

Dear Friends

At the meeting of nations in Glasgow last year the world affirmed the importance of taking more care of our human home: planet earth. Nations recognised the need to reign in profligate exploitation of carbon: coal, oil and gas which had contributed to an extraordinary rise in global temperature and extremes of weather. This year has seen the upward trend of extremes continuing. I'm sure you can think of examples from this past summer and this autumn already.

Splurging resources for present gain is a selfish tendency which our Saviour Jesus Christ exposed to his disciples in his parable of the 'prodigal son' which you will find in Luke 15:11-32. A land and property owning farmer had two sons who were set to inherit their father's wealth. The first son in the story claimed his inheritance early in life and splurged it all in an excess of greed.

In this story lies a parallel of unfettered consumption of the earth's resources. Once it has gone it has gone: the clock cannot be turned back.

In contrast the second son stayed with his father, working for the family's communal good. Yet when he saw the love extended by his father towards his miscreant brother, he became jealous and incensed. He failed to realise that he had received and continues to receive his father's love and protection. Rembrandt captured the moment in his painting of 1642:



How human is this story!

I was reminded of parallels with the current effects of climate change at a meeting in London recently of the Society of Ordained Scientists. One of our number is an active priest and climate researcher. He contributes to the wording of publications of the International Panel on Climate Change. He challenged each of us to consider which of the brothers' actions we most closely follow.

Do we view ourselves as hedonistic consumers, enjoying life to the full in a carefree way 'must do it now whilst I'm able to' mode, regardless of our consumption of energy? Or do we reign in, feeling that we are owed something through our constrained behaviour?

If you feel challenged by this stark reminder of choices we make each day: do reflect on our shared belief that it is only by God's grace that we even exist, let alone stay alive and benefit from the fruits of this beautiful world.

May you be richly blessed this week.

With all good wishes in Christ

Richard Hinder