

For Such a Time as This

(What have Christians got to offer?)

Week 4. Salvation

“The powers of the world must stop their greed and irresponsible devastation of natural resources to save the future of the planet for all” (Rt Rev’d Carlos Matsinhe, Bishop of Lebombo)

Introduction to Week Four

We are moving now to the New Testament. Christians believe that God gives us a new hope even when all seems lost. A hope not only for ourselves but for the whole of Creation. “Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are Anger and Courage; Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.” (St Augustine of Hippo) All is not lost: ‘For God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8).

Opening Prayers

O Lord open our lips
And our mouth shall declare your praise

Let us pray together:

Creator God, breathing your own life into being, you gave us the gift of life: you placed us on this earth with its minerals and waters, flowers and fruits, living creatures of grace and beauty. You gave us the care of the earth. Teach us, Creator God of Love, that the earth and all its fullness is yours, the world and all who dwell in it. Call us yet again to safeguard the gift of life.

Amen

Lord, thank you for bringing us together this evening. We know you are with us as we join together in your name. Help us make the best use of the time available tonight. Some of our discussions may be uncomfortable, but we pray that you will give us a willingness and enthusiasm to engage fully and join in discussion. We pray that we may continue after the session to contemplate and explore what thoughts and lessons we can take away from this evening. **Amen**

Romans 8.18-30

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Discussion: For such a time

A VIEW FROM MOZAMBIQUE By the Rt Rev'd Carlos Matsinhe, Bishop of Lebombo

Mozambique's geographical location in the south-eastern part of Africa makes it very vulnerable to the disasters directly caused by global climate change. In the last two decades, the country has been damaged by long severe droughts in the central and southern region, devastating cyclones and almost yearly flooding - especially in the central and northern regions. These claim many lives every year, and completely stifle any possibility of significant economic growth. In 2019, Cyclone Idai severely disrupted the lives of over four million people. To this day, many have not been able to reconstruct their damaged houses. Many social structures were destroyed, leaving the people more miserable than before. Poverty and hunger have become chronic despite the resilience of the hard-working rural population. Add political conflict, terrorism and corruption to the disruption caused by the climate and ecological crisis and the future for Mozambique looks gloomy, even though the country is resource rich. In keeping with the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission*, the Dioceses of Lebombo, Niassa and Nampula are actively addressing the climate and ecological crisis. They involve their members on reformation projects, providing education about resilience, participating in crisis response and working in partnership on climate change advocacy with other national institutions. One example of the church's work is that all confirmation candidates must plant trees as part of their sacrament. Several youth groups are involved in pollution reduction and tree planting. We are sure that global measures and policies to address climate injustice will restore the integrity of Creation and enable survival, better living and bring the planet into its full potential as a place blessed by God for all Creation. The powers of the world must stop their greed and irresponsible devastation of natural resources to save the future of the planet for all.

*The fifth Mark of Mission is "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew and sustain the earth."

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways can we see Creation 'groaning as in childbirth' in the current ecological and climate crisis?
2. How can we be part of a church that is a living example of equity and inclusion, and a powerful advocate for justice and sharing?
3. The Church in Mozambique is responding in practical ways to the climate and ecological crisis. In what ways are we and our church responding?

Closing Prayers

Our climate is changing, and we are changing it. We confess our carbon footprints, our failure to consider the consequences of our actions, and our slowness to react. We are sorry for all the times we knew the right thing to do but chose convenience instead. Your Earth is exploited, and we are complicit in its exploitation. Species are lost, soil erodes, fish stocks decline, resources dwindle. We confess that many of us have taken too much, and not considered the needs of future generations. We have become consumers. We have turned a blind eye to greed. We confess our hunger for more, and our failure to appreciate what we already have. In a time of unparalleled luxury, and we are sorry that we have not been more grateful. The poor are left behind, even in this age of plenty. Human rights are pushed aside for profit. Wealth accumulates for the rich while the poorest still do not have what they need. We confess our apathy to injustice, and our haste in judging others. This is not who you made us to be. We have not been good caretakers of your garden Earth. We have not loved you wholeheartedly or our neighbours as we love ourselves. Forgive us, creator God. Forgive us. Renew us. And inspire us **Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Lord bless us and watch over us;
the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us;
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God.