

In daily life - towards imitation

Watch Tearfund's 'Ordinary Heroes' video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfGEOA5QhdQ>
How could you be an ordinary hero?

Study questions – exploring the information

Mark 16:15 (cf. Romans 10:15). What does it mean to 'preach the gospel to **all** creation'?
Romans 8:18-23. What would it look like for creation to be "*liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom*"? How can we as Christians be agents of transformation?
Romans 6:1-7. What might these verses have to say about the way we should live now in light of the future? Consequently, what might they say about how we treat our environment?
Luke 16:10. What are the 'small things' that you have been entrusted with in relation to the care of creation? How could you respond to environmental injustice faithfully?

Living it out: What can you do to help in church and at home?

Act Practically

Keep doors closed; Turn lights and fan heaters off in rooms when not in use; Recycle; Avoid packaging; Buy local produce; Buy recycled paper; Avoid food waste; Try to cut down on unnecessary transport and energy consumption (especially flying and cruises); Avoid accidentally investing in companies that pay people next to nothing and treat them badly, or fuel climate change; Join an environmental group - either St Mark's or another.

Campaign to let the government know you are concerned about environmental injustice.

In June 2014 at church services adults and children wrote individual letters to Andrew Jones MP to express their concerns about climate change. For those who missed the opportunity then go to <http://www.hfff.org.uk>

Members of St Mark's are planning to go to the march in Leeds on 28 Nov to call for climate justice ahead of the Paris talks.

Pray. This is a critical time - the Paris COP21 (30th Nov -11th Dec) will be a crucial conference, as it needs to achieve a new international agreement on the climate, applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C.

Specific prayer and fasting is held on 1st of each month.

Prayer suggestion:

Psalm 104:27-30. Meditate on these words. Pray that you might partner with God in seeing his renewal of '*the face of the ground*'.

Joining a group and other resources:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160. There are many great resources to help you pray and enjoy the Scriptures too:

www.pray-as-you-go.org A 12 minute guided prayer and meditation to listen to.

<https://www.wordlive.org> Many excellent daily reading approaches, available as an app.

www.smch.org.uk

INSPIRE

LOVING GOD IN ALL OF LIFE:
THE AIR WE BREATHE
& THE WORK WE DO

A TEN WEEK TEACHING COURSE ON MAKING FAITH A NATURAL PART OF ALL OF LIFE
FROM SEPTEMBER 20TH 2015

Everywhere...in everything

Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals.
Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.

Week beginning: 11th October 2015.

GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on up - to God; in - to each other; out - to mission

Up

Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". Together or on your own make a thanksgiving list beginning with each letter of the word TREASURE. e.g. T = Trees R = Roast dinner etc. Give thanks together to God.

In

How can you encourage the people you have a connection with in the St Mark's community this week? It might be at Toddlers, or Open church, or at a Sunday group, or a housegroup.

Out

What can you share with someone this week. A toy? Some money? A cup of tea? Your time?

DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 - 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, "What is God saying to me, personally?" and, "How can I respond today?" If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 12th October

Readings: Psalm 98, John 13: 1-11. Focus verse: 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist.

Tuesday 13th October.

Readings: Psalm 106, John 13: 12-20. Focus verse: 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Wednesday 14th October

Readings: Psalm 110, John 13: 21-30. Focus verse: 20 Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.' 21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, 'Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.'

Thursday 15th October. Teresa of Avila

Readings: Psalm 113, John 13: 31-end. Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things Whoever has God lacks nothing;

God alone suffices.

Friday 16th October.

Readings: Psalm 139, John 14: 1-14. Focus verse: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Saturday 17th October.

Readings: Psalm 120, John 14: 15-end. Focus verse: 15 'If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever - 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

Do you think you can make a difference when it comes to the care of creation and environmental injustice? Do you see it as part of your Christian call?

This week's teaching in a nutshell: *The Church as an Agent for Change*

As Christians we are called to a remarkable task. We are called to partner with God in the renewal of all things. We are called to the incredible task of helping to bring God's transforming presence to the places and things that cry out for redemption. As we ourselves experience the transforming love of God, we are called to '*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation*' (Mark 16:15). Our hearts begin to become broken for the things that break God's heart, and we are compelled to respond to the suffering and frustration of our world.

All of creation is in a fallen condition. The blight of evil grips our world and its effects are easy to see - all kinds of injustice and hatred, poverty, violence, disease, catastrophic environmental degradation. Creation waits, longs, groans, for God's agents on the earth, his church, to rescue it from these painful realities. Creation longs to be '*liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory... of the children of God*' (Rom. 8:21). We, as the church, are called to partner with God in the renewal of creation. Amazing! The Christian vision of the future is of '*a new heaven and new earth*' (Rev. 21:1). As Christians our call is to transform the present, as far as we are able, in the light of that future. We are called to change the world into the world that ought to be.

So what does that mean in our care of creation and our response to environmental injustice? So far in our series we have looked at the reality that the earth is the Lord's, and that we have a responsibility to look after God's creation. We are a part of his creation, not above it, and we need to respect and care for it, and to live within limits as we do so. As you've engaged (or maybe not!) with this series and the very big issues that have been raised, you might be thinking 'what can I possibly do that will make any difference?' Like all other parts of our Christian lives, our care of creation and our response to environmental injustice begins as a response to God's goodness - as an act of worship and thankfulness towards God. That means that even the small things matter. Do we go on mistreating the planet even if we don't think we can make a difference? Of course not - everything we do should be an offering to God, an act of worship that says 'thank you'. If you were to give somebody a gift and they misused it, wasted it, or ruined it you would, understandably, be upset. Why do tend to think that God is not upset when we do exactly this with the gifts he gives us? Yet God trusts us with his creation, and even more amazingly he gives us the incredible privilege of joining in with him in the renewal of his creation. We need to grasp this responsibility as Christians. In our care of creation this relates to the small things - avoiding waste, recycling, considering what we buy - as well as to the bigger things - challenging the systems and structures that cause environmental degradation and injustice in the first place.

We have been called to partner with God in a remarkable task - of bringing hope to a world that aches for redemption. We are called to change the world into the world it ought to be.