

Sermon: Want Not; Waste Not: A Call to live Responsible Christian Life

Text: Colossians 1:15-20. Key Verse 16.

Introduction

We are to take not what we WANT but what we NEED. Selfishness and greed are the enemies of life. In the plan of God, every creature has a purpose and therefore everything is good in His sight. It is God's will that life is interdependent on each other because one cannot live without others. Every creature depends on every other creature. In other words, human beings needs the rest of God's creation for their own survival. For this very reason, we must not waste but learn to live a responsible Christian life humbly before God. In this short reflection, we shall see how Paul explains this in Colossians 1:15-20.

The selected passage for our Eco-Sunday 2018 speaks about the work of God through Jesus that we don't give much attention to (Vs 16). Paul clearly mentions in this passage that it was through and for Jesus that the entire creation was made. That is to say that the entire creation is good because they all have a purpose and that must not be forgotten. We shall draw four crucial points from this passage that would help us avoid the sins of greed and waste.

Firstly, Jesus is the image of the invisible God (vs 15). God the Creator of all things is full of love, mercy, kindness, compassion, just, and omnipresent but He is invisible. The Lord Jesus Christ is the visible image of God and in Him and through Him, we see that invisible God. In other words, what we see in Jesus is who God is and what He did for us - his love, action, suffering and death on the cross for the sake of others.

Most Christians don't ask or don't dare to ask, 'who is God or where is God' but we all search for God one way or the other. In times of crisis and various pressures of life, some resort to drinking or drug to escape the reality of life and others resort to religion for solution. While some find temporary happiness in what they are doing, others never find peace of mind. The Bible says that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God and in Him we find God. In other words, in Jesus we find God Himself.

Secondly, by being the image of the invisible God, Jesus became the first born of all that were created (vs 15-16). The first born here means the first visible image of God's goodness that was to be followed by the rest of God's goodness in and through creation. In other words, God's goodness is revealed to us firstly in Jesus and then in creation. John 1:3 says, 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' and what is created through Jesus is explained from verses 16-18, that is, 'things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.' Everything that has been created has been created through Jesus.

Since all things have been created through Jesus, He is the head of all things, having the supremacy over all creation. This also means that since all things were created through him and for him, every creation is good in the sight of God both those in heaven and earth, visible and invisible. They are good because every creation has a purpose of existence in the plan of God. This is further reflected in Peter's vision in Acts 10:15 where he was repeatedly told not to call any creature unclean because, in God's sight, everything is clean. Human beings have no right to call something unclean that which is cleansed by God. There is no creation that should be considered useless or wasted because God creates all and call them good.

Thirdly, God makes peace with creation through Jesus (vs 19-20). God in Jesus accepts and find favour in Creation. The Scripture says, 'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' Here, we can see two important things; one, the supremacy of Jesus above all things because He is the first born of all and two, God's establishment of peace not only with the repentant human beings but also with nature. In other words, salvation became possible through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross and that affects not only human beings but also the entire creation. Paul's letter to Romans 8:21 says, 'the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.' This clearly shows that the entire creation is the object of God's love and salvation. In the salvation of God's children, the original plan of God will be restored where there is no suffering and death for God's creation.

Fourthly, if all things were created through and for Jesus and God calls them good, we are to take not what we WANT but what we NEED. Selfishness and greed are sin against God's plan. In the plan of God, every creature has a purpose and therefore, everything is good in His sight. It is God's will that we are interdependent on each other. Every creature depends on every creature! In other words, human beings needs the rest of God's creation for their own survival. It is with this understanding that we have to understand our place in God's creation and discern how we should relate to the rest of creation. We need to relate to the rest of God's creation, our own brothers and sisters, in the way that God's intention for their existence is not forgotten. God created everything in the beginning and He continues to preserve them even during Noah's time so that we as His creatures interdepend on each other for our survival and thereby glorify His name. This demands from us a sense of owe, because creation is part of us, revealing God's beauty and goodness in them; care for creation, because our survival depends on creation and moreover, God's plan of salvation includes nature; interdependence, because creation belongs to God and we have no right to destroy them as we wish and finally; avoid the sin of consumerist culture and waste, because we are accountable to God's own resources that we wasted. Remember, stuff may be sold in the market or freely available for consumption but when you take it, it becomes your responsibility to see that is being used justifiably. This reminds us of the danger of today's idol and idol worship in the nature of ideology that emphasizes individual and individualism in the society. The notion that supports a worldview 'I can survive myself without others' and 'what I want I should have it' are against the will of God.

Conclusion

Dear friends, we are called to love the Lord and do His will. We are called to know the heartbeat of God and imitate what he has done for His creation. God created everything beautiful and they are created with a purpose. God's heart pains when the beauty of His creation is gone because of human action and nature cannot play her role for which they are being created. God's heart pains when the air can no longer support life because of deadly pollution; God's heart pains when the balanced eco-system is disrupted due to human greed and search for material wealth and pleasure; God's heart pains when human beings resentfully live as if they can survive without others; God's heart pains when the supremacy of Christ is rejected; God's heart pains when God's valuable resources are being wasted because of our selfishness and greed. So, let us acknowledge the divine purpose in creation and learn to live a Christian responsible living by not accumulating what we want but what we need because, selfishness and greed have no place in the vision of God in creation. Want Not; Waste Not!