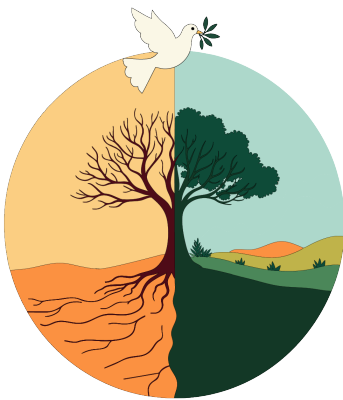


**Resources for the Season of Creation
1st Sept – 4th Oct 2025**

***Collects, Sermons, Intercessions and
Study Questions for each Sunday of
the Season of Creation 2025***

Rev'd Dr Mike Perry



Garden of Peace

Isaiah 32:14-18

**PEACE
WITH CREATION**
SEASON OF CREATION 2025

Introduction

In every generation the Spirit of God brings refreshment and revival in different ways. Currently amongst churches across the world there is an awakening of understanding in caring for the natural world (*caring for creation*) as integral to the whole mission of the church, and to the calling of each and every Christian. The roots of this go back a long way and are grounded in the biblical narratives of the Old and New Testaments. More recently there has been a resurgence of scholarly reflection particularly in the latter half of the last century and increasing to the present day.

This year's theme for the Season of Creation is *Peace with Creation*. It is a calling to live our lives in harmony with the natural world that we were created in. Independent of the crises we face, this is a call on the lives of all Christians that brings depth and greater meaning into every aspect of faith. The current urgent crises caused by us as humanity destabilising the earth's climate dynamics and through our ruinous depletion of the natural world serve to underline the urgent need to heed this call to live in peace with creation. In biblical terms peace – *shalom* – is an active idea about harmonious connection and relates also to the biblical understanding of justice.

In compiling these prayers, sermons and study notes I have drawn on the reflections of the many writers in the field that have formed my own understanding. To explore the ideas contained here further I would recommend:

Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World (2008) Dave Bookless. IVP

A Christian Guide to Environmental Issues (2021) Margot and Martin Hodson. BRF

Bible and Ecology – Rediscovering the Community of Creation (2010)

Richard Bauckham. Darton, Longman and Todd

John Stott on Creation Care (2021). RJ (Sam) Berry with Laura S. Meitzner Yoder. IVP

Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility (1991)

James Nash. Abingdon Press

Rev'd Dr Michael Perry
Bishop of Salisbury's Adviser for Creation Care and Climate Justice
Trustee of A Rocha UK
Middle Woodford
Salisbury
UK
August 2025

Acknowledgements

The Season of Creation 2025 logo is used with permission from the official *Season of Creation* website: seasonofcreation.org

Contents

Week One: <i>On the Potter's Wheel</i> Sunday 7th September 2025	4-7
Collect	4
Sermon <i>Jeremiah 18. 1-1</i>	4-6
Intercessions	6-7
Study Group Questions	7
Week Two: <i>Noticing the Missing</i> Sunday 14th September 2025	8-11
Collect	8
Sermon <i>Luke 15.1-10</i>	8-9
Intercessions	10
Study Group Questions	11
Week Three: <i>The Urgent Call to Action</i> Sunday 21st September 2025	12-15
Collect	12
Sermon <i>Luke 16.1-13</i>	12-13
Intercessions	14-15
Study Group Questions	15
Week Four: <i>Climate Justice</i> Sunday 28th September 2025	16-19
Collect	16
Sermon <i>Luke 16.1-13</i>	16-18
Intercessions	18-19
Study Group Questions	19

Week One: *On the Potter's Wheel*

Sunday 7th September 2025

Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 18. 1-11; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14.25-33

Collect

Almighty God,
you formed the earth and all creation in wisdom and love,
and you hold all things in your tender hands:
reshape our lives, turning us, renewing us,
making our hearts supple through the refreshing of your spirit,
and teaching us to live in peace with your creation,
that the world may rejoice
and all peoples walk in your ways;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Sermon *Jeremiah 18. 1-1*

At the beginning of this year's Season of Creation, we are offered an image that is as ancient as it is timely: the potter at the wheel. Jeremiah is sent not to a temple or a throne room but to a craftsman's workshop, to observe the slow, steady rhythm of creation. The clay resists; the pot collapses; the potter begins again. This is not a story of failure. It is a picture of patience, of ongoing relationship between hands and earth, between intention and form.

