

## **CARING FOR GOD'S EARTH**



***Scripture:***

**Psalm 65:5-13**

<sup>5</sup>By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. <sup>6</sup>By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. <sup>7</sup>You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. <sup>8</sup>Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

<sup>9</sup>You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. <sup>10</sup>You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. <sup>11</sup>You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. <sup>12</sup>The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, <sup>13</sup>the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

**Luke 12:24-28, 32-34**

<sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup>And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>26</sup>If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

<sup>32</sup>“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

<sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



## **CARING FOR GOD'S EARTH**

This Friday is Earth Day, a day in which we all try to remind ourselves of the importance of the environment. We remember that our actions have a direct effect on the future of our world. Ideally, we identify the ways in which we aren't fully protecting our earth from damage, and try to change that.

If I'm being completely honest, I'm not a particularly 'green' person. I like to leave the television on if I'm leaving my house. I tend to take abnormally long showers, and I almost always drive if I'm going somewhere, when I could walk or bike. I have improvements to make in my life.

## **MAKING CHANGES**

It really isn't easy to make these changes, and yet, it is important that we try. God gave us this beautiful Earth, and all it provides for us.

Psalm 65:9-10 says, "You care for the land, and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench it furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops."

## **GOD CREATED THE EARTH**

As we know, God created the earth. God designed every animal and plant and the stones and the dirt, and wove them all into a system. It is a system that works together so that the earth can provide us with an abundance of food, water, and everything we need. And it is set, so it may continue providing this for a very long time, if we take care of it.

We are truly blessed to have all of this. I think that in Sonoma County we can certainly appreciate how abundant the earth really is. It is really incredible how all of the vineyards and orchards around here yield so much delicious fruit every year. And the

beauty of the earth is readily apparent here too. I always love going out to any of the parks in this county - Howarth Park, Taylor Mountain, and Annadel to name a few. I especially enjoy the spring time, when everything is blooming, and the ground is covered in green and wild flowers, and the trees are full. This area is incredibly gorgeous.

## **WE TAKE IT ALL FOR GRANTED**

And yet, it still is easy to take it all for granted, and forget that it is our responsibility to take care of the earth. Sometimes we feel burdened or inconvenienced by the things we must do to care for the environment. When this happens, we lose perspective on where we really stand. In Luke 12:24, Jesus says to his disciples, "Consider the ravens, they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than the birds!"

## **WE ALL SHARE RESPONSIBILITY**

**We often forget that we are not more important than the planet. Every man is equal in God's eyes, and we share the responsibility of caring for the amazing earth that he provided for us.**

And today it is more important than ever. Scientists are seeing for the first time the effects of human industrialization and overpopulation on the planet, and they are not promising.

A series of studies from Norwhich University shows that in the year 2050, with the current rate of resource consumption and population growth, the human race will need three earths in order to continue being sustained. That's a little scary.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

And on the climate change side of things, there is something that should be even more terrifying for us here in Sonoma County. Professor Elizabeth Wolkovich, an ecologist at Harvard University, said that if the heat continues to rise, vineyards will not be able to maintain their current existence, and that famous wine production places like France, and yes, California, will be replaced by places like Canada and China.

## **ALTERNATIVE ENERGY**

Of course, a lot is being done to help these issues. Scientists across the globe are always looking out for alternative energy solutions. National Geographic released an article explaining some of the work being done to combat global warming. An increase in the usage of solar panels and wind power can make great strides in reducing air pollution and global warming emissions, and creating new jobs, and making energy more readily available. An increase in the usage of natural gas and bio-fuels helps. There's even work being done to capture carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and store it underground.

## **MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT HOME**

Things you do at home can greatly make a difference as well. Changing your light bulbs out for energy saving light bulbs, sealing and insulating your home to reduce heat escaping, recycling, and refraining from wasting water can greatly help reduce the damage done to the earth.

## **GRATITUDE THROUGH PRAYER AND ACTION**

It is explicitly our responsibility, as humans to take care of God's earth. He gave us this planet to use, and all of the things the planet provides for us. As Christians, we pay special attention to creation. It's a common theme in prayer to thank our God for the

universal parts of life that every Christian has received: an abundant planet with food and water and shelter and other humans to interact with. It is important:

- that we give thanks for this, not only through prayer, but also through action
- That we go out into the world and live to our fullest potential to care for this planet.

God allows us to use this beautiful creation of his, and asks only that we be good stewards for the gifts that he has provided.

## **Benediction:**

**And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen**



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