

Berean Baptist Church  
Devotions, Prayers, Sermon Notes  
For April 18, 2010



**Berean Baptist Church**  
**Devotions for the Week of April 18th**

**Thought:** For God brought things into being in order to communicate the divine goodness to creatures and thus be represented by them. And because God's goodness could not be adequately represented by any single creature, God produced many and diverse creatures, that what one lacked in representing divine goodness might be supplied in another. For goodness, which exists in God simply and uniformly, exists in creatures multiply and distributively. Thus the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly.

Thomas Aquinas

**Opening Prayer for the Week:**

Eternal Creator, source of life and light, whose love extends to all people, all creatures, all things: grant us that reverence for life which becomes those who believe in you; lest we despise it, degrade it, or come callously to destroy it. Rather let us save it, serve it, and sanctify it, after the example of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Robert Runcie

**Monday**      *Ex 20:5-6*

*but showing love to a thousand [ generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

This is the way God is described in the 10 Commandments... a steadfast, longsuffering, and patient love. This weeks sermon was about Earth Day. But discussions of should Christians see Creation Care as a moral issue, and if so, how, often spin off into political arguments and we end up thinking about Creation based more on the Left or the Right, Democrat or Republican, than from the Bible. To begin to consider Care for Creation, we must begin with thinking about God's love. We all, no doubt, have our favorite verse, such as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, or story, such as Jesus rescuing and protecting the woman caught in adultery, which give us an image of God's love for us. Paul would certainly want us to think of Jesus on the cross, suffering that cruel fate so as to be faithful to God's plan for our salvation, as an image of love. In order for us to consider the Environment theologically, I suggest we start with meditating on God's love. What connects you to God's love? Worship? A particular

friendship or relationship? Music? Nature? Stop and think about that which helps you to experience God's love.

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**Tuesday**

*Jn 15:9-10*

*9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love . 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love , just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love .*

*Jn 15:18*

*17 This is my command: Love each other.*

There are many ways to explain and describe the Christian Faith and the life of discipleship. One way, the way I want us to focus on this week, comes from these verses of John. 'Remain in my love.' The greek work translated 'remain' can also be translated 'abide.' Faith is constellation of beliefs and practices that shape our thoughts and actions individually and communally, so that we can abide in God's love. More simply, Faith is learning how to experience, participate and share in God's love. We live in love when we follow Christ and our life is focused on learning how to love, not based on the model of love presented in our culture, but based on the example of Christ.

How would you describe love as our culture presents it? What is different about love the way Christ lived it and taught it?

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**Wednesday**

*Mt 6:28-31*

*See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field , which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

These verses are quite well known. If you've spent any time in church you know these words. I encourage you to read them with eyes that are open to fresh nuances today. There is no doubt that Jesus is teaching the disciples (1) not to live in anxiety or fear, and (2) not to calm anxieties and fears through material gain, wealth, power, cruelty or pride. But notice the metaphor Jesus employs to teach us to trust in God to provide for our every need. The lilies of the field. What we may pass over every time we read this is Jesus assumption that God is actively caring for the lilies. We can trust that God will care for us because we see God caring for the lilies every year. In short, Jesus tells us that we can trust in God's love for us, because God shows such extravagant love for the creation that surrounds us. God loves creation.

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**Thursday** *Ge 9:13-14*

*13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.*

Covenant is one of those GIANT Bible ideas. We often think of two things when it comes to covenant. We think of the 10 Commandments. This is a covenant, an agreement between God and Israel. Israel lives into the 10 Commandments and God will bless and keep Israel. We also think of Communion. 'This cup is a new covenant, poured out in my blood...' we say, remembering Jesus' words at the last supper. We share the bread and cup and practice the

forgiveness, hospitality and generosity it symbolizes, and Christ will be present with us, care for us and provide us with life. So Covenant is more than an agreement, it is the promise of a caring relationship. I mention all this because as Christians we most often think of the covenant between God and humanity. But in Genesis, God makes a covenant with 'the earth'. This covenant, this relationship of caring and protecting, comes after the great flood which if we recall, was the destruction of all creation because of human sin. First point; Creation can either benefit or suffer by the presence of humanity. Second point; God loves creation so much that God has created a covenant with the earth. God loves the Earth VERY MUCH

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disciple of Christ. A disciple of Christ knows a couple of things; (1) That God loves the Earth enough to have a covenant agreement with creation, an agreement of love and care. (2) that to be a disciple is to participate in God's love, to love what God loves as God loves. One way of summarizing faith is to say; 'In being loved by God, we learn to love what God loves as God loves.' (3) Therefore, Creation Care is a way in which we love what God loves... just as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the estranged and accept the unaccepted, because this is what Jesus did, so too should the disciple love the Earth. It is but one more facet of God's love. If we want to fully experience God's love, we will find ways to live lovingly with all of Creation. Notice the warning of those who fail to love as Christ loved.

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**Friday**      *Mt 25:41-46*

*41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

*42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

*46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

So here is the point of our considerations. We do not think of the Earth as a Republican or a Democrat. We think of the Earth as a