In Hebrew, the word *Shalom* – which we translate as peace – has layers of meaning far beyond the absence of conflict. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, right relationship. It describes a condition in which things are in their right place and working for the good of everything else. When we speak of "Peace with Creation," we are not just talking about preserving wild places or polluting less. We are being invited to live in such a way that all life can *flourish* together, in a way where nothing is exploited for short-term gain, and where we fully understand creation not to be something to conquer but something to care for.

The image of the potter reminds us that the world is not fixed or finished. It is dynamic, turning on a wheel, shaped by forces of intention and resistance. The clay isn't passive. It can be shaped into beauty, but it can also become misshapen. So too with our relationship to the world God has made. Humanity was never given ownership of the earth; we were entrusted with its care. Yet in so many ways – through systems of consumption, waste, and indifference – we have let that relationship stray from the potter's centre point and become misshapened. Once proud forests are no more,

rivers are choked with run-off and our skies are filled with polluting gas. The shape we have made is not the one the Creator intended.

But the potter doesn't discard the clay. The flawed vessel isn't abandoned. It is reworked. Reshaped. Not destroyed but made new. Jeremiah's isn't a message of despair. It is a call to renewal. Peace with Creation starts not with perfect policies or pristine wildernesses, but with the recognition that we are not the potter. We are the clay. And we are being invited into transformation.

Shalom, the idea of things knit together *well* is linked with a true biblical understanding of Justice, the idea of things being *set right*. Set right, not just between people, but between humanity and the land, the sea, the creatures that share our common home. Peace with Creation is impossible if we continue to treat the natural world as a machine to extract from or a backdrop to human activity. It requires humility – an acceptance of limits, a recognition that our lives are bound to the health of soil and water and air.

In the Season of Creation, the Church is not adding something new to its message. We are returning to what has always been true. From Genesis to Revelation, the story of God includes the earth – not just as scenery, but as a participant in redemption. The mountains rejoice, the trees clap their hands, the rivers sing. The whole world is alive with God's presence.

But creation also *groans*. The biblical witness is honest about that. It names the sorrow of a world out of balance. This too is part of our calling in this season: to listen to that groaning, not to turn away from it. To *lament* what has been and is being lost. And in that lament, to find the courage to live *differently* – not just as individuals, but as communities, as churches: As a society.

The task before us isn't small. But neither is the hope. The potter's hands are still at work. The reshaping of our world is not only about avoiding disaster. It is about rediscovering joy, simplicity, connection. It is about recovering that sense of *Shalom* – not only in our prayers but in our habits, in our choices, in the ways we grow food, use energy, design cities, treat neighbours.

In this first week of the Season of Creation, we are invited to hold two things together at once: the weight of the crisis we face, and the trust that we are still in God's hands. The clay is marred but not discarded. The world is wounded but not forsaken. The wheel turns, and with it the invitation to live more gently, more gratefully, more justly.

To truly follow a path of peace with creation we must go beyond theory and renew the understanding of how we live. Renew our understanding of what we do with our time and money, how we travel, what we teach, how we pray, and how we listen to the world around us. We may not be able to change everything, but we are not powerless, and we start with small steps and build to larger ones. We are clay that can be reshaped.

And so, we begin again. With open hands. With honest hearts. With a trust that the same God who formed the earth from nothing can form in us a new way of being. A way that makes peace with creation – not in word alone, but in life.

Intercessions Week One

Creator God,
you are the potter and we are the clay.
Hold your Church in your skilled and patient hands.
Reshape us when we grow rigid; renew us when we lose heart.
Inspire us to live not above creation but within it,
as people who carry your image and your care.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of the whole earth,
we bring before you this fragile, groaning world.
For rivers depleted, for forests cut down,
for oceans overwhelmed and species vanishing –
we ask your mercy and your healing.
Stir us to wise and courageous action
that works with, not against, the grain of your creation.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of justice,
we remember those most affected by ecological crisis –
the poor, the vulnerable, the ones whose voices go unheard.
May those with power use it well,
those with resources share them wisely,
and those who bear the weight of decisions act with humility and vision.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God who heals and restores,
bring your peace to our restless lives.
We lift before you all who are in pain today –
in body, mind or spirit.
A short silence
Shape us into a community of gentleness,
where no one suffers alone and all are held in love.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
teach us to delight again in the beauty of your world.
Help us to walk lightly, to notice more,
to live as those who know the earth is yours.
And when we are anxious about what lies ahead,
remind us that we are still held, still loved, still being made new.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Study Questions

