



What's a Christian to do about Climate Change?

Personal responsibility

Opening Prayer

God of all Creation,
 Source of life and blessing,
 of garden, orchard, field:
 Root us in obedience to you
 and nourish us by your ever-flowing Spirit
 that, perceiving only the good we might do,
 our lives may be fruitful,
 our labor productive,
 and our service useful,
 in communion with Jesus, our brother.

Amen.

Bible Study - Luke 12:13-21

(New Revised Standard Version) – 10-15 min.

Ask one person to read the parable.

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” ¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷ And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

Pause for several minutes of silence as a group to reflect on your hearing.

Another person reads the short commentary.

Commentary: Arland J. Hultgren comments that the parable "provides an example of what one ought not to be like. The person whose identity is tied up with his or her possessions, status, and/or achievements—and is driven by acquiring them—can so easily end up unaware of the call of God and the need of the neighbor."

The farmer's conversation with himself is self-centered: first-person pronouns occur 11 times. As an interior monologue, it serves as a narrative device to inform the reader of a character's tragic flaw, -- in this case, the rich man's overweening confidence or hubris.

[Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*, Eerdmans, 2002, ISBN 0-8028-6077-X, pp. 104-109.]

Discussion: What are ways we might store up treasures for ourselves and fail to be rich toward God?

Slide Presentation: (25 min.) <https://youtu.be/ax2nSOktUR4>

Overview [1-4]

⇒ How do you connect with God's creation? (discuss, 3-5 min.) [5]

Why is climate change so difficult for us? [6-10]

- ⇒ What signs in our society do you see that we may be awakening to the reality of the climate crisis?
- ⇒ Why has it been so difficult to acknowledge?
- ⇒ What does it mean to say that ethics for our time has become utterly practical?
- ⇒ Why are the impacts of our actions on the natural world a moral issue?

Insights about Personal Impact [11-25]

- ⇒ What are parts of your climate footprint?
- ⇒ What are the major impacts of individual actions on the climate?

How you can make a difference [26-38]

- ⇒ How can Sustain Island Home help individuals combine their actions to influence powers of communities, corporations and nations?
- ⇒ Has your parish joined the Episcopal church's www.SustainIslandHome.org?
- ⇒ How is stewardship part of our Baptismal promises?
- ⇒ How is it part of the climate justice movement?
- ⇒ Where do you see opportunities to live more simply so that others may simply live?

What will you do? [40]

- ⇒ What actions would you like to take personally and as a parish to do your part for care of creation?
- ⇒ What are your next steps?

Concluding Prayer

Prayer for Stewardship

God of all Creation,

At the beginning of time

You placed a single mandate on humankind

To be stewards of Creation

To replenish and nurture all generations

What you have made.

We kneel today amid that same Creation-

A world that is, in many ways, more splendid than ever

But, in too many ways, scarred beyond recognition.

Turn us from our un-mindfulness

Help our touch be light

Help us renew the world that supports us

So we may once more know Creation

As it was in the beginning. Amen

[by Catholic Relief Services]

Resources

- Sustain Island Home www.SustainIslandHome.org with additional guidance about parish start up see www.diocal.org/climate.
- Awareness of climate change and call to stewardship from multiple faith traditions (see book “Rooted and Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis,” by Leah D. Schade and Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, 2019)
- Presentations and discussions about climate change and creation care in 2020 (see recorded webinar series sponsored by St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church, Mountain View, CA, at www.sttims.org/creationcare/)
- Regenerative agriculture as a tool to sequester carbon (see the documentary: “Kiss the Ground,” Netflix)