

One Earth, One Chance

1. Warm up: What's one of the most beautiful sites you've ever seen on planet earth?
2. On Sunday Rev. David Radcliff shared two different sermons. In our conversation today, we'll explore both, starting with his early service sermon. There, David shared some astounding statistics. Earth has 70% fewer wild creatures now than it did 60 years ago. Of the 460 million tons of plastic manufactured each year, only 8% is recycled. Styrofoam will live forever in landfills, never dissolving. The carbon footprint of a typical person in Malawi is 0.3 tons per year versus 17 tons for the typical American. Sustaining the consumption of the average American for just one year requires the extraction of 25 tons of stuff from the earth (coal, oil, gas, minerals, etc). For just one person! Climate change is expected to result in one billion refugees by 2050.
 - a. When you hear the foregoing statistics, what do you feel?
 - b. Why do you think we humans keep procrastinating and refusing to get serious about the damage we're doing to our environment? What are the human motivations or quirks behind our reluctance?
 - c. David asked, "Will we get our act together in time to avoid catastrophe?" What do you think?
3. David said, "We're the only creature knowingly doing ourselves in, but Jesus wants to help us," then pointed us to Matthew 6:25-33. Let's read it together, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. In this passage, Jesus challenges us to dial back our consumption by becoming less focused on materialism. David summed it up this way: "Here Jesus is telling us that we are more than what we drink, drive, and drool over." Do you feel that's a fair interpretation of the passage? If so, why do you think Jesus was so concerned about warning us against materialism? What's so bad about it?
 - b. Every year, advertisers in America spend an average of \$1,200 per person trying to convince us that we need more. By one estimate, we encounter 10,000 marketing images each day. How do you think that affects us? Do you think it affects you? Why or why not?
 - c. David said that if everyone on the planet consumed as much as we Americans do, we'd need five more planets to sustain us. Are we consuming too much?
 - d. In your view, is consumption a matter of morality? Why or why not?
 - e. David encouraged us to strive to make a shift from "Me, More, Now" to "Us, Enough, Tomorrow." What do you think he meant? Do you agree that we need to make that shift? If so, where might you start?

- f. David is the modern-day equivalent of a prophet, and prophets are often eccentric to the point of shocking us. David told how, when he goes into a fast food place, he fishes an old plastic cup out of the trash can, washes it in the restroom, then reuses it! When you hear that, how does it affect you?
- g. When asked what practical steps we can take to better care for our planet, David replies, “Cars, Cows, Coal, and Consumption.”
 - Cars – Drive less and/or drive something that will give more miles to the gallon – or go electric.
 - Cows: Eat less meat. (Livestock have a significant negative impact on our environment.)
 - Coal: AES still generates much of Indy’s electricity at a coal-powered plant. So strive to use less electricity where you can (by turning off lights, unplugging things not in active use, and tweaking your home thermostat).
 - Consumption: Use things until they wear out instead of replacing older items that still function well.

If you were to take one more step to better care for our planet, what might that be?

4. Now let’s read together the scripture passage that anchored David’s second sermon – Mark 15:1-15, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. When Jesus appeared on the scene, he boldly challenged the social status quo which was organized around rank, privilege, gender, and tradition. Both the religious authorities and the crowds that gathered at Jesus trial felt so threatened by Jesus, they concluded, in David’s words, “We cannot tolerate a free Jesus. We’d rather have Jesus on the cross than Jesus on the loose.” What are some of the ways Jesus was challenging the social status quo?
 - b. Jesus paid a heavy price for bucking the status quo. It ultimately got him crucified. But he didn’t stop there. He now challenges each of us to “take up your cross and follow me.” Luke 14:27. What does that mean? And how do you think that way of being affect our happiness and quality of life?
 - c. David told the story of a girl named Olivia who challenged Girl Scouts of America to stop selling cookies that contain palm oil because it’s manufactured with child labor and is ruining the habitat for orangutangs in Borneo. Olivia got ostracized from the Girl Scouts. She also discovered that her beloved Skittles and Oreos also contain palm oil, so she gave them up too. David later asked Olivia how she felt about all she had lost. She replied, “When I realize I’m helping creatures keep their habitat and saving kids from slave labor, I feel pretty good.” Following Jesus means making sacrifices for the greater good. David said, “Pick your passion and dive deep.” What’s something you’re willing to do to further justice in this world that requires at least some measure of sacrifice on your part?

Matthew 6:25-33

25 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mark 15:1-15

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶ Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead.

¹²Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' ¹³They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' ¹⁴Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.