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Christians should help take care of environment

By Ryan Bennett

Message of the week

Concern over environmental stewardship is often politicized in our society. When issues like global warming or drilling for oil come up, we draw our political lines. However, as Christians, is this the only way to address environmental concerns? Does environmental stewardship have to go to one of the extremes? Stewardship of the environment should be something that all Christians are concerned with as it is an integral part of our faith.

From the very beginning, humanity is given the charge to "be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves over the face of the earth." (Genesis 1:28, The Message) Adam was put into the garden to care for it, not to exploit it (Genesis 2:15). And in the 24th Psalm, the Psalmist writes "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." This creation we live in belongs to God. Our job is to rule over it wisely.

In the church, we speak often about stewardship of our monies and stewardship of our time and talents and resources, but what about stewardship of the environment? This is part of who we are as followers of the creator of the universe.

Jesus offered that the whole of the law is summed up in loving God with all of our heart, soul, and mind and also in loving our neighbors as ourselves. Environmental stewardship shows a love of God by caring for and ruling over wisely God's creation that was pronounced good.

A disregard for the state of God's creation shows a lack of love for the creator. We appreciate the glory of a beautiful sunset so we need to prevent smog from wiping it out. We enjoy the majesty of God's mountains so we take steps to prevent them being blown up in the name of business. We look forward to spending time on rivers, lakes and oceans so we keep them from being polluted. This earth is on loan from God so we are responsible to show our love of God by how we care for it.

If we loan a car to a friend, would we want it back with dents in the hood, gum in the seats, and the gas tank empty? We should extend the same courtesies to God's creation as we would want extended to us.

Environmental stewardship also demonstrates loving neighbor as self. The impact of being good stewards of the environment goes beyond self, showing a love for not only those who we share the earth with now, but also those who will inherit the earth from us.

Disregard for our water supplies, air supplies, and the food supplies of the earth show a lack of love for neighbor. Conversely, a care for these very things shows a deep care and concern for our neighbors.

Care for creation is an integral part of who we are as followers of God. Let us show our love for God by ruling over this creation wisely.