2. CHRIST: people or creation

"I look upon this world as a sinking ship, and the Lord has given me a lifeboat, and told me: 'Moody, save all you can'." *D. L. Moody*

The preacher D. L. Moody came from a worldview that understood the Bible to teach the world was like the Titanic — destined for destruction — so why did we need to care for it? For Moody only individual souls could be retrieved from the wreckage of this world; the earth itself was beyond redemption.

What do you think about this? Do you agree with Moody that the discussion around the environment is a 'distraction' from a Christian's main duty — to lead people to Christ to be saved?
(Be gracious in your listening and responding)

In this study we consider Christ's relationship to creation.

The more we love someone, the more we care about the things they care about. As followers of Jesus our desire should be to grow in relationship with him. One way we can know God more is to see how he interacts with his creation—as the one who is present in and through all creation. ❖ Look at one of the OT passages and Colossians.

Read Genesis 9:8-17.

- Who does God make his covenant with following the flood? Is this surprising?
- When something is repeated through out a passage the author is usually trying to get our attention! What two terms are repeated? ("all creatures" and "all flesh")
- What does this tell us about how God views his relationship with humans and creation?

Read Psalm 147.

- List the different ways God is active in this Psalm. There are two themes running side by side: humanity and creation. Divide them up. What do you notice about God's presence?
- In what ways does God bring healing? (v3-4)
- What do v10-11 tell you about the role of creation in connection between God and humanity?
- What does this Psalm communicate about God's overall involvement in creation?

Read Colossians 1:15-20.

- What does Paul tell us about Christ's relationship to creation?
- How does Paul expand Christ's work upon the cross — is it just for people?

- Paul presents an expansive view of Christ — as Creator, sustainer and reconciler of all things. How might that change your understanding of your connection to all parts of creation?

- Psalm 147 uses the rhythms of the seasons as a reason for praise. Look out of your window. Give thanks for God's presence and activity where you live.
- Our choices have a direct impact upon the environment — whether for convenience or necessity. Consider the following quote in light of your lifestyle choices.

> "For individuals, flying is the most carbon-intensive thing you can do. Holiday air travel makes up around 10% of the average UK annual carbon footprint. Cut that out — or travel by train, with about a tenth of the emissions — and you can produce a real and immediate effect." (The Week, Oct 2019)

Flying may not be your thing but what's the equivalent challenge for you?

- ❖ Through Christ's sacrifice upon the cross we find reconciliation between heaven and earth. How should this affect our prayers for problems we see in creation as well as for those facing humanity?

Jesus teaches in Matthew 7:1 that we should not judge others by a different standard to the one we're using for ourselves.

- ❖ What kind of changes do you think others should be making to solve the climate crisis? How does that view reflect in how you manage your life?
- Consider exploring how your daily habits impact the environment using the BMS carbon-emissions calculator (find a link in the resources near the back)
- Jesus is our perfect example of how to live a godly life—fulfilling God's purpose for humanity—but his journey led to the cross. In what ways might you need to be sacrificial to do your part for climate justice?
- Spend some time with, or nurturing, something living — feeding the birds, planting seeds, walking slowly around a garden centre taking in creation. As you do, consider the mystery of God in his creation. Remember that God made and cares for all things and give thanks.