

Genesis 2:4b-9
Climate and Human Sin
WRCoB 9.19.21

There has been considerable discussion
If not knock-down drag-out fights
Over climate change.

Is it just the cyclical nature of weather
As some would argue?
Because climate is constantly changing.

Or is it what they call AGW
Anthropogenic Global Warming

The argument that climate change is caused by humans
Largely from the emissions of CO2 greenhouse gases?

Those proponents of naturally occurring climate change
Point out various warming and cooling periods
In climate history

Notably, the warming period from 250 BCE to 400 CE
Called the Roman Warm Period

And to the Little Ice Age beginning around 1250
And ending around 1850 CE.

They suggest our current warming period is just a glitch.

Nature will once again balance out
Just as it's done since forever.

Many Christians believe a good God wouldn't let weather
Adversely affect humanity.

On the other side of the argument

The supporters of AGW contend

That the current warming trend is unprecedented.

- Carbon dioxide concentrations are higher than at any point in human history
- Global temperatures are rising at unprecedented rates
- Warming is poised to surpass anything the planet has experienced in millions of years (Scientific American)

The Christian world is divided on climate change.

Denominationally, a paper on climate change

Was presented to Annual Conference several years ago

Only to be voted down by the naysayers.

And I, for one, believe we humans are responsible

For climate change.

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Mark Twain once said

“Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.”

In the next couple of sermons

I want to talk about the weather

I want to talk about weather from a biblical perspective.

Because I think what is missing in our national conversation
On climate change is this: **SIN!**

Michael Lefebvre in an article in Christianity Today writes

Too many Christians (and non-Christians) think about climate change as primarily a political or an economic issue. But it is also a spiritual issue that requires a biblical approach.

He poses that the Bible has a whole lot to say
About human-caused climate change.

And that we shouldn't be surprised that
Anthropogenic Global Warming is occurring
Nor that it is a result of human sin.

Lefebvre stresses that Christians should

anticipate human-caused climate change. It should incline them to respect the evidence of today's climate crisis, even if they come to differing conclusions about how to interpret that evidence.

And most importantly, Lefebvre feels *the Bible teaches that climate crises often have a reformational purpose.*

Maybe climate change is a warning from God
That things are not right with the world.

And that we need to recognize our complicity
Repent and do the hard work of reconciliation.

Reconciling ourselves to God
To one another
And to creation

For it is all interconnected.

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We begin in the opening pages of the Bible
And the story of Creation.

In our Lesson today, we are introduced
To the Garden of Eden

And within this glorious garden
God formed humankind
And breathed life where there was no life.

It was a perfect climate designed by a good God
For the benefit and enjoyment of God's creation.

Our passage says God planted beautiful trees
That were pleasing to the eye
And delicious to eat.

God also planted two other trees
The tree of life
And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God gave Adam the job to care for his garden.
To be the steward of God's wonderful creation.

His first assignment was to name all the animals.

And so Adam began "Lion, Tiger, Horse, Cow, Pig..."

After he named all the land animals
Adam grew tired.

But God said, "You must now name all the sea animals, too."

And so, Adam started in again
"Sea lion, Tiger shark, Sea horse, Sea cow, Sea pig..."

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Following, God could see Adam was lonely
And so, he created a soul-mate companion for him
And named her Eve.

And in that perfect climatic setting in paradise
Where God placed Adam and Eve
God gave Adam and Eve one more gift.

It was a gift that ended up a curse.
Free will.

They could eat from any tree in the garden
Except one, one little ole tree
In the vast forest of Paradise
The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And of course, what happens next is what you'd expect
The two ate from the forbidden tree
And things were never the same since

Adam and Eve were kicked out of paradise
God took away their immortality
God gave women birthing pains

And women became subordinate to man.

None of which were in God's original intention.

Because of their sin

- They ruined their relationship with God
- They ruined their relationship with each other
- And they ruined their relationship to the environment.

Everything changed and for the worse.

There they were without a care in the world
Munching on whatever paradise offered
Without any effort to produce

To this

Genesis 3:17-19 CEV ¹⁷ The Lord said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate fruit from that tree. And so, the ground will be under a curse because of what you did. As long as you live, you will have to struggle to grow enough food.

¹⁸ Your food will be plants, but the ground will produce thorns and thistles, ¹⁹ You will have to sweat to earn a living; you were made out of soil, and you will once again turn into soil."

So here is something interesting . . .

Their sin had a direct impact on the environment.

Am I right? Or am I missing something here.

It shows us how life is so interconnected

Our relationship to God
Our relationship to each other
And our relationship to earth

They cannot be separated.

When one is strained
They all are strained.

Through sin, the ground became cursed
From a perfect paradise to thistles and thorns.

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I believe, today's climate change
Is the direct result of human sin

Tearfund USA, a Christian aid organization
In an article in their website
Has this to say about climate change and sin.

For Christians, a healthy appreciation for the effects of the Fall should bring more clarity to the problem of understanding climate change. In a healthy, orthodox, Biblical worldview, nothing is more plausible than global environmental chaos.

You could almost predict something like anthropogenic climate change that threatens the livelihoods of millions of innocent people, compromises the global economy, and causes the extinction of many of God's creatures all you'd have to do is read the Bible.

A Christian worldview says that humans still have the kind of dominion and authority to affect the planet at a global scale

(including the atmospheric system), and corruption of that authority can have actual, physical, and dire consequences.

The Apostle Paul also speaks of creation
As having fallen into chaos from sin.

Romans 8:19-21 NLT

¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.

To see the impact of human sin on our environment
Shouldn't surprise us.

Knowing how sin has reared its ugly head
From the very beginning.

And so, I ask, what do we do about it?

For Christians, it's a threefold action.

We are to do everything we know how
To get right in our relationship with God.

We are to do everything we know how
To get right in our relationships with each other

And we are to do everything we know how
To save the planet

Because our first assigned task as human beings
Was just that . . . to care for creation.

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From another Christianity Today article
Written by Meagan Church

*The good news is that it's not too late. We can take action.
We might not be able to reverse all that has happened, but
each one of us can make a difference.*

*Each of us has the ability to do what God originally called us
to do; we can stop exploiting his creation and start tending to
it. We can be the gardeners he wanted us to be.*

I agree.

It's all about redemption.

This is the story of God.

Through Christ, we are reconciled to God
Through the forgiveness of sins.

And empowered by the Holy Spirit
We also become reconcilers

Reconciling humans to humans
Beginning with those closest to us
And extending out from there.

And reconciling humans to the environment.

Now is the time to act.

2 Chronicles 7:14

New Revised Standard Version

¹⁴ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.