

Contemporary Issues
Biblical Theology of Creation Care
Dr. Dan Doriani

Our theme is Creation Care, and I'm going to do more preliminaries than I usually do. So just forgive me. As I talked before, actually getting going was the first thing and I looked at my outline and I decided it is too complicated. And so I'm just going to simplify it.

Point one is the basics of the Bible

Point two is the beauty of God's caring

Point three is caring for God's creation

Point four is hope for the new creation.

The second thing I want to say is, I've been thinking about this and studying this for something like 40 years and I've read a whole lot of books and many, many articles by Christians or by non-Christians. And I am very deeply aware that some of the things I say you'll be thrilled to hear and other things I say, you'll think, oh, that guy doesn't know what he's talking about. And that's a possibility. And so what I'm going to ask is you distinguish between the things I say that come from the Bible and the things that I say that seem to come from science. All right. So you can disagree about science all you want, but, maybe try to hold back on the disagreeing when I talk about the acceptable program, you're allowed to disagree with me about the particulars.

All right. So the most basic thing I still want to say is that, God does tell us enough about creation care, that we have a pretty good idea of what we should do with his creation, which is excellent. It's good. Good, good, good. Very good. Right. It's complex. The more people study, the more they're astonished at the almost incomprehensible complexity.

I'm going to lay out some things that people try to explain. I barely understand it. After thinking about it for years. and it's our job to rule over creation, to exercise dominion, over creation, to care for creation. And then at the end of our lives, we're going to answer for what we did with God's world. Now, this means you to punish us at the end of life, but you to ask us questions like, what did you do with my world? That's clear from Scripture as well. I want to read to you from two places before we get started. And now the sermon is beginning. The two places are Genesis 1:1, 26-31 mostly, and then 2:15. This is God's Word speaking to us about his excellent creation, how we care for it.

It says, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Verse 26, Then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground. God saw all that he made.

Verse 31. *And it was very good. And there was evening and morning, the sixth day.* And then the second account of creation is in Genesis chapter two. And I read one verse, verse 15. Verse 15 says, *the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to keep it, to work it and to keep it.*

The word keep could be translated. Guard or protect? To keep it, that is to say, to keep it from harm. So to work it and to keep it.

Let's pray for a minute, shall we ?

Father, I do pray that you would give me the ability to say, as best I can with crystal clarity what's in your word? And then I hope to offer thoughts of a practical nature about how we can glorify God and take care of this world.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

So the Lord has called us to see that his creation is beautiful, and then to care for it. And we call that creation care. Now there are lots of books that maybe you read and you're in the media and you see references to in the environment and to environmentalism. The environment is kind of a negative or neutral word. It's a neutral word when people say it's just the world around us. And it could be negative when people talk about the environment as something that exists apart from God, environmentalism is usually not the healthiest outlook. It's an ideology that looks at the world not as God's creation, but as what exists. And what exists is generally construed to be a self-regulating system. For example, animals breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide, and plants inhale carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen. Isn't that beautiful? And the environmentalists say that's a self-regulating system. And Christians say, no, that's a system God created. And so we have a fairly fundamental difference as we look at the world as a whole, a secular person or a naturalist sees something that existed. It just came to existence, who knows how. And now it's organized itself and it's regulated itself, and it's in perfect balance. And humans are often construed as the villains of the story. If you've watched those documentaries about nature on nature channels, they go along beautifully about porcupines and trees and bogs and peat and grass and trees. And then somewhere around the 52 minute mark, they start talking about humans who are despoiling the habitat and knocking down all the trees and all the rain. Good tans have nowhere to go. And we're paving Paradise and putting up a parking lot, and we're destroying strawberry beds and other degradations of the world, and we're overpopulated and humans are evil. And humans are tainted by sin. There's no question about that. But that's not the view that the Bible gives of creation care. In God's view, humans are not an alien species. Nature is his creation and we are supposed to rule it, and sometimes we rule it well, and sometimes we rule it poorly. In fact, just after Genesis 2, after Adam and Eve

were given the responsibility to tend and keep the garden, they didn't tend to keep the garden because they didn't obey God. And then thorns and thistles came into the world.

