

**International Worship Service for the Climate
October 28, 2014
Copenhagen Cathedral**

Sermon by Desmond Tutu

Behold, I make all things new. These wonderful words give us hope and inspiration. God gives us opportunities of starting afresh, starting anew, turning away from the hurtful past to new beginnings. But if God is to make all things new, we in turn must seek to be obedient to God and seek justice, equity, and God's righteousness.

We have been singularly disobedient, as we have pursued financial profitability instead of caring for the wellbeing of people and planet. We have been serving mammon instead of seeking to serve God.

We are now being given an opportunity by God, but we have a narrow window of opportunity. We have to act fast!

Fossil fuel has brought great wealth and development. Our modern world has been built on it. Think of the oil and coal and the automotive industries driving our modern economies. But we also now know, that it is causing the destruction of the ambient climate upon which most of life depends. We are causing the destruction of the very life support systems upon which all life is dependent. If we don't change our ways, the scientists warn that 50% of species will become extinct and billions of people will no longer be able to continue to survive in large parts of Africa, to name one continent only.

Is this not extreme injustice? Those who have done least to cause climate change producing 2 percent of carbon emissions - they are suffering the most. The bottom line is that we have to hear the scientists and the rural people across the world, who are already experiencing dramatic climate change. And we have to stop burning fossil fuel as a matter of urgency.

Every day (that) we send more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere - to last for anything between hundred and a thousand years - is an opportunity lost to start a new.

This is not a cause of concern, but of hope and rejoicing. We know that God has given us new ways of generating electricity. We know that if we turn to making all things new, we can get our energy needs from today's energy resources, like the sun and the wind and ocean currents. We obviously have to encourage and help the fossil fuel interests along, but there is no reason why we should allow the one and a half percent of us, who hold all the financial interests to jeopardize all of our futures.

South Africa showed the world a wonderful example. Before there was an all-out conflagration - those in power shared it. Now those in power and with all the wealth need to turn to sharing it for the wellbeing of all people and the planet.

I have suggested four steps that we can take to help nudge the fossil fuel industry along, as they will probably be reluctant to change.

1. Freeze further exploration for new fossil sources and use exploration budgets to develop renewable energy solutions.
2. Hold those responsible for climate damages accountable by making them pay for the damage they cause.
3. Encourage governments to stop accepting funding from the fossil fuel industry - and
4. Divest from fossil fuel companies, and invest in a clean energy future that benefits the world's majority.

We often hear that we do not inherit the earth from our fore parents but are borrowing it from our children. This is not correct. We are stealing it from them! We cannot pay back all the resources we are devouring in order to feed our growth economy. Nor can we bring back all the species whose extinction we are bringing about.

In this service, a children's choir is helping to lead the singing. They are a reminder that our greatest responsibility is to pass on this wonderful world to them in an even better condition than we inherited: cared for and loved and looked after - for it is God's. It is sacred and we must do all we can to protect it.

Just imagine a new world without smog in the air, pollution and the noise of the internal combustion engine. Just imagine again experiencing fresh air, clean rivers and springs of water and mountains that have not had their tops taking of for coal.

Just imagine the beautiful world that our hearts know is possible.

God will enable us to bring it about if we follow God's universal laws for all of life. To bring this about we put the wellbeing of people and planet at the forefront. No longer must our future be directed and dictated by financial interests.

Let us follow the God that makes all things new. When we do that we will be filled with hope.

Amen.