

# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

JUNE 5<sup>th</sup> 2018

Jesus said "Let there be no waste" John 6:12



**#BeatPlasticPollution**  
If you can't reuse it, refuse it

**BEAT**  
PLASTIC  
POLLUTION



WORLD  
ENVIRONMENT  
DAY

**UN**   
environment

[www.worldenvironmentday.global](http://www.worldenvironmentday.global)

# World Environment Day 2018 Waste

## *Texts*

Isaiah 24:1-13  
Psalm 65:9-13  
1 Corinthians 5:14-17  
John 6:1-15

## *Introduction*

In a world where plastic bottles clog up a pristine beach, where dyes are simply poured into the nearest river after the process of dyeing has been completed, where mountains are being built with the waste that is generated from human habitations, at some point the question has to be asked, "Is this what God intended?" And if the answer is "No!" then we are dealing with sin.

## *Hearing the Word*

### **Comments on Isaiah 24: 1-13**

The prophecy of Isaiah presents a bleak picture of an earth that has been polluted and dried up

"The earth is polluted by its people.  
They haven't obeyed the laws of the Lord."

The Earth and its people are suffering the consequences of breaking God's commandment to be good stewards of Creation.

In Genesis 2 God put Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden to 'take care of it'. Then sin entered into the garden of Eden, the devil tempted them to take the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and three relationships were broken down because of their disobedience:

- their relationship with God;
- their relationship with each other;
- their relationship with the land.

Whereas before they walked and talked with God, now they hide from him in fear and shame. Whereas they were in harmony with each other, walking naked, now they hide their sexuality in shame, and soon violence enters this dysfunctional family.

And now their relationship with the land is destroyed – whereas before they ate freely of the good fruits and vegetables, and drank pure water,

"Cursed is the ground because of you, through painful toil you will eat of it, it will produce thorns and thistles"

We do not treat the land as part of God's creation, to care for and to nurture it. When we create piles of waste we are not being good stewards. Our waste pollutes water, the land and kills animals, fish and birds. According to the World Health Organisation, one in eight deaths globally are caused by air pollution. The Gauteng province has one of the worst air pollution levels in the world. The United Nations Millennium Eco-System Assessment...has confirmed "for the first

time that 60% of the eco-systems that human systems depend on for survival are degraded and that the damage is largely irreversible."

### **Comments on 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17**

Paul tells the church at Corinth that one died for all and therefore all died. Since Christ died for all, we should no longer live for ourselves, but instead live for Christ, who died for us and was raised again. Paul discusses our earthly and heavenly requirements and concludes the brief passage by telling us that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come."

It is time for change and to live in a different way. Our environmental stewardship is part of our being with Christ and being part of the new order. Recycling is part of nature and an important part of the concept of sustainability. We cannot have a sustainable society if we use things once and throw them away. We need to adopt the old standard, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without." Recycling programmes mimic the recycling that goes on in nature, where nothing is wasted and everything, even things that die, serve a useful purpose.

### **Comments on John 6: 1-15**

In this well known story of the feeding of the five thousand, we often hear of the miracle that took place. Jesus miraculously provided food for over 5000 people from a few loaves and fishes. What we often don't think about is what happened to the waste? Conferences and workshops leave us with left-over food, and piles of rubbish.

So what did Jesus say that day?

When they had all had enough to eat, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." (John 6:13)

They gathered up twelve baskets of leftovers. I wonder what happened to those left-overs? Surely there were some very grateful people who had food on their plates that night. Jesus didn't have the nightmare we often face of piles of polystyrene containers and bags of litter. But God's message is the same to-day "let nothing be wasted!" It would have been easy for him to repeat the miracle and to provide more food, but his concern was that there should be no waste. Those 12 baskets of left-overs would be used to feed the hungry and the vulnerable, those left behind who were perhaps not fit enough to walk the distance to hear Jesus preach.

## *Preaching the Word*

Why is waste so important?

Firstly, we are called to be stewards of the earth and its resources. Landfills are being filled up and new land being taken over for the storage of waste. The cost of collecting waste is astronomical – the City of Cape Town spends R220, 000 per week on its 750 trucks that

move up and down collecting waste, money which could be used for other needs.

Secondly - we owe it to our children and grandchildren. The Great commandment calls us to love God and our neighbour. This includes our neighbours in generations to come. Whatever ends up in landfill stays there for a long, long time. For instance a milk carton takes 5 years to decompose, a foam cup takes 50 years, a plastic bottle 450 years, a "disposable" nappy 550 years, and a plastic bag between 200 to 1000 years. What will your great, great, great grandchildren feel when they see your plastic bottle still here in 2314!!

