

This week we conclude our stewardship series, ***A Life That Counts***, with this Sunday's sermon, The Stewardship of the Garden.

1. Do you remember when the U.S. first started observing Earth Day? Why do you think that became important? Did you, or do you, do anything to observe that day?
2. **Read and reflect on Genesis 1:26-30.** Sit and reflect with this passage. What does this passage reveal to you about the role of humans in relation to plants, animals, and the earth?
  - How do you think we are to “rule” or “subdue” creatures and the earth?
  - How are we doing in the job God gave us?
3. **Read** the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. This parable is about a master who entrusted different amounts of money to different servants, what each servant did, and how the master responded to their actions.
  - How did each servant handle his stewardship of talents?
  - How could you compare talents to earthly resources given to us? Are cattle, apples, shrimp, and pigeons resources God has given us? How about cats or dogs? What about spiders or worms?
  - What earthly resources has God given you specifically? How are you a steward of them?
4. Do you remember times in our country before we made Earth Day an “official day” when fish and algae died in our rivers from pollutants dumped in the water? Recall how people started reacting and objecting, and new rules were started

that limit what you can dump in a river (or the Chesapeake Bay) that might be harmful to animals, plants, or people. Sometimes, these rules make it more expensive, or harder for businesses to make their products. There is a tension that can exist between protecting the environment and encouraging businesses.

Is there a balance that should be made? How do you make it? Does it make a difference for you as a Christian?

5. If it's important to be good stewards of the environment, how can you as an individual do that?
6. How could we as a church be better environmental stewards?
7. **Read Romans 1:20.** Spend a few minutes contemplating nature and its revelation of God.
  - What does this verse tell us about nature?
  - What do this verse and verse 25 indicate about the typical human reaction to the natural revelation of God?
  - How can we care for the creation without confusing it with the Creator?
8. **Read Romans 8:18-23.**
  - What does this passage say about the current state of God's creation?
  - How is the redemption of the created order related to our individual redemption?

Many of us traveled during Thanksgiving, taking in the beauty of God's creation. Spend time with your IG thanking Jesus for the great things He created and praying for what could improve.