



1. God's World

It is God's world. He created it. He saw it was good. He made it for our good, for us to enjoy. The grandeur of the mountains, the sweep of the sky, the power of the ocean are all for our enjoyment. I vividly remember a holiday in the Western Highlands of Scotland when the weather was glorious for a fortnight! The beauty of a sunset over a loch, the clear blue water and bright sandy beaches, and the ruggedness of the landscape made the whole experience unforgettable. It is right to take pleasure in these things. That is why God made them.

God also made the earth to provide us with what we need: food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe, as well as the basic materials we need to provide shelter for ourselves and to make life comfortable.

But God made us to take care of the world, not destroy it. If we possessed a great work of art or priceless antique, we would take care of it. We would perhaps polish it, keep it away from too much sunlight, take security measures. But in the earth, we have the most valuable possession possible. And we overuse it to the point of destruction. We need to take care of world, because it is God's creation. He has appointed us as His stewards to look after the earth on his behalf. He will require an account from us of the way we have managed things.

2. God's Nature

Something went wrong. Creation as it is now is not way it was meant to be. Basically, the problem is we went wrong. Paul speaks of all creation, ourselves included, longing to be restored to way God made us: good, loving, kind, just, forgiving. That is how we are meant to be, but we thought we knew better and insisted on doing things our way. Creation was marred by our rebellion and things went wrong. But they can be put right again, because of Jesus. He died on the cross, bearing the penalty our sin deserved, he conquered sin and death by rising to life on the third day, and he poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit upon his people to give us the power to live life as God wishes, and to fill us with the love of God, so God's image can shine through us. But if we want to receive all this, we have to ask. We have to admit we are not good enough by ourselves, that we have not the strength in us to live life God's way without His help, and that we have been wrong to live life our way (and not God's) up to this point. If we do these things, God will forgive all we have done wrong, change us and make us the kind of people He always wanted us to be (more like Jesus) and fill us with a life that will go on past death for all eternity.