

Creation Care

A testimonial by John Adams Broughton

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Good Morning and Happy Earth Day! As Alan mentioned in his sermon, today's focus is on Creation care and our role as Christians.

- Back in October, my wife and I stumbled upon a PBS documentary, "Is God Green?"
- Highlighted what congregations across the US were doing in support of Creation Care. Such as replanting efforts in areas that were ravaged by forest fires, a WV church fighting against mountain top removal and a few others.
- Emphasized the message that man's stewardship of the planet is a biblical imperative.
- After we watched the documentary, I felt God calling me to take what I just learned and see how I could apply it here at SPC.
- So, I reached out to Alan and as he and I began working together these last few months, he asked that I talk to all of you about my passion for the environment and how I have been able to intersect my personal and professional life to help shape my Christian path.

Environmental Stewardship:

- One thing that I have come to really admire and appreciate at SPC is the deep sense of "mission." There is one more mission I would like to focus on today that all of you can do on a daily basis – the mission of environmental stewardship.
- Environmental stewardship is the idea that we should care for, manage, and nurture what we have been given.
- To me, the environment is a major assurance to mankind of God's existence. God's creation is all around us, through the vastness of the oceans, the sturdiness and strength of a tree, the singing of birds, the deep blue sky, rolling hills, waterfalls, and much more. Nature is indeed an intricate system designed by God. If any of you have been watching the Planet Earth series on the Discovery Channel have seen firsthand the awesomeness of God's creation. I encourage you to watch it tonight. It is the last episode in the series. It has amazing footage of some pretty spectacular areas on Earth and features such a diverse array of animals that are truly unique.
- My deep reverence for the environment began as a child growing up in Vermont, a state that really cares about the environment. This passion I have grew in me as a child, continued to develop as I went through college, and continues to this day as I search for my purpose in the life that God has given me. Becoming a steward is not only something I believe, but it has become integrated into the way I live. Now, I don't want to convey or mislead you in thinking that I am doing everything right to reduce my impact. Trust me, there are a few things that I can do better.

Humans versus Earth:

- The relationship between humans and the Earth is often presented as one of stewardship. That we are stewards of creation brings in the fundamental notion of responsibility to look after the Earth, not as we please, but as God intended us to look after. Secondly, we have the responsibility to the rest of creation as ones who stand in place of God.
- The Earth belongs to God by creation and to us by delegation; God has not handed his creation over to us to use and abuse, but has allowed us to be responsible for looking

after it on his behalf.

- I want to paraphrase a recent editorial I saw in the Free Lance Star – “We have a problem, one as meaningful and real as if a sinking ship with billions of passengers are on board. The Earth is that ship, an ark for everything that lives. It is the only vessel available to carry humans through the ocean of space, and it is rapidly becoming unseaworthy.” This statement, to me, reaffirms that we only have one planet that sustains all living things and we can’t afford to mess it up.

Creation Care:

- As people of faith, we have no option but to act. My challenge to this congregation is to take the lead in becoming an example of biblical stewardship – meaning that we begin to honor and care for all of his Creation.
- The church needs to be leading the way in caring for the environment. By caring for God’s creation on a daily basis, we can be the good stewards that God intended us to be.
- We cannot by our own efforts, “save the Earth.” Only God can do that. But as Christians, we can join God in that good work at home, our places of work, in our times of recreation, and in our congregations.
- We can begin to model the care for the Earth that God gave us. We have a new purpose set forth before us and a clearer understanding of the responsibilities we have been given coupled with trust in God’s presence that makes stewardship both exciting and challenging.
- I hope my message has opened your eyes to the responsibility we have to be good stewards of the Earth. Let SPC be the first church in F’burg to show other churches what environmental stewardship is. With the support of Alan and the worship committee, I would like to start up an environmental ministry and invite any one of you who may be interested to talk to me about some ideas on how to get started. I am hoping that we can take the first step forward and follow where God leads us.
- A few things that all of you can easily do – Recycle as much as you can, change out your incandescent light bulbs to CFLs, get an energy audit on your home, and plant the seedling that you will receive on your way out today. Caring for his creation begins with the first step to becoming agents of change. One thing that we will be doing here at SPC is the Facilities Committee will conduct an internal energy audit of the facility to see what types of energy efficiency improvements we can make. Hopefully that will lead us into some additional efforts that will help us to become environmental stewards.

As I close, I would like to share with you my favorite quote by Margaret Mead that I hope you find inspiring as much as I do. ***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”***

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion new insight into your purpose for us, as well as wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will. As we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose. In giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature that no one may suffer through our abuse of them, so that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for the creation you have given us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***