1. What does the image of the potter and the clay reveal about God's relationship with the world and with us as human beings? (Consider how this image speaks both to divine patience and to God's willingness to reshape what is flawed.)
2. Reflecting on the idea that "we are the clay," how might our daily attitudes toward the natural world need to shift?
3. How can we resist the tendency to act as though we are the potters?
4. What small but meaningful changes can you or your community make to reflect peace with creation in practical ways?
5. Hope is a central theme in this reflection. Where do you see signs that God is still at work reshaping the world for good?

Week Two: *Noticing the Missing*

Sunday 14th September 2025

Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 4.11–12, 22–28; 1 Timothy 1.12–17;
Luke 15.1–10

Collect

Merciful God,
you search for all that is lost and rejoice in its restoration;
open our eyes to the wounds of your creation,
give us hearts that notice and wills that care,
that we may seek the healing of the earth with patient love
and rejoice with all your creatures in the harmony of your Peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sermon *Luke 15.1–10*

There is something unexpectedly earthy about Jesus' stories in this passage. A shepherd goes after a sheep. A woman sweeps her whole house to find a coin. These are not grand parables about kings or nations. They are stories about ordinary people doing ordinary things – searching, paying attention, refusing to accept the loss of what is theirs.

In both stories, something has gone missing. And what matters most is that someone notices.

So much of our ecological crisis stems from a failure to *notice*. Not in the sense that we're blind, but in the sense that we stop paying attention. We get used to absence. We accept damage as normal. A field that no longer hums with insects. A shoreline choked with plastic. A summer where the rain barely falls. One part of creation goes missing after another – and often, we only notice what we've lost once it's too late.

Given the state of the world, the Season of Creation could all too easily become simply a season of penitence and lament. Whilst both may have their place, at its heart this season is for remembering how *precious* and *glorious* this world is in the sight of God. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin remind us that God's love is all encompassing – every bit of matter *matters*. Each creature matters. Each species. Each stretch of forest. Each stretch of coral reef. Each has its worth, not because of what it can produce or sell, but because it is part of the whole that God has called *good*. (cf Gen 1).

These parables speak to us about the power of noticing. The shepherd could have accepted the ninety-nine as enough. The woman could have let the coin go. But they didn't. They disrupted the routine to seek what was missing. That is a deeply spiritual act – refusing to let loss have the final word.

In our time, that kind of attentive love may look like listening to the stories of communities living closest to environmental collapse. It may look like reading the land around us with more care – recognising where life is failing and asking why. It may involve practical changes, yes, but more deeply, it calls for a kind of spiritual reawakening: a renewal of the relationship between humanity and the wider creation.

It is often said that you protect what you love. But the truth is we can only love what we know. And we only know what we take time to notice. So much of our culture is built on speed, efficiency, and outcomes. But the shepherd and the woman in Jesus' parables do not rush. They stop. They look. They commit. This is not the love of consumption. This is the love of reverence.

One of the dangers of facing the climate and biodiversity crises is that we begin to think in generalities. We hear about tonnes of carbon, or square miles of rainforest lost, or species extinction rates – but the scale can make us numb. These parables bring us back to the small. The one. The single thread whose presence matters to the whole. They remind us that our response does not need to begin with fixing the world. It can begin with tending what is close by. Seeking what's within reach. Recovering what's been neglected.

This seeking is not about being the saviour of the world. It is about becoming the kind of people who will not settle for peace with ourselves while creation suffers. It is about being shaped by Jesus's own character – Jesus who searches, who notices, who rejoices when what is lost is found.

And in this Season of Creation, there is a particular kind of rejoicing to imagine. Not only the rejoicing of God, but the rejoicing of the earth itself. Psalm 96 speaks of the fields exulting and the trees of the forest singing for joy. Romans tells us that creation longs for the children of God to live in freedom. There is a deeper harmony to be restored, where our flourishing and the earth's are not in conflict.

