

Aud 10

Side A Dr. Dave Mahan – Praising the Creator by Caring for Creation & The Importance of Naming

Side B Tom Bulick – Reflects on The House of Mourning

[Side A]

[Dr. Dave Mahan]:

- an aquatic biologist, speaking about praising the Creator by caring for the creation
- most people disregard the environment as “New Age-y” and tree-hugging
- he is here as a Christian who loves the Lord, and this determines how he interacts with the world
- reads Psalm 19—the psalmist is praising God through a reflection on nature
- many Christians are concerned about the growing environmental crisis, but are they involved with nature in more intimate ways
 - do we hear God speaking to and teaching us through nature?
- we’re supposed to be listening for God’s voice, and we should be doing that through closeness to Creation
- outlines some root causes of our separation from Creation
 - industrial revolution, air conditioning, electricity
 - students have lost all concept of how dependent they are upon the world
- science is another problem; it has taken the mystery out of creation
 - has allowed us to view creation as nothing but a reservoir for our use and abuse
- where do people turn when they see the folly of this perspective?
 - the church offers little or no answers to this problem, so people turn to New Age ideas [5:00]
- even in this secular age, many people derive some of their ideals and morals from religious teaching
- if Christians don’t view environmental issues as moral issues, we’re in trouble
- talks about Earth Day: it’s as much about moral choices as it is about science
 - we have the technology to resolve many of our problems, but lack the moral leadership to use it
- we need to look to scripture to see how we should behave
- look at the word “nature”: hebrews did not have a word for nature. Human and non-human life were not divided.
- reads Psalm 104: nature is not something outside of ourselves
- shares anecdote – he went to Lake Superior and saw a sign on the beach: don’t eat the fish, they’re contaminated with mercury”. It’s the largest lake on the earth and we’ve trashed it.
- we’ve lost our closeness to creation
- the bible tells us that God created the earth, and that he didn’t just start creation and set it adrift: he is the sustainer. [10:00]
- reads Psalm 147
- we need to remember that God owns everything; we are God’s tenants, and that responsibility is ours. Stewardship is the responsible care of a property belonging to another, and God isn’t an absentee landlord.
- reminds us of the status of Creation: it is good.

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- “good” is not a synonym for “useful for humans”
- 1 Timothy 4:4.
- Christian tendency is to look at the physical world as evil and spiritual world as good, but this is not a biblical concept—it came from the Greeks. God doesn’t make junk. It’s all good.
- moves on to redemption: is it just for us? or for Creation too?
 - John 3:16: “For God so loved the *world*”
 - God brought Jesus to this world to offer redemption to the entire cosmos
 - [15:00] it’s in the Old Testament too: Noah and the Ark’s covenant is with all of creation, not just people
- shifts to discussion of the image of God; Genesis 1:26: we are made in God’s image
 - we don’t necessarily look like God; *image* means a representation
- God forbade the creation of images because he made us in that position.
- we rule creation as his stewards, his representatives on earth
- examines the idea of stewardship
 - Gen 2 provides a picture of perfect world and how to care for it; Lev. 25 provides a template for crop rotation [20:00]
- unfortunately they failed, trashed the land, and were exiled
- God’s promises and commands are still in force. We can’t be neutral on this issue. The whole earth is our promised land and we are to be examples to everyone. We don’t have to do this out of a sense of duty, but as an act of Love to the creator of the Cosmos.
- How does this relate to the Gospel? People are out there looking for answers to the environmental crises, and we can provide them.
- Jesus is the only hope that we as humans and the whole Earth have.
- Our care for the earth, an act of love for god, will bring people to Christ.

[Speech ends 23:15]

[New Recording 23:29]

[Dr. Dave Mahan]:

- recommends some books that take a Christian perspective on environmental issues
 - *Preserving the world God Created* by Bill Badke [25:00]
 - *Caring for Creation* by David Hallman
- yesterday’s focus was on caring for the earth being praise to the Lord; today’s focus is on Naming the creatures
- asks what people think of their names, whether they’re important
 - references the movie *One thousand Clowns*: a child changed his name every few weeks
- names are important: they establish personhood and identity