Thirdly we are called to feed the hungry. Recycling can create jobs, often for the most vulnerable. Nationally, recycling has created over 29000 jobs, and created R15.3 Billion in the last year. So if we just throw our waste away we are throwing away job opportunities for many people

"Let nothing be wasted" - what can I do?

First of all, reduce! Ask yourself – do I really need to buy that item? Can I do without or re-use what I already have? For example, why not buy yourself a bottle to carry water and give up on buying bottled water! Buy a fabric bag to take for grocery shopping.

Secondly – give away ! What you think is junk is a treasure to someone else – clear out your cupboards and give away old clothes, toys and general stuff!

Thirdly find a way to recycle – can your church take this issue seriously? This is a service you can offer to the community and to the planet.

### ***Living the Word***

Ask the congregation, youth or Sunday school to come to church wearing green.

- Prepare posters the week before that say "REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE"
- Hold a 'recycled fashion show' after church.
- Plan a clean-up day and announce it at the service.
- Launch an ongoing recycling drive –
- Decorate the church or foyer with recycled goods

### **Suggested Songs for the Service**

- All creatures of our God and king
- All things bright and beautiful
- Beauty for brokenness (God of the poor)  
Graham Kendrick
- For the beauty of the earth
- For the healing of the nations
- We are standing on holy ground.
- Who will save our Land and people  
John B Gardner
- Plea for Africa

# Liturgy for World Environment Day: Plastic Waste

## **Texts:**

Isaiah 24:1-13

Psalm 65:9-13

1 Corinthians 5:14-17

John 6:1-15

## **1. Gathering in God's Name**

### **Act of Penitence**

God our creator,

we confess that we have not been good stewards  
of your creation.

We have wasted your resources and defiled your land.

We come to you

for healing from our spiritual weakness and

for your guidance to find ways to heal our world.

Help us to find ways to lead lives

that respect and revere your creation,

that provide sustainability for future generations

and teach others to respect

the beauty and wonder of your creation.

We ask all of this through Christ our Lord,

**Amen.**

## **2. Proclaiming**

## **3. Responding**

*Suggested prayers from a number of sources*

Lord God our Father

Let our walk this day be

Full of beauty and brightness

**Lord, hear us**

That we may know

Your presence and your peace

**Lord, hear us**

That we may experience

Your grace and your glory

**Lord, hear us**

That we may be at one

With you and your creation

**Lord, hear us**

That we may be aware of you

In and through and above all things.

**Lord, hear us**

**God bless the path on which I go**

**God bless the earth beneath my sole**

**God bless the fellowship that makes us whole**

**Amen**

Giver of Life,

in the midst of a plundered  
earth we groan with creation:

**Have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life,

in the midst of poisoned water  
we groan with creation:

**Have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life,

in the midst of polluted air we  
groan with creation:

**Have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life,

in the midst of mountains of waste

we groan with creation:

**Have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life,

in the midst of a world of war

we groan with creation:

**Have mercy on us.**

Giver of Life,

we who are made in the image of God have gone  
astray,

and creation groans with us:

**Have mercy on us.**

*Source: Worshipping Ecumenically, WCC Publications*

## **A prayer for recycling**

We thank you for the resources of the world,

and for the many goods available to us.

Grant us wisdom and restraint in our spending and  
consumption;

grant us inspiration in the re-use and recycling of  
resources.

Bless those who collect our waste and those who work  
to recycle it

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

*Source: Diocese of Newcastle*

Living God

Where there is waste, let us bring recycling,

Where there is recycling, let us bring reuse,

Where there is reuse, let us bring sustainability,

Where there is sustainability, let us bring justice

Where there is justice, let us bring love

*Source: John Polhill ( Eggs and Ashes published by Wildgoose),*

## **4. Celebrating at the Table**

## **5. Sending**

Almighty God, we thank you for reminding us of the  
importance of recycling as part of a new creation. We

pray this day that we will go out into the world and

spread the Good News about the wonders of God's

creation to our friends and relatives and all that we

meet. We ask all of this through Christ our Lord

**Amen**

*Music- referring to your own local repertoire:*

Suggested Songs

- All creatures of our God and king
- All things bright and beautiful
- Beauty for brokenness (God of the poor)  
Graham Kendrick

- For the beauty of the earth

- For the healing of the nations

- We are standing on holy ground.

- Plea for Africa

- Who will save our Land and people

John B Gardner

## **Bibliography**

Richard Keller: United Methodist Church "Green  
Church"

Victor Mughogho, address at Anglicans Ablaze