Our job then is to care for God's creation. And although the Bible doesn't have a lot to say about creation care, it certainly has a number of things. For example, you're just reading along in the book of Deuteronomy one day and you come to chapter 20 and God says, by the way, don't go around chopping down fruit trees. I don't want you to do that. Take care of the trees, God says. And then we have Psalm eight, which we heard sung to us. Thank you very much a little while ago, and saw me says that even after the fall, God still appoints mankind to govern the earth. Psalm eight says, *you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings*. This is God talking about humanity. You've made him a little lower than heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. And you have given him dominion over all the works of your hands. So God has still a portion to us, or delegated to us the good care of his creation. Now we know that things aren't always going well. And what do you think? The world is getting hotter or not? We know that the world doesn't always operate the way it should. I mean, there are hurricanes and some people say there are more and some people say no. It seems like maybe there are a few more and a little bit more dangerous hurricanes. But there have always been hurricanes and they've always hurt people who live in their path. And in the Pacific Ocean, they have a word for them. And in the Atlantic Ocean they have another word for them. And then, you know, armies and hurricanes call it what you will. And there are earthquakes under the under the beds of the ocean. And they create giant waves that that hurt people who live in the island lands.

And, species do become extinct. It's very clear that that's the case. And there are things that are wrong. On the other hand, we should not despair. I do not want to give you the sense that despair is the right response to the problems in creation, because most people think that the air in North America is cleaner than it's been in centuries.

Today. And many people think there are more trees in North America, for example, than there ever have been. By which I mean ever. Because we treasure trees right now as a society, so we don't want to get too negative. We don't want to buy those. I'll see those documentaries. You've seen the documentaries where they where they have, you know, aircraft flying over Antarctica.

You know what I'm talking about. And they're showing, you know, all the icebergs breaking off Antarctica, and they have airplanes and drones and camera crews and all the rest. And as they describe the icebergs breaking off Antarctica, they say, you know, it's mankind's pollution. It's driving cars and flying and planes and technology and all the all the energy we consume when we when we make metal objects. And I think, yeah, you're flying a plane right now. And you're creating CO2 right now with giant, expensive cameras. It cost a lot of money to build. As you tell us how evil we are. Okay, so creation is not exactly where it should be. And Christians don't always agree about it.

So one of the people who's been writing about creation care, who's a Christian for many years, is Wendell Berry. Some of you might have read some of his very distinctly Christian novels,

although everybody reads them. And he's sort of a Christian creation care environmentalist. He's a little bit angry but not too angry. And this is this is what he says in one place. He says the environmental movement, he's writing for secular people here, we would call it creation care is different from other movements.

Protests against war come and go because wars end, but creation care comes closer to home every time we draw a breath, every time we drink a glass of water, this is water. Every time we drink a glass of water, every time we eat a bite of food, we either suffer from pollution or reap the results of someone's care for God's creation. Our actions have consequences. And then he gets a little edgy at the end, he says a protest against environmental abuse is not a convocation of accusers. It is a convocation of the guilty. We are causing the crisis. So maybe you like the first half of what he said and not so much the second half. I don't know where you stand on these matters. It's complex.

God tells us in Romans eight, all creation groans like a woman preparing to give childbirth. As it is, it labors under the futility caused by sin. And yet we groan, waiting for the day when the Lord will restore, to restore all things. Creation labors under sin, individual sin, and also corporate sin and the consequences of sin. Calvin said that God places humans as spectators in the glorious theater of his creation. That's a great statement, and it's true. But his next sentence is yet not yet. The curse and the fall have made creation despoiled enough that we can clearly see his glory in it any longer. I believe that's true as well. Now, when we think about the failures we might have when we work in God's creation, when we do or do not take care of creation, we need to make a couple of distinctions. And, the first distinction is between an object of sin and a subject of sin.