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- God got into names early on, with Adam and Eve. Names are important in scripture.
 - Jesus told a story about a beggar and a rich man, where the beggar had a name and rich man remained nameless
 - reminds us of the Shepherd who calls his own sheep by name: God never addresses us as “Hey you”
- points out that if we want to depersonalize someone, we don’t learn their name
 - eg. Nazi concentration camps [30:00]
- People’s names are important, what about the rest of creation?
 - reads Isaiah 40:26: God named the stars
 - each part of creation is important to him
- Genesis 2:19: Adam named the animals; God gave us that privilege
- what does it mean to us, if all of Creation has a name?
 - a name denotes value. You are worth more than the sparrows, but God still values the sparrows.
 - just as he values us, we are to value other members of the creation
 - what denotes value? How do we show it?
- one way that we confer value upon something is by getting to know what it is, by learning about it
- points out the irony of extinction: we don’t even know the names of the thousands of species that are going extinct
- asks if we are made from something so very different from other living things
 - No, we’re all part of creation, not a separate entity, and all aspects have value
- [35:00] How does this affect our daily lives?
- we need to figure out how best to use the power God has given us: look to Jesus for an example
 - power expressed as powerlessness, as humility, as sacrificial love
- reminds us that most of creation is defenseless in the face of humanity
 - we’re called to a life of service. That’s how we should exercise our dominion and lordship, because lordship without service is tyranny
- acknowledges that sheer existence will have an impact on the world we’re a part of
- we need to seek to live with the rest of creation and build a sustainable lifestyle
 - remember Noah: he was told to gather all the animals, clean and unclean. They are all important.
- we could have selfish motives for environmental change, but instead we should see stewardship as worship
- mentions the concept of eco-justice: justice among people is closely linked to the health of the creation.
- reads from Hosea 1-3: care for people and creation is interconnected
 - gives example of Kuwait and the scorched-earth policy [40:00]
- sustainability doesn’t automatically create social Justice, but they are related

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- the mindset shouldn't be Jobs vs Environment: any approach that emphasizes the long term health of the earth should enable the sharing of resources and a better life for all
- challenges students to make this an individual project
 - first step = learn. Follow the advice of Job and learn from creation.
- shares a story of student finding plants in the cracks of sidewalks in the Bronx—we need to find the creation where we are, rather than being eco-tourists
- returns to the idea of names: what's in a name?
 - your name gives you worth, all creatures have names and it gives them worth
- we need to be stewards as an act of worship

[45:40]

[End Side A]

[Side B]

[Tom Bulick]:

- opens with verses from Ecclesiastes—Ecclesiastes 7:2-4
 - better to go to the house of mourning than the house of pleasure
- why? because people should live in light of our own mortality
- our characters are typically benefitted more by attending a funeral and contemplating the difficult things in life than by attending a baseball game
- directs focus to the mourning on campus in the past few weeks **[5:00]**
- shares his personal reaction to the aviation accident
 - he has thought about death and dying—initial reaction was one of fear; he has a boy and a wife and a responsibility to them
 - then thought, the Lord has conquered Death on my part; it is not an end but a beginning. He has forgiveness of my sin and he believes in Jesus Christ.
- talks about the difference that having faith in Jesus Christ makes to his life
- he was afraid, faith reassured him, and then he gave thanks to God
- talks about the magnitude of influence that we all have on one another
- there were thousands of people at Danny Penner's funeral
 - **[10:00]** it amazed him to hear all the stories of the influence that Danny had had on the people in his life
- Teena's funeral was at a small church, packed to the doors
 - so many people from the church talked about how knowing her made a difference in their lives
 - there were pictures on the walls showing the insignificant moments in Teena's life, which are the ones that ultimately make the difference in the lives of others

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- Jeff's funeral in Peachland was held in the City Hall because there wasn't enough space in the church
 - listened to a preacher, the volunteer fire department, teachers talk about the difference that Jeff had made
- states that we can't choose whether we want to influence other people or not: we simply DO influence others
- other lives are eternally changed, for better or worse, because of our interactions with them
- we have an enormous amount of responsibility to live our lives to be a positive influence rather than a negative one; references 1 Corinthians 15:33
- tells the students that he has gained a fresh appreciation for all the students, because they are just like Danny and Teena and Jeff
 - addresses them directly: you are loved by your family more than you will ever understand [15:00]
 - you do not know how many people love you deeply
- he was impacted by the fact that these people were appreciated by their communities
 - the people in your communities know and love you
- he has known that the students are beautiful and bright; says that he has realized that if they are anything like the five students that Trinity lost, they're remarkable
- closes in prayer

[19:33]

[End Side B]