The stories Jesus tells end in celebration. The sheep is brought home. The coin is placed back in the woman's hand. That joy is not naive; it is hard-won. It comes through persistence, through care, through noticing what others ignore.

Today, as we pray and act for peace with creation, we begin with that same posture: one of attentiveness. We begin by asking: what has gone missing around us? Not in despair, but in hope. Not to catalogue loss, but to rekindle our desire to seek and restore.

The narrative of this world can often make us think that we are too small to make a difference, Jesus offers another view. The shepherd mattered. The woman mattered. And that which they searched for mattered beyond measure.

So may we, too, search. May we look for what has been lost in creation – with persistence, with reverence, and with the kind of joy that knows: this, too, belongs to God. Amen..

Intercessions Week Two

Let us pray to the God who delights in every part of creation,
who seeks out what is lost,
and calls us to rejoice in the renewing of all things.

Creator God,
we give you thanks for the beauty and wonder of the world around us:
for golden sunlight and whispering trees,
for the rhythms of tide and season,
for the hidden life of soil and the soaring of birds.
You have made a world rich in variety, alive with praise.
Open our eyes to its goodness, and our hearts to your glory within it.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

God who seeks and saves,
in Jesus you show us the joy of finding what has been forgotten.
As you searched for us,
help us search for what is endangered –
oceans in distress, forests under pressure,
and people most affected by environmental harm.
Renew in us the will to restore and to cherish.
May your Church be a beacon of hope in a world that groans for healing.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

God of delight,
may we learn to live in joyful relationship with all that you have made,
not using creation only for our gain,
but honouring its purpose, praising its beauty,
and walking lightly upon the earth.
Bless those who farm and fish, who choose to tend the land and sea not exploit them,
who research, teach, and care for the natural world.
Strengthen all who lead in creation care,
and guide our steps in ways of justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

God of resurrection hope,
you do not give up on what you have made.
Help us live as those who trust in your renewing Spirit.
May we be part of the great rejoicing that happens
whenever even one life, one place, one lost hope is restored.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Study Questions

1. Read Luke 15:1–10 slowly. What do you notice about the shepherd's and the woman's response to what is lost? How does this speak to God's attitude toward the created world – not just humanity, but the whole of creation?
2. The sermon speaks of noticing what is being lost in creation – species, ecosystems, climates. What have you become more aware of recently in the natural world? Are there signs of loss or damage that you find yourself drawn to notice more deeply?
3. Jesus tells stories that end in celebration and joy. How might we begin to recover joy – not only in restoring the environment, but simply in recognising its beauty, complexity, and interdependence?
4. In what ways does your faith shape your response to ecological issues? Are there ways that seeing yourself as a created being in creation, rather than a user of resources, might change how you live?
5. The parables in Luke 15 reflect persistence, searching until the lost is found. What might persistence look like in our care for creation today, especially when change seems slow or overwhelming?
6. How can our church community reflect God's joy in the world He has made? Are there practical ways your group or parish could embody the theme of "Peace with Creation" this week?

Week Three: *The Urgent Call to Action*

Sunday 21st September 2025

Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 8.18–9.1;

1 Timothy 2.1–7; Luke 16.1–13

Collect

Almighty God,
you have entrusted to us the riches of your good creation:
teach us to be wise and faithful stewards,
not serving wealth, but serving you above all;
that by your Spirit we may use what we have
to nurture life, seek justice, and care for the earth,
until all creation is reconciled in Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Sermon *Luke 16.1–13*

In the third week of the Season of Creation, the lectionary brings us to one of Jesus' most perplexing parables. The dishonest manager is not an obvious model of virtue. He is, in fact, wasteful with what is not his. He is accused of squandering, caught, and summoned to give an account. Knowing he is about to be removed, he uses his final moments of authority to forgive debts – not for moral reasons, but to make sure others will welcome him later.

It's a story full of tension, ambiguity, and reversal. Yet buried within it is a teaching that speaks powerfully to our present age and the calling on all our lives to care for God's world. It is a parable about management – about what we do with what isn't ours, about acting wisely, even under judgment, and about seeing wealth, not as an end in itself, but as a tool for shaping relationships and the future.