Now, I'm going to ask you to pretend for a moment that this ordinary, bottle of water, which, by the way, is polluting the Earth because it's made of plastic. But that's another topic. This ordinary bottle of water I'm gonna ask you to imagine is filled with the most delightful fruit juice you can imagine. And I am an eight year old boy, and I come home from school, and I see that bottle of fruit juice, and I think nobody's around, and I'm just going to take it and guzzle it in my room. Now, we would say that's probably a sin because it's somebody else's juice, right? And he goes and drinks it in his room and his mother comes to and says, oh, honey, I hope you found the delicious juice I put out for you so you could have some when you came home from school. Now, what just happened? He did not commit an object of sin because he didn't steal what wasn't his. But he did commit a subject to sin because he thought he was stealing it, was intending to steal. Okay, so we distinguish between an object of sin and a subject. Just an object to sin is when you do something wrong.

Subject to sin is when you intend to do wrong. Now, what I'm going to say is that a lot of times when we don't treat creation well, we are committing a subjective, sorry object with sins. We're not caring for the world as we should, but we don't intend to misuse creation. Therefore, we're not committing a subjective sin. If you don't like that way of putting things, I'll say in a different way.

There are voluntary sins when we choose and design to say something evil or harsh. For example, and they're involuntary sins when something comes over us or we accidental commission, for example, you think of you're in a conversation and you think, if I tell this lie, this very large exaggeration, I can get someone to do what I want. I can manipulate them. That is a voluntary sin. Involuntary sin comes about when you're, telling a story and you just kind of accidentally mis tell it in a way that makes you look better and you just don't know how to correct it. It's still wrong, but it's not wrong in the same way as setting out to deceive someone. So again, with regard to creation care, we sometimes error without knowing or intending to error. And that is somewhat different thing. So we distinguish. All right now I want to talk about how good God's creation is and how beautiful it is, and how we can celebrate the wonder of God's creation, how he made it with so much skill and so much beauty that we should marvel at it. We don't marvel the way secular people do it -- the self-organizing tendency of the world. We marvel at the way God organized the world to cohere, to hang together. The animists believe that creation has the world, has little gods in the rocks and trees and the rivers and bridges and all the rest. And we believe that God created it. And the naturalists believe that creation is beautiful, but we believe it's sacred because it's God's.

And so we admire his creation because we're told to do so. Psalm 19 says, *the heavens declare the glory of God*. Psalm 104 says, *the earth is full of your creatures*. It says that back to God. And Psalm 50 says to me *behold the world and all its fullness*, and Isaiah says that *God is filling the earth with his glory*. And so the universe is beautiful and we need to take care of it instead of abusing it or exploiting or being careless with it. This is God's world, and he made it. He made it because he's creative. It's a deliberate act. He loved this world before he ever made it. And that's why we care for it and we admire it. So I want to help you just admire the world a little bit with some things I've found over the last few years, and I hope you enjoy them.

There is a man named Roger Penrose who's an award winning physicist and mathematician teaching in Oxford for many years, and one of the things he does is study things like entropy and gravity. And he said, when you study (and he's at Oxford and has won all kinds of awards so this is not just a, you know, a light opinion) gravity and entropy, what you find is that if entropy, which is the force that dissipates energy and moves things apart and makes, you know, your bedroom fall apart, if you're not constantly watching everything, it causes disintegration. If you made entropy just a little bit stronger than it is, just a little bit, the universe would have nothing but randomly scattered, isolated hydrogen atoms just spread evenly throughout the void. And if the forces of gravity were just a little bit stronger, the universe would quickly have collapsed into one giant black hole and disappeared. He's a mathematician and physicist. He figured it out and he said, the number that you would need to figure out how unlikely it is that this universe, which has clumps of matter that are gathered but not to gathered, so don't all collapse on each other and not to scatter the chances are one times ten over the ten, and that to the 128. Now you have no idea what that means, and I know you don't, but I'm going to give you a picture of it.

