

To Care or Not to Care...and to Care about What? – part 2
(Gen.2; A mos; Matt. 20:1-16; 21:33-43; Ja s 5:1-5)

4. The Redeemed are now the Garden of God (Matt. 6:33).

Now believers are the “sacred space” because a way to the tree of life has been made possible. Now believers are called to focus on “serving and preserving” the church of Christ and his temple—our bodies.

We are the care givers of the sacred space and s piritual ecologists spreading God’s garden everywhere by caring for what Christ has died.

Caring is an act of worship, an act of connecting, and an act of reaching.

- As worship care is first sourced from care for God as first priority of the heart. We care because we care about God and the expansion of his glory.

- Care is about protecting and preserving the spiritual Eden each of us are. We are called to be gatekeepers of purity because of and through our connecting to Christ.

- We are each called to extend Eden by living the implications of God in and to our world. Care extends the reach of Eden in obedience to the original design.

4. All creation, ruined by man’s sin, awaits the final hope of our glorious redemption at Christ’s appearing (Rom. 8:19-22).

Since the earth and creation matter then, they need to matter now. The mandate to keep God’s creation “good,” organized and productive (“work and take care of”) has not been rescinded.

Since the order of things mater i al and living devolves into disorder (and ultimately passing away, Rev. 21:1 ,4) man is to bring it under control, utilize the resources (subdue), and domesticate the creatures (rule over) for the benefit of man and glory to God.

Here’s our ecotheology (how I connect Scripture with environment al decisions):

- Creation is “ The Theatre of God’s glory” (Ps . 19:1-4, Calvin) and the first apologetic evidence for God’s existence and nature (Rom. 1:18f) .

- Noah’s ark demonstrates God’s care for bio-diversity (Gen. 6:20-7:3)

- Men’s assignment was steward-caregiver of God’s handiwork (in the best possible scenario) .

- Jesus is the Creator, holding all things together—we need to represent the magnificence of that well as gospel witnesses of the nature of Christ (Col 1:15f) .

- Creation is the property of a nother, not ours to exploit (Ps . 24:1) .

- The gospel is about a total redemption of the cosmos— inaugurated by the Easter event (Rom. 8; Rev. 21) .

- People are “worth more than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31) .

- Eating the creation is what was supposed to happen (Gen. 2:9)—first green plants/fruit and then animals (Gen. 9:3) as a gift by God’s permission .

4. God's garden is expanded by God's people for God's glory when ... (Ja s. 5:1-5).

- We no longer steal from people but work for the purpose of having something left over for those in need (Eph. 4:28) .

- We stop hoarding and start helping those who try so hard but can't make it work (Ja s. 5:3)

- We stop deceiving people by the hypocrisy of having our head in the game but our heart far from God .

- We stop acquiring more because of our addiction to our own comfort at the expense of expanding Eden—people are missing out on the message (Ja s. 5:5) .

- We no longer lack dedication to the productivity of Eden by deceiving people through the fine print, who aren't getting what they paid for because of our bad workmanship .

- We finally stop walking by the Lazarus' on our way to our third house because what we do pays ten times more than what he gets paid even though he works very hard (Ja s. 5:4) .

You and I will never care until we really care about God. Do not be deceived, any lack of care for what God cares about is a low level alarm measuring a dangerous spiritual deficiency.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (James 1:27).