

**Series:** Seven Simple Truths about Life  
**Title:** This Is My Father's World  
**Text:** Genesis 1:27-31; Luke 12:35-38; Psalm 24:1; Romans 8:19-21  
**Key Word:** Commitments  
**Proposition:** Everyone will become better stewards of our disposable world by making these biblical commitments.

Good Morning everyone. We're delighted that you have chosen to worship with us today. We're continuing our series on Seven Simple Truths about Life. We're familiar with these simple truths, but we also know how challenging they are to live by. We often fail to remember them, and often fail to put them into practice. If we know and remember them, life goes much better. If we forget them, then life seems not to go that well.

These simple truths of life derive from the Scriptures. For many of us, they are truths we know, yet so frequently we fail to follow them. Today, we will focus on one simple truth about life. I invite you to pull your sermon-handout. We offer this to you as a gift to write down that which God would want you to remember. We will explore some statistics that define the world in which we live and some concrete commitments to make our world a better place. **Our simple truth about life is: Don't take for granted what you can't live without.** In other words, don't be careless with what you can't replace.

We have many things that we take for granted in life. When I was in my late teens I attended some concerts featuring such rock bands as Journey, Eddie Money, and Pat Benetar at Hara Arena in Dayton. We would be jumping up and down to the music's rhythm, enjoying the sound of the bass and electric guitars. The music was

loud. Often times I had to shout in order for my date to hear me. That night my ears would be ringing, the noise lingered throughout the night. Now that I am in my mid-forties, I don't hear as well as I did when I was a teenager. Melinda may think though that it is selective hearing. I learned that it is easy to take my hearing for granted. I just assumed that my hearing would always be a certain way no matter what. I simply underestimated the value of this part of my body.

We also can take the world in which we live in for granted. We think it is always going to be here. Often times we find ourselves being careless with this planet in which God has placed us on.

However, there is a movement in our country calling us to become more conscious of our planet. The Green Movement may be annoying to you. Or it may be a passion of yours. On the other hand, you may not care one way or the other. Often time's folks associate this movement with a particular political party or an ideological point of view. Whatever our view point on this movement, we must ask ourselves this question: What is it that God expects of us as people who reside on this planet? Why should we even care about our planet?

On a Thursday, late in the afternoon, Melinda stopped by the church to do some things for vacation bible school. She came into my office to deliver something to me and one of the first things I asked her was what we were having for supper. She simply said that she had not given that much thought and she would have something prepared. Later, when we were sitting alone at the kitchen table she said

that she didn't appreciate my comment in my office when she had been focused on some more important things. I said, "Your right, that comment was selfish and inconsiderate of your thoughts and feelings. I'm sorry." It's hard to remember and practice one of life's simple truths, "**Don't take for granted what you can't live without.**" A conversation with my Uncle Jack who lost his wife to cancer after forty plus of marriage, reminded me for my love my life partner, and yet, how easy it is to take our marriage for granted.

The Christian faith proclaims Good News not only for human beings but also for this planet on which we live. The Apostles Creed, one of the founding documents of the early church summarizes the Christian faith. It begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." Whether we believe the earth is several thousand years old or 14 billion years old, we're convinced that God created the heavens and the earth. God spoke and there was light and separated it from the darkness. He created the atmosphere, the oceans, the continents, plants, animals, birds, fish, whales, the sun, moon, and stars above the night sky. He created human beings in his image. He then rested on the seventh day, admiring his handiwork. The Lord asks the question: "*Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Who marked off the dimensions? Surely you know.*" (Job 38:4, 5)

The Psalmist wrote our memory verse for today: "*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*" (Psalm 24:1) **This is God's World.** And God has given us the responsibility to care for it. God has blessed humanity,

instructed us to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, to rule over all living things. Genesis tells us that the “*Lord took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*”

The beauty, power, majesty, and the systems and structures of all creation displays God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature, so we are without excuse. Creation is God’s handiwork. It reveals many things about Him. Yet, this Good News is shadowed by bad news.

In the words of Milton, “Paradise is lost.” God had given Adam and Eve a clear command that they could eat anything in the garden except one thing, the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One day, Eve and Adam saw this fruit. The tempter came and aroused doubt within Eve, questioning God’s clear boundary that he had established. Eve remembered what God had said and the natural consequence for ignoring it. But the tempter was persistent, provoking doubt. Eve looked at it again this time through a different, distorted perspective. She saw how delicious it looked, how good it would be for food and ate it. Then Adam ate it. And just as God had said, death entered them. From that moment on, the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve have been plagued by the cancer of selfishness. We’re always thinking, “What’s in it for me? What’s in it for my family, my community? We’re always considering ourselves first rather than others. Death, destruction, violence entered the world. In addition, the planet suffers from our selfishness, even death. Paul wrote to the Romans, “*The creation waits in eager expectation for the*

*sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*” (Romans 8:19-21) We have treated our planet as a play thing for our pleasure, rather than a gracious resource sustaining life.

