

Small Group/ Reflection Notes

Session 5:		Let fish swim and birds fly – Day 5
 Read	Genesis 1:20-23	 Listen again ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk/Talks
 Discuss	<input type="checkbox"/> Have you ever seen living creatures teeming? Where? What was it like? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it matter how a chicken is reared? <input type="checkbox"/> Is organic food a luxury or a necessity? Who for? <input type="checkbox"/> How can we be less reliant on plastic?	
 Go further	<input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 4:22-26: What does this say about human behaviour and our impact on the rest of creation? <input type="checkbox"/> Look up Mk.1:16; Mt.7:10; Mt.12:40; Mt.14:17; Lk.5:6; Jn.21:5. What do these fish moments have to say to us today? <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 6:25-27 & 31-35: What can birds teach us? About life? About God?	
 Reflect	<input type="checkbox"/> Which one verse stands out to you? Why do you think it grabs your attention? <input type="checkbox"/> Which verse(s) will you need to think more about? Why? <input type="checkbox"/> Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: What time or season do you identify with at the moment? How has that changed over time? How might it change again in the future?	
 Do	<input type="checkbox"/> Do some birdwatching. How many different kinds of birds can you spot? Read Matthew 6:25-34. What is God saying to you through these birds? <input type="checkbox"/> Make a bird box. <input type="checkbox"/> What 'next step' could you take to make your space more habitable for birds?	
 Pray	<i>Dear God, Thank you for Your abundance, creativity, and compassion. When I look at birds in their natural habitat I realise that You _____. Thinking about the life of birds and fish, forgive me for _____. Thank you, God, for all the living creatures You have made. Help me to _____. Amen</i>	
 My question:		



If you're not yet in a small group, why not join one!

Check out: ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk/SmallGroups

Can't see a small group that suits your availability/ interest? Why not start one!

Email: SmallGroups@ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk

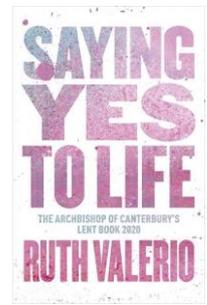
Background

Genesis 1:20-23: Day 5 - God said, "Let fish swim and birds fly"

Now that created space has light, water, vegetation, it is ready to be inhabited by, and able to sustain, living creatures. First up are fish in the sea and birds in the sky.

There is abundance in God's creation. The seas and sky are teeming with life.

There is also such diversity in God's Creation. Not just one or two kinds of fish or birds. Today, there are thought to be 34,000 different species of fish, and 11,000 different kinds of birds. Then there's the six to ten million different kinds of insects. Living creatures vary in colour, habits, location, shape, size... God is not just Creator, He is creative, taking great delight in diversity. He still does. God is the same, yesterdays, today and forever.



For the first time, God pronounces a blessing on His creatures and tells them to be fruitful, multiply and fill the spaces He has created for them. God gave the same blessing and command to all living creatures, not just to Adam and Eve.

Through bird watching we reflect, not only on God's creativity and diversity, but also His care for all that He has made. Jesus said, "Look at the birds" (Mt.6:26). If you're anxious, go bird watching. They don't stress about career choices, investment funds... And yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Jesus had (and still has) a longing to gather up his children as a hen gathers up her chicks under her wings (Mt.23:37).

And yet, birds are facing a crisis, with 14% at risk of extinction. In the UK, the number of birds have halved in the last 40 years. The UK tree sparrow has declined by 95% since 1970, and the house sparrow by 70%. Changes in farming practices and increasing urban development are denying birds of their natural habitats. Hedgerows are being sacrificed to make bigger, more 'efficient' fields, wetlands are being drained for more 'productive' use, and increased use of pesticides and fertilizers has destroyed the insect population that birds feed off.

The majority of birds in the world today are factory chickens. There are now three times as many domesticated poultry as wild birds. God loves chickens too. Plant, animal and insect life are more abundant on organic farms than non-organic farms. Going organic is good for birds as well as humans.

Migrating birds spread unity across the world. There are few more awe-inspiring wildlife experiences than watching migrating birds pass by, marvelling at the distances they've travelled, and how far they still have to go. The tiny Willow Warbler makes the 6,000 mile round trip from the UK to Chad, nature's reminder of Chester Road Baptist Church's connection with the Republic of Chad through or BMS World Mission partners, Andrea and Mark Hotchkin. But migrating birds face increasing threats due to climate change, human hunting and 'sport', and shrinking habitats.

Jeremiah foresaw the evil of habitat destruction and its impact on creation: "*I looked and every bird on the sky and flown away.*" (Jer.4:22-26). It is a bleak picture and a warning to us today.

Because some of those who first followed Jesus were in the fishing business, catching and selling fish, fish feature often in Jesus' ministry and teaching. For example: Mk.1:16; Mt.7:10; Mt.12:40; Mt.14:17; Lk.5:6; Jn.21:5. Two thousand years ago on the Sea of Galilee fishing was sustainable.

Today, commercial fishing is big business. Vast floating fish factory ships can each catch and process 250 tonnes of fish per day. One-third of all fishing stocks worldwide have collapsed. Climate change is causing sea temperatures to rise, reducing oxygen levels that fishes depend on. The eco-systems are threatened further by coral bleaching and the loss of breeding grounds for marine fish and mammals.

Plastic waste is proving a major killer to both fish and birds. They weren't made to digest it.

Once again, our human behaviour is threatening the existence of what God made and declared good. It's the responsibility of all of us to live responsibly and sustainably.