



**Series Title:** Stewardship – Making our Whole Lives Count for Jesus!

**Weekly Title:** Stewardship of Creation

**Date:** Sunday October 23

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 1:26-30

**Purpose of Preach:** To share biblical principles on creation care and apply.

**Introduction:**

This week we are looking at what the Bible teaches us about stewarding creation. We are going to see two biblical truths and then make six applications.

**TRUTH #1: CREATION IS BY GOD AND FOR GOD.**

The first truth we see in the Bible is that creation is by God and for God.

a) *We see in the creation song of Genesis 1 that God created everything.* The very first words of the Bible are “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Creation is by God and from God and belongs to God. So for example, we see in Exodus 19:5 God says to Moses “all the earth is mine” and David says in Psalm 24:1-2 “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.”

b) *Creation teaches us what the God who created it is like.* The universe and all of creation exists to glorify and magnify and declare how great and glorious God is. So David says in Psalm 19:1 “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.” It shows us that He is God of glorious creative power and artistry. He is wonderfully expansive and yet is also incredibly concerned with detail. He loves diversity, beauty, colour and life. As we look at creation we can see a God who is awesome, majestic and worthy of all praise and glory and honour. This is why Paul says in Romans 1:20 that God’s “invisible attributes, namely His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that been made.” Creation declares to us what the creator is like. As Richard Bradbury puts it: “Creation shows us a God who loves the wild. Creation shows us a God who cares about the big and the small and the unseen. Creation shows us a God who is deeply mathematical. He is the scatty artist and the wise mathematician.”

c) *Creation continues to matter to God.* God did not create the universe and then walk away. The Bible says He continues to be involved and to sustain and uphold it. So Paul tells the Colossians that by Jesus “all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16-17) God is passionately concerned about His creation. He cares for it even the parts where no human being is watching (Job 38:26). Nothing is outside of God’s view. This means stewarding His creation should matter to us because it matters to Him and it should not take a crisis to motivate us to care for creation.

## **TRUTH #2: HUMANITY HAS A MANDATE TO STEWARD CREATION ON GOD'S BEHALF.**

The second truth is that God has given humanity a mandate to care for His creation.

*a) The mandate is given in Genesis 1:26-30 and given an explanation in Genesis 2:15.*

Humanity is given a mandate to rule or have dominion over creation on God's behalf and this means to work and keep it – it means tilling and keeping. Tilling refers to cultivating, ploughing or working. Keeping means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving.

These two words express what it means to steward creation.

*b) This means creation care is worship.* We are obeying God, valuing something He values and stepping into what we were created to do. This fallen creation matters to God, and a day is coming when He will gloriously renew it.

*c) This means creation care is a witness.* We are sharing the heart of God to those around us, and also living out a love for all people and for His creation in that we want it to flourish. It shows we take God and His commands seriously.

## **SIX APPLICATIONS FROM THESE TWO BIBLICAL TRUTHS.....**

*i) Walk and Wonder*

We need to take time and space to walk and wonder at creation. (share some of your personal experiences of this and how it has impacted you).

*ii) Reflect and if needed Rethink*

Take time to reflect on these two biblical truths. As you do it may well be that you need to rethink your attitude to creation. Think about the reality of climate change and the impact it is having. Reflect on how humanity is only one of many species who inhabit this beautiful planet together. As Richard Bradbury puts it "bio-diversity is important to our survival and yet we so often see creation as something to exploit – as merely a backdrop to our lives." Take time to process what we have been looking at and reach a personal conviction on it all.

*iii) Pray*

We may not have all the answers but we know who does. Pray and ask God for mercy. Pray for world leaders to make wise, courageous and decisive decisions.

*iv) Start now and start small*

It is so easy to feel guilty or overwhelmed when thinking about the current environmental crisis. The key response though is to start now and start small. Think through how you are living and what small but important changes you could make today. Think about your purchasing habits, perhaps your diet, how you recycle, your carbon footprint etc (perhaps give two or three practical things that you do in creation care ie. Walking more and getting the train when possible rather than driving)

*v) Commit to learning more.*

Learn more from charities such as Tearfund, the impact on the most vulnerable places in our world our choices have. Learn the bigger picture and how we can better love and care for our world.

*vi) Have better conversations.*

Talking about creation care can sometimes be a bit tricky and hard. Learn how to start a new and faith filled conversation with people that expresses a love for Jesus and for His world. Use the crisis to point people to the loving creator.