

Season of Creation

Small group material week 4: climate change

1. Welcome

Welcome everybody to your group. If you're going to watch the movie get comfortable. Make popcorn!

2. Opening discussion

The Bible is full of 'inconvenient truths' in which God challenges individuals or groups of people regarding their perceptions and understandings of themselves.

Read Luke 18:18-29 (The Rich Young Ruler) and discuss the challenges and inconveniences faced by the rich ruler when Jesus suggested that he follow him.

3. Video input

An Inconvenient Truth is the title of both a documentary film and book by Al Gore highlighting the awkward reality of global warming and climate change. Climate change is awkward and inconvenient because humanity now has to face up to the consequences of its particular concept of progress and attitude to nature. Discovering the life-threatening damage that we have caused to our atmosphere and planet means coming face to face with our own nature and greed and making inconvenient changes to the way we live.

Watch the video clip.

Consider this 19th century statement by Chicago businessman WP Rend:

"Smoke is the incense burning on the altars of industry. It is beautiful to me. It shows that men are changing the forces of nature into articles of comfort for humanity."

What attitude does this statement reveal? Do we still hold the same attitude to the use of resources from creation that Rend did?

Discuss the video clip.

4. Bible study

Read Job 38:39-39:8 and Matthew 6:28-30, and discuss the following questions:

- What do these verses tell us of God's attitude toward creation?
- How does the thought that God cares for creation as much as for human beings strike you? What is its spiritual significance?
- What might it say to our generation in terms of environmental attitude and responsibility?

Read Romans 8:18-23.

- What significance does salvation have for creation? How would you see this in practical terms? In the light of this passage, how do you see the work of Christ?
- Discuss the "groaning" of creation. What is the relationship between the earth's stress and the human condition? How is this visible in your home communities and environments?

5. Close with this prayer

Creator God, you brought order out of chaos transforming and separating the raging ocean into earth, sky and seas, filling them with living creatures; then you created human beings and put us in charge of your creation.

Show us how to use your creativity today when the delicate balance of nature is under threat.

6. Next week

We will be looking at the issue of 'need not greed'. Think about how much we have because we want it, rather than because we need it. How have things changed over the generations?