

Session 6: Climate change and the problem of human greed



What do you think are the root causes of climate change?



For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21

Katharine Hayhoe refers to climate change as a 'threat multiplier', which amplifies the existing risks of social and economic disruption.

Climate change is also a vulnerability multiplier. This is because risks interact with the existing social and economic context.

For example, women as a group are already, and will be in future, more affected. This is because of a phenomenon called the 'feminization of poverty', where women experience poverty at rates that are disproportionately high in comparison to men. There is already UN research which shows 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.

Peter Harris talks about human greed being 'the real problem'. Climate change is an outworking of living in a way which outstrips the replenishment of the vital systems on which all life depends. It is not a technical problem, but a spiritual problem relating to what we trust and where we put our 'treasure'.

As Christians we profess that our 'treasure' is in Christ, trusting in God for the security and hope of fulfillment which the consumption of resources appears to offer.

And yet the lifestyles of those of us in the Western church are often highly carbon intensive.

Discuss

Climate change raises many questions about how we live, and many of these questions are spiritual. Can you make a list of different questions?

Peter Harris mentions the director of the UN Environment Programme, what would you answer to their question, 'How do we change people'?

The opposite of greed is not contentment, but trust. Do you agree? What are the implications of this for Christians in the context of climate change?

Do you struggle to reduce your own consumption of resources? Could this be connected to where your treasure is?

Pray, repenting of your own greed and declaring the total sufficiency of Christ.

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