



SEASON OF CREATION

SEPTEMBER 1- OCTOBER 4

SERMON NOTES WEEK 5

Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32 Matthew 21:23-32

ECS STAFF

“You’ll die of old age, but we’ll die of climate change” - is one of the grimmer and more popular banner slogans you’ll see in protests by youth movements such as Fridays for Future. I’ve encountered those in older generations who - sympathetically - agree with this general point: that generations born after the (initial) damage has been done carry a disproportionate burden of the effects caused within the lifetime of those now looking to retirement, and the several generations preceding. And yet this responsibility is carried by every current participant in our culture of the Global North. Grandparents, in their youth, likely trashed and wasted less and used less plastic than the grandchildren who are already suffering the consequences.

EcoCongregation Scotland has attracted and benefitted from the commitment of those who take seriously their responsibility to generations to come.

But maybe it's not that simple.

It's tempting just to look back to the choking pollution of the industrial revolution over two hundred years ago, leading into 'Victoria's inferno' as experienced in some of the more intensive industrial sites, but that would be to miss the scale and urgency of our current situation, with vastly greater human populations and levels of industrialisation and use of fossil fuels, let alone the obscene waste of lives and resources in every military conflict: (not just Ukraine, but also Iraq) where Creation is also the first casualty.

In amongst the disabling 'unfairness' a given generation might either feel or own up to, we need to hear God's all-embracing concern: "Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine." The life of all flesh, with whom God makes covenant; of the flesh that John's Gospel says the Word became, and which we share with so much life.

Jesus' exchange with the Temple authorities "the chief priests and elders of the people" seems at first glance to be a PR battle. But we also see it in some academic debate. Those beautiful games where the truth is valued less than the skills and intimidating entitlement that ensure debate is carried. And where, alarmingly, sincerity and loyalty can be twisted into opposition to truth. It should be tragically familiar. Today, hypocrisy of setting net zero targets - then evading or postponing them - is **not** redeemed by being "in the best possible cause". Energy security is not guaranteed by renewed and additional investment in what absolutely and morally needs to end. Nor can short-term economics or offers of jobs in new fossil fuel exploration

excuse what the UN Secretary General called such “moral and economic madness”

The speed of change and the urgency of action - as well as the value of a change of heart and life - mean that all generations are engaged and affected by the challenges of our day. All are called together to embrace justice at all levels. Whatever the level of your burden and responsibility, and whatever the particular circumstances of your location, no one is exempt or ‘off the hook’, but neither is anyone excused from care and consideration for fellow creatures - including human ones! God does not ‘cry wolf’ : warnings ignored do indeed lead to disaster, and what matters for every generation now living, is the practicalities of current and future action, rather than getting bogged down in what might have been.