God though has Good News for our planet and for the ones who care for it. He offers a plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. God loves us; He loves all of creation, so much so that His heart bleeds for the death and destruction we have brought upon ourselves and our world. Out of love and mercy, He sent his Son to seek us and to save us from ourselves. He died a lonely death on a cross to pay for the penalty of sin so that paradise might be regained. He rose to new life so that the power of new life would be implanted into all those who receive Him. When we receive this gift of salvation from God through Jesus we’re changed from the inside out. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in us and a new ruler sets on the throne of our lives. Instead of “Self” sitting on the throne, Jesus sits on the throne. Our thoughts change. Our actions change. Our priorities change. Our calendar changes. Our check book changes. Everything changes. It is no longer all about me. But it’s about God’s purposes & ways. It is not just about avoiding harmful, destructive behaviors. It is more about doing all the good one can do. It is even about caring for this planet on which we live, because we can’t live without it.

Worship is not just about loving God through music, prayers, liturgy, multi-media, and the Scriptures. It's also about worshipping and seeing God who is the creator of the stars in the night sky. Discipleship is not just learning about God through the Scriptures and relationships so that we can become more like Him. It is also includes learning about our planet so that we can take better care of that which we can't live without. Impacting the lives of others by serving the poor is what a radiant follower of Christ does. Radiant followers also adjust ones behavior to impact our planet for the sake of children and grandchildren.

Before we can impact our planet we must know some current facts about it. National Geographic produced a series of shows called the "Human Footprint" which defines our planet as it really is. It helps us see how we have impacted God's world. Here are some interesting statistics which you might find helpful. In ones lifetime the average American....consumes 43, 371 cans of soda pop...uses 28,400 gallons of water in a seven minute shower alone, that's enough water to keep a person alive for 100 years. We also use 700lbs of paper in a year. In China and India the average per person is about 25 lbs. In a life-time one's car consumes 30,000 gallons of gasoline.

On average one American produces 1600 pounds of Solid Waste per year. This waste is composed of the trash we place in the garbage can each week. The average child in the US is in diapers for 2.5 years. One baby uses four disposable diapers a day. By the end of this child's 2.5 years in diapers, he would have used 3,796 diapers. Those diapers would have been produced with 1898 pints of crude oil,

715 lbs of plastic, and 4.5 trees. We also don't know how long it will take for those diapers to decompose in a land fill.

On the other hand, reusable, washable diapers would require 22, 455 gallons of water, which would be enough water for one human being for 93 years.

There is much debate over the issue of global warming. Regardless of ones political perspective one can acknowledge that there is much passion around this issue. One thing for sure though is that both sides of the issue affirm that our planet is experiencing raising temperature. As the earth gets warmer, then disasters like hurricanes, droughts, and floods also increase. The question is whether or not human beings are affecting this increase or not. It has been noted that during the past thirteen years we have seen the warmest temperatures since the early 1800's when temperatures were recorded. Many in the scientific community believe that increases in green house gases are contributed by automobiles, coal burning power plants, and industrial production. They say that this leads to melting of glacier ice, rising sea levels, expanding oceans, and other significant climate changes that alter nature's delicate balance. Others would respectively disagree. The bottom line is that whatever one's perspective we human's can live without our planet.

So, what can we do about this? We can make some commitments that can make a difference. **First**, we can **respect our planet as our Father's World**. I love what the hymn writer wrote, "This is my Father's World, O let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet. This is my Father's

world: why should my heart be sad? The Lord is king, let the heaven's ring! God reigns; let the earth be glad.”

**Second, reduce consumption.** Consider buying used rather than new when it is feasible. Choose products that are long-lasting potentially energy-saving over those that may be a bit less expensive. Energy Star appliances, durable furniture, quality tires and compact fluorescent light bulbs are examples. Save paper in letters and fliers by using e-mail or phone mail to send messages to one's community. Receive and pay bills on-line. Make your next car purchase 20% more fuel efficient than your current vehicle. Go out and buy or lease a hybrid car.

**Third, recycle.** 40% of paper could be recycled. 32% of Americans recycle. We can recycle such things as glass, paper, metal, plastics, textiles, and electronics.

**Fourth, reuse materials.** Simply put use an item more than once. Items can be reused in the same way as before, or they could perform a different function than what was intended. Reuse helps us save time, money, energy and resources. Whole industries have been developed to repair and overhaul such things as transmissions, engines, toner cartridges, and computers. Some items, such as clothes and children's toys, often become unwanted before they wear out due to changes in their owner's needs or preferences; these can be reused by selling or giving them to new owners. Regiving can take place informally between family, friends, or neighbours, and also through various non-profits agencies like the “Clothes Closet”, Good Will, Plato's Closet, and Salvation Army Thrift Stores.

There are many things we can't live without. One of which is this planet we live on. It's usually a challenge to be deliberate in our care of our Father's world. Yet, with God's help, we can make our Father's world a better place to live not only for this generation but also for generations to come. 2322