The picture is if every particle of every atom in the universe had a one, had a zero attached to it, there wouldn't be enough zeros in the entire universe to describe how impossibly Enock impossible. How impossibly unlikely it is that these two forces would be in perfect balance to allow us to exist.

All right, now, you may say that's impressive, except I don't know how many particles there are in the universe, so I'm going to help you with that. Now, the human body has about (nobody really knows) but about 40 trillion cells. So we got hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, trillions and 40 of those. That's how many cells are in the human body and each human body has about 100 trillion atoms per cell, which means we're not in hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, trillions, quadrillion quintillion sextillion septillion octillion but we're in nonillion. So that's like nine sets of zeros. Or maybe the low tens. It's a lot in one human body. One human body. That's how many there are. And if you put a zero in every atom in the human body, you just covered one human being. And I get to tell you, humans are really small compared to stars.

So God has made a world that is impossibly fine. He's made a world that has, if you remember your biology classes, it has all these beautiful structures down to the tiniest level. Things like, remember Golgi bodies, anybody remember Golgi bodies? Anybody remember a rough and smooth endoplasmic reticulum. Remember those in mitochondria. Nobody knows where they came from. And centrioles and ribosomes and DNA and RNA in the nucleus and the cell wall that's permeable just the right amount and all the rest. And there are tens of trillions of those in every single one of you. And so you should give thanks for that and praise God and be amazed at the universe He made, on the one hand, you go down to these fine structures. On the other hand, God made a world that has really big things in it, like stars. Stars are big and there are lots of them. Do you know how many there are? There are four times ten to the 23rd power. And you think to yourself, I don't know what that means. It means there's a lot of stars. Now, I figured this one out all by myself. Okay, I hope you like it.

100 billion people, roughly speaking, have existed so far as people can tell in the history of the world. And if you told every single person that they had one job for their entire life, and their one job is to name stars 60 hours a week for 60 years, you get to retire at the age of 68.

You start when you're a retired 68 and you do nothing but name stars for 60 years, no days off. No days off. And you have to name a star once every 12 seconds, five per minute. It would take everybody 5000 lifetimes to name all the stars, everybody who ever existed. So that's a lot of stars. You agree with me on that. So we have a lot of stars, and then we have a lot of people, and we have people with tens of trillions of cells. And each of those tens of trillions of cells have hundreds of trillions of atoms and all these fine structures, and God made all that really big, and he made it all really small. Do you think we should praise God for that? Let's praise God for that.

And that's why we take care of his creation, because it's just so amazing.

And Job sings about it his way. In some parts of the Book of Job, he talks about the delight of the animals of the sea, frolicking and oxen and wild donkeys on the hills. And, you know, we get

pictures of mountain goats standing on the edges of cliffs. And God has made them to be able to do that. And the way their body is formed. So they can do that. And then there's just joy and creation. Have you ever seen otters in the wild? They just have fun all the time. And then they study things like porpoises breaching. We have whales breaching and they've studied whales and porpoises breaching. And as they study it, they say, so far as we can tell, they do it because they like it. There's no benefit even, you know, even the raw evolutionary person says we don't. There's nothing good happening. They just seem to like it. And you watch birds and you watch puppies and you think God delighted in making this world.

The Christian theologian, philosopher, named Dallas Willard said, you know, we spend a lot of money to go to an aquarium, one of those big aquariums that cities have and see the tropical fish. And God sees oceans full of them every day, and he delights in it. So let's delight in his creation. And because we delight in his creation, we care for it, and we care for it because God has given us this, this place where we rule and exercise dominion and fill the earth. Now that that word exercise dominion implies that the world has material in it that can be developed, but it's not done easily. If you've done anything with, you know, silicone or steel or molybdenum. And here we are in a city that has, you know, had abundant resources right in the ground. And we, we know that it's work, even when it's right there in the surface of the earth to put things together to make steel and to make, you know, computer chips and all the rest.

