

In daily life - towards imitation

Stuart Pimm, a Professor of Conservation Ecology, bought land in Brazil to protect a species of primates called the golden lion tamarin, on the verge of extinction. He was interviewed by the New York Times about his work, and at the end of the interview they asked him, are you religious? And this is his response. He said, "I'm actually a believing Christian and Christians have an obligation to care for the planet because it was made by God and does not actually belong to us. So we cannot simply fail to care for oceans, or forests, or creatures. That would be to fail to fulfill our obligations to God."

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION

This interesting! Look up the UK's global footprint at a website which compares how much earth resource we need to how much we use and share your reactions:

http://www.footprintnetwork.org/ecological_footprint_nations/

Genesis 2: 15-17. How can eating of "the tree" lead to "consuming the earth"?

Deuteronomy 15: 1-18. What heart attitude do we need to live within limits? How can this be fostered?

Deuteronomy 24: 19-21. How could this principle apply to modern business?

Luke 10: 25-37. In a globalised world, how can we define neighbours?

Living it out

Can you come up with any tips for helping people or each other "pause" before we buy?

Prayer suggestion:

Get hold of an apple...a symbol of so many things! But instead of being a symbol of putting our selves and our needs at the centre, it will be a symbol of gratitude, and enjoying God's gifts. So, together, eat your apples slowly (you may need background music!) and as you do so pray for hearts that can live within limits, in order to love others and love God.

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 on a daily basis.

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.

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> A short guided prayer and meditation to read.

Or download the app from Soul Survivor, with short daily videos: <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>

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: 4th 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 Big and small and all. What is the biggest animal or plant you know of? Praise God - He made it. Do you have a microscope or a magnifying glass in your house? Look at the detail of a tiny insect or leaf - Praise God - He made it. Look in your bathroom mirror. Praise God - He made you!

In Take a photo of something or someone you love. Show your photos to each other and talk about what/whom you chose, then spend a few minutes thanking God together for each one.

Out As you walk around your neighbourhood or down your street, ask God to be in each home and to show His love to each person who lives there. Can you be part of the answer to this prayer?

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 5th October

Readings: Psalm 80, Mark 15: 1-15. Focus verse: 12 'What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked them. 13 'Crucify him!' they shouted. 14 'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

Tuesday 6th October.

Readings: Psalm 87, Mark 15: 16-32. Focus verse: 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spat on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Wednesday 7th October

Readings: Psalm 119: 105-128, Mark 15: 33-41. Focus verse: 37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

Thursday 8th October

Readings: Psalm 90, Mark 15: 42-end. Focus verse: 46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

Friday 9th October.

Readings: Psalm 88, Mark 16: 1-8. Focus verse: 6 'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."'

Saturday 10th October.

Readings: Psalm 96, Mark 16: 9-end. Focus verse: 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

Have you any idea about your "carbon footprint" or how to find out about it?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

Living with limits Genesis 2: 15-17

The average person at the moment might think that Christians are engaged with looking after the planet. The Pope has addressed the UN about it, "Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years." But a few years ago many people said Christians were partially responsible for the issues the world is facing. In 1967, a professor named Lynn White went back to Genesis 1: 28 and human dominion and to rule over the earth. White said Christianity created this idea that nature is not sacred it is just disposable, and that in the Bible human beings are not really a part of nature, they are above it, so nature exists just kind of as a thing for people to use and exploit.

It's true that in the Bible we are special and have been given a special place in creation. You have been created the Bible says, "A little lower than the angels," and "crowned with glory and honour..." God has given you such dignity. He has entrusted you with a precious possession, and asked you to take care of it. But stewardship in the Bible is not dominion. It is service. We unfold its beauty, not steal its riches. We hand it on. And we serve our brothers and sisters around the world.

George Otieno from Dodoma Tanzania told us about loss of species, rainfall, pollution...all which lead to poverty. However much you know or don't know about climate science, we can love God in how we consume. We may not be able to trace it directly but our use of the resources He has given us in a globalised world also has an impact on George and his family.

In Eden, God planted a tree and He put limits around it. It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The existence of the tree says God made a world with limits – and we can easily see with population forecasts that He made a creation which cannot sustain limitless consumption. To be stewards is as much about recognizing limits, as it is about enjoying things. The tree also tells us this: that at the heart of the human problem is our tendency to try and take over God's job for Him. To place ourselves at the centre. Knowing good and evil is a good thing. But acting like we decide what is right and wrong, as if we are God is putting ourselves at the centre of life. And if we do this we will end up treating the world as if it is there to serve our needs, more than anything else. Pope Francis said, "We are not God. The Earth was here before us and was given to us."

You are a sovereign, a ruler, given honour and dignity. There are kings who built lavish palaces for themselves, using people and resources to their own glory. They misunderstood their calling. You were created a little lower than the angels to steward, look after, care for this gift, which one day you will let go of. Let our treasure be in serving, not consuming, worshipping and loving God by embracing the responsibility of limits, so that when God says, "Did you enjoy my creation?" we may answer, "Yes, and I made it enjoyable for your children."