The earth is not ours. That much the biblical tradition affirms without hesitation. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it," says the Psalmist. And humanity, placed in the garden as we understand it from Genesis, is not called on *to own*, *but to tend*. To serve and keep, not to dominate and exploit. If the dishonest manager's failing was to waste his master's resources, then we are not far from the same charge.

The natural world groans under the burden of what we have extracted, burned, polluted, and discarded. Forests are razed to feed demand. Waters rise, carrying away homes. Heatwaves spread across continents. These are not distant headlines. They are the accounts being tallied up. They are the signs that the system we have built is not sustainable – not for creation, and not for us. The parable, unsettling as it may be, reminds us that all of this is under scrutiny.

But Jesus does not tell this story only to highlight mismanagement. He draws attention to the manager's unexpected wisdom – not in deceit, but in *urgency*. Faced with a reckoning, the man acts decisively. He uses what little time and power he has left to alter the future. He recognises that the system as it stands is coming to an end, and so he shifts course.

There is wisdom here for those who seek peace with creation. The climate crisis is not just a scientific concern or political challenge. It is a *moment of reckoning* for how we relate to the world and to one another. We are not called to panic, but we are called to act. Not with denial or despair, but with *clarity and purpose*. Like the manager, we have a chance to use what influence remains – not to protect our comfort, *but to care for what truly matters*.

Jesus says that if we cannot be trusted with what belongs to another, who will give us true riches? Creation care is about so much more than carbon footprints. It is about *faithfulness*. About recognising that the earth is not our possession but our charge. And that faithfulness requires attention to the systems we participate in – economic, industrial, agricultural, and personal. These are the tools with which we shape futures, whether we mean to or not.

The parable ends with a stark truth: no one can serve two masters. We cannot serve both God and wealth. There is no neutrality here. If accumulation becomes our aim, then we will bend everything – including the earth – to that desire. But if communion with God becomes our aim, we will find ourselves drawn into a different kind of economy – one rooted in gratitude, humility, justice, and care.

Throughout this Season of Creation, we are seeing afresh that God is not absent from the ecological crisis. God is the potter, still shaping. God is the shepherd, still seeking what is being lost. And now, God is the master who watches how we handle what is not our own. In each case, we are reminded that our choices matter. That we are not simply spectators to creation, but active participants in its healing – or indeed in its harm.

This third week calls us to accountability, but not condemnation. It calls us to take stock of what has been entrusted to us: land, air, water, food, time, money, influence. Not to hoard them, but to use them in ways that honour the Creator and care for creation. We are being invited into a wiser, humbler, more faithful stewardship.

The future is not fixed. The hands that shaped the stars have not withdrawn and the Spirit still moves over the face of the earth, breathing new life into what we have neglected. We cannot undo all that has been done, but we can live in ways that signal another kingdom. A kingdom not built on abundance shared not extraction,. Built on restoration not exploitation.

This is what it means to serve God, not wealth. To act wisely, even now. To live as if the earth were not our possession, but our inheritance, and our gift to those who follow. Amen.

Intercessions Week Three

Let us pray to the God of all creation,
who gives to his people the earth in trust, not as a possession.

Creator God,
we thank you for the beauty and wonder of the world you have made –
for oceans and rivers, hills and forests, skies full of stars and the breath of morning.
May your Church live as faithful stewards of the world you have entrusted to our care.
Teach us to use our influence wisely, not to accumulate, but to heal and to share.
Give courage to churches around the world as they witness to your kingdom
in how they live, spend, and speak.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Sustaining God,
we pray for those in positions of power in our economy, our industries, and our
communities.
Grant wisdom to those making decisions about energy, land, water, and food.
Shape public policy in ways that honour your creation and protect the vulnerable.
Where there is waste, bring accountability.
Where there is inertia, stir imagination.
Where there is harm, lead the way to healing.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Gracious God,
we remember all who are already paying the price of environmental breakdown –
communities losing homes to rising seas, families facing drought and failed harvests,
species under threat, ecosystems in collapse.
We ask for justice, not only in words, but in choices –
that the wealth of your earth would no longer be used at the cost of its life.
Turn our hearts from indifference and awaken in us a longing for restoration.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Loving God,
we give thanks for those who model faithful stewardship –
for scientists, campaigners, farmers, teachers, and children
whose lives point to better ways of living.
Bless their efforts and protect their hope.
Give each of us the will to begin with what we have –
our homes, our habits, our prayers, our voices.
Help us to see the connections between faith and finance,
between daily choices and eternal values.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Welcoming God,
as we celebrate this Season of Creation,
draw us deeper into the mystery of your love that holds all things together.
Help us to live not as owners, but as guests.
Not as masters, but servants and fellow travellers.
That we may serve you, not wealth,
and leave behind not destruction, but blessing.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Study Questions