But God has said, care for it, subdue it, exercise dominion over it, and people get to do that. And for a long time, people have done things like take wild pigs and make them into domesticated pigs, which are a lot safer. And we take wild strawberries -- Have you found and eaten wild strawberries that don't taste nearly as good as cultivated strawberries? And so we cultivate strawberries and we create, we breed wheat that has more and more that goes into the kernel.

We take care of God's creation and we fill it when we have children and take care of our children. And God gives us enough commands that we have an idea about how we should take care of his world.

For example, it says, when you lay siege to a city, don't chop down the fruit trees. You're not at war with the trees. Take care of the trees, enjoy the trees. Let other people enjoy the trees. It says in the Law of Moses, don't muzzle an ox while it's churning out the grain. Treat randomness well. Treat that what you know well and don't joke ox and the donkey together, because they don't pull together well and it'll hurt them. And there's actually 2 or 3 places where it says, if you find a wandering animal of a neighbor, you know, like there's a notch on the ear of the donkey, you know, you can recognize it like you recognize people's cars in those days. They recognize people's donkeys. If you recognize your neighbor's donkey string, take it back to your neighbor. If you see a donkey fallen under load, help the donkey. It also says, if you see your enemies donkey falling down, help it get up. Because we're kind to the animals. Be kind to the animals. Now somebody's worried that I'm going to say, let's all become vegetarians now because it's not kind to slaughter animals, and I am not going to say that, and I'm not going to

say it because I don't believe it. And here's why I don't believe it. Because when you eat a hamburger, you are eating the meat of an animal that was slaughtered and one animal died to feed you and 40 other people. But if you harvest an acre of wheat with the harvesters, the machines that we use to feed the earth now, actually killed dozens and dozens of animals because the harvest is run over ground squirrels and ground birds and lots of insects, and they count, too. And so what we do is we say God has given us food to eat. That's clear from the book of Genesis and we can eat every tree from every tree and every plant. And God has given us the animals to eat. And it's not evil. We should take care of the animals and slaughter them well and treat them well in advance. We take care.

Now, I don't know if you know this, but the pastors, a number of pastors of this church, and I'm one of them get a car. We get to use a car to drive around but if you if you see my wife, she's driving our car. that I bought with my own money. And if you look at it carefully, you will see that it has one of those little things that says it's a hybrid car. And I've been driving hybrid cars for about 20 years, and I drive hybrid cars for one very simple reason. They tend to get 50 miles per gallon. And by the way, I did drive a Prius for a while and yes, I hated them. But they got wonderful mileage. And so I got rid of my Prius, and I got a car that actually is as fast and gets 50 miles per gallon. Praise God. Why? Because why burn the oil when you don't have to take care of God's creation? There's only so much oil in the earth now. It's hard to know what to do sometimes with.

I'm picking something that probably most of you can relate to by way of pain or agony. If you've ever been environmentally conscious. So a while ago I became aware of the debate about cookware, and the debate is between cast iron and aluminum and copper. Anybody know about this debate? Does anybody know about this? Raise your hand. Okay, a few people know about this debate. Okay. So copper is the king of conductivity. So people say if you want to save energy and get it going fast, get copper and aluminum is in the middle and then cast iron is the worst. So don't buy cast iron - buy copper. Except that cast iron is the king of heat retention and copper is the worst. And aluminum again is the middle. So you should buy cast iron. And by the way, if you take care of a cast iron pan, well, do you know how long cast iron pan can last? Yeah. You're fun. You're with me all of a sudden. An answer that's commonly given is 500 years. Some people say no, it's only 375 years. I don't care. It lasts a long time and so you think... Well, then I should buy cast iron. But somebody says, do you know how much energy it takes to make cast iron? You shouldn't do that. You should buy aluminum because that's easier to make. And so we think if I'm just trying to buy a frying pan, come on, give me a break. I'm trying to take care of God's creation. And I can't even decide what kind of a pan to work on. It's hopeless. It's too complex. What shall I do? And what we do is we go back to the basics. God said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, care for it, guard it, keep it. Okay, I can't do everything, but I can do some things.

