

WOMENS CONFERENCE 2019



VERITAS CHURCH

# Kingdom Work in Creation: Caring for the Earth as God's Royal Servants



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# Goal

Make a case for Creation Care as an integral part of our **vocation** in God's Kingdom

Not: a list of how to be a “Green Christian”

# Outline

- Introductions
- Central theme woven through God's story
  - Vocation of care for creation
- Discussion
- Application

# Introductions / Testimonies



# Our Vocation

**Servant rulers called to bring shalom  
and fruitfulness to God's creation**

## **Psalm 148**

1 Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his hosts!

3 Praise him, sun and moon,  
praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the Lord!  
For he commanded and they were created.

6 And he established them forever and ever;  
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you great sea creatures and all deeps,

8 fire and hail, snow and mist,  
stormy wind fulfilling his word!

9 Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Beasts and all livestock,  
creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and maidens together,  
old men and children!

13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his majesty is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his saints,  
for the people of Israel who are near to him.

Praise the Lord!



CREATION

FALL

REDEMPTION

RESTORATION

CREATION

FALL

INCARNATION  
RESURRECTION

RESTORATION

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# CREATION

God made everything

God finds it good

God holds it all together

Creation is a character in God's story, not merely the stage

Humanity was made in the image of God

**Servant rulers called to bring shalom and fruitfulness to God's creation<sub>11</sub>**

# Imago Dei

## Commands in Genesis

- Be fruitful and multiply
  - (1:28)
- Fill the earth and subdue it
  - (1:28)
- Rule over creation and creatures
  - (1:26, 28)
- Tend and keep
  - (Abad and Shamar; 2:15)
  - Requires knowledge and love!

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# FALL

Humanity rejected our calling, preferring to rule for our own glory and to leave aside bearing God's image

Consequences:

- Death
- Idolatry (other images)
- Broken Relationships
- Creation groans and waits, subjected to futility

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## **Romans 8:18-23**

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

# FALL

Example: Mountaintop removal

Now our calling is an uphill battle: We work against death and decay and the evil of man.

**But we hope for a savior and rest.**

**BEFORE**

Lincoln County, WV

April 2011



**AFTER**

March 2012

Surface Mine No. 45;  
Hobet Mining



**Servant rulers called to bring shalom and fruitfulness to God's creation**

## Isaiah 55

1 Come, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price...

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.



12 For you shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall break forth into singing,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall make a name for the Lord,  
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

# REDEMPTION: INCARNATION

Jesus entered the world, reaffirming the goodness of creation declared in Genesis.

Jesus fulfilled our vocation as the image of the invisible God: living the life we couldn't live, dying the death we should have died, and triumphing over death on the cross.

Jesus brings shalom, defeating death

- Where, O Death, is your sting? Where, O Death, is your victory?

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# REDEMPTION: RESURRECTION

The bodily resurrection of Jesus continues to affirm God's commitment to redeem all of His creation

By His death and resurrection, Jesus inaugurated his rule over all creation, reversing the curse and bringing reconciliation.

Jesus is the *firstborn* from the dead, the first fruits of the resurrection:

- “in Christ, all will be made alive” - 1 Cor 15:20
- We pursue our vocation in confidence, looking to the perfect fulfillment accomplished on our behalf by Jesus

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## **Joy to the World v 2-3**

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields & floods, rocks, hills & plains  
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found.

# RESTORATION

We look forward to the consolidation of Christ's kingdom

- All will be made right and well
- His judgement will end suffering and evil, for no longer will there be any curse (Rev 22:3)
- The curtain between heaven and earth will be torn away:

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## **Revelation 21:3-5**

Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

# RESTORATION: Already/Not Yet

We live in tension: struggling with the remaining reality of the fall, but called to live forward into the truer reality of Christ's kingdom.

We are called to faithfulness and hope as we struggle between these.

Heaven has not yet come to earth for God to dwell with us, but He has already given us his Spirit - an internal foretaste of the external reality for which we long and hope.

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## **Let Creation Rejoice, pg 112**

We are to live “in keeping with creation’s eventual freedom from the futility and ruin that it suffers at our hands...We are called to live now as signposts pointing to the new creation and even as instantiations of the new creation here and now.”



# RESTORATION

Because our vocation is tied to our dominion and image bearing, our redemption spills out into the rest of creation: Creation waits in eager expectation to be brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We are to call all of creation into the proper order ("righteousness") of Christ's coming and present kingdom - not from our own strength but by the indwelling power of the Spirit.

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## Isaiah 61:1-4

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the  
brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to  
those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our  
God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress  
instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness instead of  
mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a  
faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of  
righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, that he  
may be glorified.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former  
devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many  
generations.

# Conclusion

**Servant rulers called to bring shalom and fruitfulness to God's creation**

Our vocation points us to Christ's Kingdom "where righteousness dwells."

Our vocation means all of creation is caught up in God's redemption.

Vocation and image bearing permeate all aspects of our lives.

Vocation looks like discipleship and spiritual disciplines, not a list of how to be a "green Christian"

## **2 Peter 3:13-14**

“But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him”

# Processing/Transition to Application

We just gave you a *lot*. Spend a minute or two thinking about it, and then turn to your neighbor and share what you're thinking.

Does it make sense to you?

Do you have any questions or objections?

# You Already Care for Creation!

What are you already doing to cultivate love for and knowledge of God's creation?

What are you already doing to bring shalom and fruitfulness to God's creation?

Application: Cultivating knowledge of and love for  
God's creation

# Application: Cultivating knowledge of and love for God's creation

## *Ideas*

Diary of what you use and where it comes from (for one week, month, etc)

Spend time outside: sitting, walking, running, biking, etc.

Learn the names of some local birds, plants, insects, rocks, etc.

Grow something! - whether in your yard, or in a pot on your windowsill.



Application: Caring for creation where we live and work

# Application: Caring for creation where we live and work

## *Ideas*

Gardening

Composting (<http://www.thecompostexchange.com/>)

Participate in local ecological projects

[https://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/urban-forestry/Columbus-Ecological-Restoration-Program-\(CERP\)/](https://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/urban-forestry/Columbus-Ecological-Restoration-Program-(CERP)/)

# Application: Caring for creation in general

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## *Ideas*

Consider the environmental or human costs of the products you buy (food, clothes, etc).

Can you switch to less wasteful products? Can you purchase fewer products or used products?

# Application: Caring for creation in general

Consider your “ecological footprint”

- Ecological footprint (<http://www.footprintcalculator.org/>)
- Water footprint (<https://waterfootprint.org/en/water-footprint/>)
- Nitrogen footprint (<http://www.n-print.org/YourNFootprint>)
- Carbon footprint -Ecological footprint  
(<http://www.footprintcalculator.org/>)
- Water footprint (<https://waterfootprint.org/en/water-footprint/>)
- Nitrogen footprint (<http://www.n-print.org/YourNFootprint>)
- Carbon footprint