1. Jesus tells a story about a manager who uses his limited time and influence to prepare for an uncertain future. In what ways might this parable challenge how we use our resources, time, money, skills, in response to today's ecological crisis?
2. The parable does not offer a simple moral judgment but highlights the urgency of acting wisely and decisively. How might this sense of urgency shape how we approach caring for creation in our homes, churches, and communities?
3. Verse 13 contrasts serving God with serving wealth. How might devotion to consumerism or material security hinder our ability to live in right relationship with the earth and its people?
4. In what ways can we be faithful with "very little", as verse 10 describes, when it comes to our own lives?
5. The parable implies that wisdom sometimes lies in unexpected places. Where do you see signs of wisdom or prophetic action about creation care arising outside of traditional religious spaces, and what might we learn from these sources?

Week Four: *Climate Justice*

Sunday 28th September 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Jeremiah 32.1–3a, 6–15; 1 Timothy 6.6–19; Luke 16.19–31

Collect

Lord of justice and compassion,
you created the world in goodness and love
and made us to care with compassion for your earth and each other:
Forgive our neglect of creation and our indifference to suffering,
stir-up in us a hope that acts, a faith that speaks,
and a love that crosses every boundary.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who came to bring good news to the poor
and to restore all things in you,
Amen.

Sermon *Luke 16.19–31*

The story Jesus tells in Luke 16 begins with distance. Not geographical distance, but the chasm between lives lived beside one another yet untouched by each other's reality. The rich man lives with every comfort, dressed in luxury and dining daily. Just outside his gate lies Lazarus, hungry, sick, and ignored. It is not a story of cruelty in action, but of compassion withheld – of the daily decision not to see.

This final Sunday in the Season of Creation with this passage invites us to reflect on climate justice. Throughout the season, we have considered our relationship with the natural world: how it is shaped, how it is broken, and how it might be healed. Now, our focus turns to the people already bearing the brunt of a damaged planet – especially the poor and the vulnerable who, like Lazarus, find themselves at the gates of plenty, overlooked and unheard.

The reality of climate change is not abstract. It is visible in retreating glaciers, scorching temperatures, floods that wash through towns and villages, droughts that leave fields barren. But perhaps most painfully, it is experienced most by those least responsible for its causes. Entire communities are being displaced by rising seas. Livelihoods based on farming or fishing are crumbling due to changing weather patterns. Access to water, food, and shelter – already fragile for many – is becoming more precarious leading to warfare and famine.

Many of the world's poorest communities live in regions most exposed to environmental collapse. They bring deep knowledge of the land and resourcefulness shaped by generations of experience. Yet the scale and speed of climate change pose challenges no one should face alone. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and

degraded ecosystems are pushing people beyond what traditional practices can sustain. Families are making difficult choices – protecting their children, feeding their communities, preserving their cultures – often with little external support. The task before us is not to act on their behalf, but to work alongside them in love, the *agape* love Jesus tells us is the mark of the Christian community, sharing resources and standing together for a just and sustainable future for all.

The parable Jesus tells in this passage does not explain everything about poverty, but it does shine a spotlight on indifference. The rich man does not harm Lazarus. He simply does not respond. The gate between them becomes a silent witness to a relationship that never formed. What is troubling is not just the wealth but the refusal to recognise a neighbour.

It is a story that challenges not only personal morality but structural inaction. Unknowingly and knowingly it is the wealthy nations of this world – us – who have consumed vast tracts of land and changed the climate. Yet those with the fewest emissions – those with the smallest ecological footprint – are the ones bearing the brunt of the effects losing their homes, crops and health.

But the Gospel of Jesus does not stop at guilt. It always calls us beyond it – into confession, repentance, and hopeful action. Christian hope is not passive. It is not wishful thinking. It is the firm belief that God is still at work in the world, and that those who follow Christ are called to take part in that renewing work.