And Proverbs says, take care of the animal creation. A righteous man has regard for the beast. So what can we do given how complex it is? I'm going to suggest a couple really broad ideas.

The first idea is if you have influence, use it. If you know the best plan to buy and you look into it, tell your friends. And if you're an expert, a true expert, write about it, disseminate the information, be a scientist and so forth, and help people buy things that are useful and constructive. And if you have a little bit of courage in you, righteous man has regard for his beast. And you go to a restaurant and you see veal and you know, the server, it's a nice restaurant. The servers can, you know, walking through the marvelous pitch about reduction sauces and spices. It came from Taiwan and he's, he's he's going to move you to buy the veal. And maybe you've heard that those little calves are kept in cages that are not treating the animal so well. In fact, maybe they're miserable. Or maybe you've heard about chickens that are kept in cages where they can't even turn around. The hens that lay. And so if you're the kind of person that knows how to be bold and also polite, you can just say loudly enough that about 14 people around you hear it. And how was the cow treated before it was slaughtered? Was this cow treated well? And heads turn and that doesn't (I'm kind of joking, but kind of not) have to happen a whole lot of times before. The manager of a nice restaurant says, we want to give a good answer to this. We want to be on top of this. We want to be able to say to our patrons, we treat the animals well. We buy meat that's been sourced.

Well, I happen to know somebody in the chicken and hen industry and it's real simple. They said, Dan, you know the stories you heard about chickens in cages, that's history. That ended ten years ago. 15 years ago. How did it end? A few people complained loudly. And then people said, you know, we don't want to be the bad guys who tortured chickens. We want to be a supplier. That's known part of our brand, helps us be profitable, helps us be attractive to consumers, to say we treat our animals well. It can be done. It has been done, it has been done. And I got to tell you, I did ask about veal a little bit loudly one time, and the server did go talk to the manager, and the manager did come and tell me, yes, yes, sir. We take your concern very seriously. It's possible to do this sort of simple thing if you were a leader, especially, especially if you're in a position of corporate leadership or brand leadership in which you can move other people along this path.

Now there's a passage of the Bible. I'll talk about it at some point this fall. That's very much on my mind when these sorts of topics come up.

And I'll invite you to turn in your Bible if you want you to, Luke chapter 12 and verse 13 and 21 has a parable. And at the end of the parable, it's a parable about a rich man who used everything for himself and was greedy and and thought to himself, my goal is to is to take care of myself and to be happy all the time.

And then in verse 20, God says this. He says, it says, God said it was Jesus words. God said to him, you fool. This very night your life will be required or is required of you and the things you prepared. Whose will they be? That and that simple phrase this very night your soul will be required of you is a Greek word that means to call back, to ask back.

And it was used commercially for the recalling of a loan. And it's saying to us that your life is a loan from God, and you will have to answer for your life. And then a little bit later in chapter 12, the same word is used again. Luke loved to do that, to put a rare words kind of close together to make us think, oh wait, I just read that rare word a minute ago, and in verse 48 it says in the middle versus a long verse, it says, everyone to whom much was given of him much will be required. Same word. If God gave you a lot, it's not yours, it's a loan. And God's going to recall the loan. If you have been given much, everyone to whom much was given of him, much will be required. If I gave you a lot, I'm asking you to use a lot. And so I'm speaking to you who are leaders. I'm saying if you're in a position of influence, use it. Use it. If you're a leader in science and you can help creation care, move along. If you are. A marketer, an agent that kind of moves the way food is sold and marketed and prepared and you have the ability to influence the food chain and. The way we treat farmers here in America and other places, because, you know, the global food chain gives us the food that we buy. I mean, the blueberries you're eating may come from California and they may come from Argentina. And so we're individually one by one. We can't do all that much. But if you're a leader, you can do a great deal. The problem, I think, for many of us is that we're a little bit careless. That's why I introduced the idea of, object of and subject to sin a little while ago.

Now, children have been known to do things like smash insects. We found one of our children at the age of two, bopping ants with an object saying, meet your maker. I think she got it from me because when I would swat flies, I would say, meet your maker, but I didn't. I didn't just kill random insects. So children, they'll kill insects. They'll kill bugs for no reason. I kill them for a reason. And boys will take a B-B gun and just shoot songbirds because they can, in a certain age, eight, nine, ten, 11, 12. And we were horrified by that. But the truth of the matter is, as a nation in sometimes in some ways we're careless. And I don't know if you ever been to West Virginia. I've been to West Virginia many times. I used to live just a couple miles from the border and, great hiking and great whitewater rafting. And when you go whitewater rafting in West Virginia, you enjoy beautiful vistas and trees and rivers, and it's exciting. And once in a while, when you go down one of those rivers, you see a mountain that's been strip mined. And it's about the ugliest thing I've ever seen in my life. It's a mountain top sheared off, and there's nothing but dirt lying there at worst. At best, people mine and quickly plant grass and trees and all the rest. Now you and I can't do anything realistically about what happens with strip mining in West Virginia. We can't. But we have to ask questions like, what can I do? What's within my grasp? And it may be simple. Things like turning off lights when you're not in a room and buying a car that gets 50 miles a gallon instead of 15 miles per gallon. And it may be simple things like buying LED lights instead of incandescent lights and fluorescent lights, which are better, but I learned way too late. They make you bald sometimes, especially men. That's the latest explanation for male baldness. It's fluorescent lights. Just kidding. It was a theory that was out there for a while. It's hard to be sure. It's very hard to be sure, but it is certainly true that LED lights last longer and give more light and lower cost. You think, well, is that going to change anything much? The answer is probably not going to change the world, but if you're doing it because you want to

take care of God's creation and just burn a little less oil and take care of a tiny bit less pollution, I think the Lord smiles.

I think Lord smiles when we recycle things. I think the Lord is pleased. I don't think we should be anxiety laden at all times and think, oh my goodness, I'm putting CO₂ in the air and putting carbon dioxide in the air, and we're going to change everything. That's a bigger order for most of us. And by the way, if we stop putting out CO₂ today, if CO₂ is the cause of global warming, if we didn't put out another atom, another molecule, sorry, a CO₂, the world by most calculations, would continue to heat up for another 200 years because CO₂ washes out of the atmosphere at the rate of on average, about every 400 years, one atom, one molecule drops out. So there's some things that are way beyond us, but we can do what lies in front of us, so we can offer the care that the Lord puts in our path.

And here's where I'm going to tell you my strangest conviction. But I believe it. I've agonized over this for years. There's so little most of us can do about creation care, but we can do. I believe it's changed. The overall approach to the world in which we're interested in saving and honoring and protecting. And we do little things like turn out lights and have a car that gets better mileage, and we recycle things and we just don't throw things away all the time. When we do, when we do what we can, we create an atmosphere in which people care. And my belief is that the solution to problems like global warming, and I know you don't all believe it exists, but if it exists and it probably does, and it's very complicated and big parts of it are anthropogenic, created by humans and big parts or come from who knows where.