Hope can feel fragile when faced with the scale of environmental loss. Species vanish. Forests burn. Coral reefs bleach and crumble. But even here, hope can and does take root through faithful action to make a difference, inspired by the knowledge that God does not abandon creation. The Spirit of God that hovered over the waters at creation still breathes through the Earth today, healing, restoring and *inspiring* the Church to make a difference.

Our call is to refuse complacency, to be attentive and to have courage. Unlike the rich man of the parable, it means paying attention to the voices of those already affected by the coming storm. It means changing how we consume, how we waste, how we vote, *and* how we live as Christian brothers and sisters, blood relations in Christ, to those in peril now.

Knowing that it is our sister and our brother in peril now moves the call to change from a nice idea to an urgent necessity. Always it means remembering that creation is not a backdrop to our lives. It is the common home of humanity along with the rest of creation.

And there are good news stories. Around the world, churches are acting, planting trees, restoring land, helping communities adapt to the changing climate. In Rwanda churches are working with communities to promote agriculture resilient to climate change. In Zambia, Malawi and Burundi faith communities are partnering to develop solar powered micro grids, helping rural communities to become self-reliant in clean power,. A Rocha Ghana is working with communities to restore mangrove forests,

restoring nature and improving the livelihood of communities. A Rocha Peru is working with communities to protect the endangered Pacific Dry Forest and benefit the lives of low income families. A Rocha Australia is working with the Ngarrindjeri First Nations in coastal restoration. These are not grand gestures. They are faithful ones. Through A Rocha UK and Eco Church we can be part of this movement here, helping to restore the UK for nature, one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

The rich man asks, too late, for someone to warn his family. But the truth has already been spoken – through Moses, the prophets, and now the gospel of Christ. We are not waiting for more information. We are called to discernment, humility, and action. The gate need not, *should not*, remain closed.

Hope, then, is not a soft word. It is a brave one. It looks honestly at the pain of creation and chooses to care. It listens for the voice of the Spirit in groaning ecosystems and grieving communities. It refuses to look away.

As this Season of Creation ends, may we carry forward not only our love for the beauty of the Earth, but a deep commitment to justice for those most affected by its wounding. May we listen, act and pray. Not out of fear, but out of love. Not with despair, but with hope grounded in the God who makes all things new.

Amen.

Intercessions Week Four

Let us pray for the world, the Church, and all creation.

Creator God,
we praise you for the beauty and complexity of the world you have made.
Open our eyes to see creation not as a backdrop
but as the shared home of all living things.
Help us to treasure its diversity, protect its fragility,
and honour your presence within it.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

God of justice,
we bring before you those already suffering the effects of climate breakdown:
communities uprooted by rising seas, families living through drought and hunger,
children robbed of a secure future.
Strengthen those working for adaptation and restoration.
May we not look away, but rather choose instead to act in love and solidarity.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

God of wisdom,
guide governments, corporations, and institutions
to choose policies that honour both people and planet.

Give courage to decision-makers
to work for the common good, not short-term gain.
We pray for those preparing for the November
UN Climate Change Conference in Brazil,
Bless those seeking solutions
frustrate the plans of those seeking to derail the talks
May the Church be a voice of hope, and a witness to justice.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

God of community,
bless those within the global Church who are
restoring land, planting trees, conserving water,
and walking alongside the most vulnerable.
Bless the work of our own church in... and through...
Help us as a Christian community to understand that this is a call for all to act on

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

God of all comfort,
we hold before you those who grieve –
for lost homes, broken landscapes, and endangered species.
Sustain them with your Spirit, and kindle in all of us
a deep and joyful hope in your promise to make all things new.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

.

Study Questions Week Four

1. What are the “gates” in our society today that separate comfort from crisis?
Where do we find ourselves sitting?
2. The rich man’s failure is not cruelty but inaction. What kinds of climate-related suffering are easy for us to ignore?
3. In what ways can our church grow in practical solidarity with those most affected by climate breakdown?
4. The sermon spoke of hope as an active choice. What does hope look like in the face of climate grief or despair?
5. What local or global stories of environmental action encourage you personally?
6. How can the teaching of this parable shape our priorities as individuals, households, and a church community?