Nobody knows where some of it comes from. The world seems to be getting warmer, and if there's a solution to it, it's probably going to be through an inventor who's moved very possibly by faith, to do what he or she can to take care of the problem. Now, here's why I say it over and over again. Through the years, people have faced a problem, a crisis that they thought would ruin society. I don't know if you know this, but in the year 1900, people were saying that cities like Chicago and in New York City are going to have to end or disperse, because the manure from the horse carts that brought all the goods in to take care of a city with one or 2 or 3 million people, it's just burying the city. We're going to have to get out of here because we're sinking under manure. And then somebody said, hey, how about if we create, something that will bring goods in without manure, like a car? They called them automobile at first because it was moving by itself, not with a horse. And then the other one is, you know, we all have phones, and I don't know if you know this, but when the phone was first created, all phones, I mean, you saw it in old movies, all phones were, connected by a person who switched and connected the switches. And they said, this is chauvinistic for sure, or sexist. Whatever word you want to use. They said, you know, the way phone usage is going on, pretty soon every woman in America is going to have to be a switch operator. And then somebody created automatic switching. And the problem one way, and I believe, I hope that someone's going to come along someday and say, God's given me the ability to attack this problem.

And because this man, this woman has been surrounded by people, teachers and mentors and guides and grandmas and grandpas and brothers and sisters who want to take care of God's creation, maybe they may find they're called to this and they solve the problem. That's my fault, because I have to tell you, the stats are in this book. We're never going to get there by wind power. We're never going to get there by solar power. Germany is the number one nation in world for wind and solar and water power. And they still it's number one in the world. And they still get 78% of electricity from coal and oil. It's the number one nation in the world. It's hard. But then there are people like Doug Moo, the marvelous Christian theologian who wrote with his son, who's a scientist, a book called Creation Care. And if we desire to care for God's creation, I believe that it's possible someday, sometime along the way, God is going to find a way for us to take care of our world a little better.

Now that may or may not be true. We may do all that we can, and we find that our world is getting darker and darker, and there's more tornadoes and more hurricanes and more earthquakes. And certainly some people think that's what's coming. It's just going to get worse and worse. I'm not a pessimist. But I do believe that the final solution of these problems does not reside in human beings. I believe that the Lord has told us that he made his creation good. Very good. Beautiful, excellent, marvelously ordained. And he's allowed us, as we study the world more and more to see more and more of that. And we've had a couple glimpses of that tonight. But the final healing is never going to come in this life. Amos in chapter nine speaks of the day when God restores all things. He says in chapter nine -- *The days are coming when new wine will drip from the mountains and flow from the hills*. Now, wine was a rare and treasured beverage in those days, he said. It's just going to run like rivers. God's going to make his world new. And Romans 8, verses 22 and 23 say, we who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly as we await eagerly for our adoption as sons. That is, the redemption of our bodies by redemption. It does not mean that our aches and pains go away. He doesn't mean that that weird spot on our back disappears or our arthritis goes away. He means the restore of our bodies when we'll all be 30 years old forever, and as limber and strong and loose and free and talent as we could ever imagine. God's going to do that one day. So in the meantime, we're not the Savior he is. But in the meantime, God has said, rule the earth, subdue it, tender care for it, keep it as best it lies before you according to the place God has given you in this beautiful world that he made.

Let's pray.

Father, would you thank you for your beautiful world. And Lord, we know that whether we're heedless on purpose, doing things like throwing trash out the window of our car more often, just kind of making mistakes because we don't think we pray, Lord, that you would forgive us for when we falter, when we sin against your creation by not being careful. And pray that you would give us a desire to say, this is your world and it's beautiful and we love it, and we love you for the magnificent structures you put into this world. And we could study it for 50 lifetimes and

never get to the bottom of the beauty of your creation, the way you ordained all things the world did not make itself.

Lord, you made it. You loved this world before you made it. You had love in your heart, in your mind, from all eternity for what you are going to make. We thank you for that. And Lord, we ask you, make us good stewards as best we can in our days. And Lord, if we if we fall short, which we will if we can't deliver this creation and we can't, we pray that you would make all things new one day.

Put us in your new creation as we trust in you to live with you and with each other there forever.

We pray in Jesus' name,

Amen.