



CLIMATE JUSTICE & DISCIPLESHIP

REFLECTION WEEK 2 - SOLIDARITY

BY DR LISA ADJEI

Transcript of talk delivered online

Hello, everyone! Good evening. It's such a blessing to be able to join you today as we gather and reflect on the topic of climate, justice, and discipleship.

This is a conversation that calls us not only to reflect on the state of the world but also to discern how we, as followers of Christ, are called to act—to stand in solidarity and bring about change. It's a call that demands our full attention and our full hearts. So I really want to encourage us to lean in tonight to this conversation.

I'm really grateful to Reverend Dr Peniel, who last week set for us a beautiful framework on the posture of humility. If you missed that session, please do go back and have a listen. It was absolutely fantastic.

Tonight, I want to build on this framework and speak on solidarity—a costly solidarity, one that forces us to think about others, to consider others, and to centre their experience within it.

We heard Luke's Gospel tonight, chapter 4, verses 16 to 21. In this passage, Jesus reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and boldly declares his mission to the world.

It's a passage that not only reflects Jesus' own words and identity but also offers us a vision of how we are to live out our faith. In this powerful moment, Jesus lays out a vision of a ministry of liberation. He declares that the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord has anointed him to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, healing of the blind, and freedom to the oppressed.

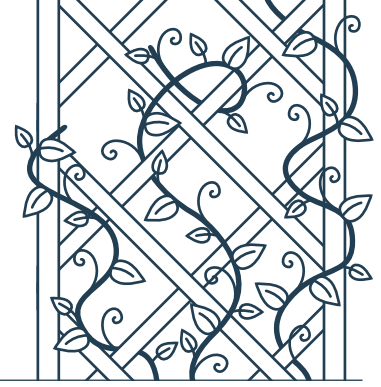
And I know that we could use some good news in our world today. For Jesus, justice is a holistic vision—one that encompasses spiritual, social, and environmental restoration. Nothing is left behind; everything is a part of that. It's a call that intersects the struggles of all people, especially those who have been marginalised and exploited. Just as Jesus proclaimed the release of the captives, we too must work for the liberation of those bound by chains of environmental destruction and racial injustice.

Climate justice is not just a separate issue from racial justice. These are intricately linked together with our faith. I love that this Lent series is called Climate Justice and Discipleship because it reminds us that this is intricately linked to the walking out of our faith. It is not a separate side issue for a few who are passionate about it. All of us, as disciples and followers of Jesus, have been called to be good stewards of the world around us.



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We know that the exploitation of the earth and the exploitation of marginalised peoples go hand in hand. Often, when you see one, you see the other right beside it. And so if we want to see climate justice, we're going to need racial justice too. We cannot separate the two.

In my work, I often meet so many people who are passionate about justice issues. They usually have a particular one that they focus on, something they feel deeply about. Oftentimes, we spend time in conversation talking about intersectionality—the way in which these justice issues overlap with one another. If you're passionate about climate justice tonight, I want to encourage you to see that this is also a racial justice issue, and we must join in that fight towards racial justice.

Climate change has historically and still continues to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities—those already bearing the weight of racial, economic, and social injustices. The way of empire has declared that some people count while others don't. It has commodified resources that God has given us freely and has sought profits at all costs.

Empire and colonialism have not only robbed tribes and peoples of their very lives, culture, tongue, and home, but they have also exploited natural resources—leading to soil erosion, deforestation, and environmental devastation. The silencing of indigenous knowledge has significantly contributed to climate change.

This history is present among us and has left a legacy that continues to impact climate change. And so now we know that those who have contributed the least to climate change are the very ones suffering the most from its impacts—Black and brown communities all around the world.

A number of years ago, I had the honour of walking in solidarity with communities in Durban, South Africa. On this journey, we went on an environmental toxic tour. This was arranged by an organisation that gives you an opportunity to see up close what it looks like to be on the front lines of the environmental crisis.

Seeing large corporations headquartered here in the UK that have built oil and gas refineries in residential areas—within walking distance of schools, homes, and communities—and subsequently hearing the numbers of people in those communities diagnosed with cancer and respiratory disorders like asthma, we have to stop this now.

Those on the front lines of the environmental crisis are losing their lives, as well as their homes, their communities, and their environments. Africa as a continent contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it is one of the continents most affected by droughts, floods, and extreme weather patterns. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, this pattern of extreme weather has continued, with parts of Southern Africa gripped by damaging drought and exceptional seasonal rainfall causing death and devastation in East African countries, most recently in Sudan and South Sudan.

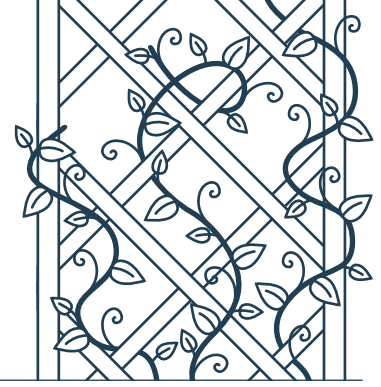
Millions of young people around the world are speaking up about the climate emergency and calling us to seek climate justice now. This isn't just a campaign for them. They are fighting for their future—for their tomorrow.

There's an African proverb that says, "We do not inherit the world from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." This is their future, this is their world, and we must pay attention



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to how we're living on it now because it is not ours alone.

Climate activist Vanessa Nakate says, "Many Africans are losing their lives, and countless more are losing their very livelihoods because we cannot adapt to extinction." The Pacific island nations, which contribute almost nothing to global emissions, are facing threats of extinction from rising sea levels.

Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai, a brilliant, phenomenal womanist theologian, says, "It is evident that many wars are fought over resources which are now becoming increasingly scarce. If we conserved our resources better, fighting over them would not occur. So protecting the global environment is directly related to securing peace."

Professor John A. Powell, from the Othering and Belonging Institute, talks about the mechanisms of separation—a separation from ourselves, from others, and from the earth. Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, in her book *Hospicing Modernity*, explores how shifting our perspective is essential in finding a new way of being. Many outside the status quo are a prophetic witness to us. They show us that a different way is possible.

For me, it's clear that the way we are living as a society is not working. This isn't the way of release, the captive liberation that Christ has called us to. We need a better way to be human together. Often, I think we need an ancient way—back to Celtic roots, back to indigenous practices, back to a better way of living in togetherness and solidarity.

Maybe this Lent, we take an opportunity to pause and examine the way we're building together. These injustices are deeply connected, and we cannot seek to deal with one without addressing the other.

I want to leave you with the challenge to think about the voices you are listening to. God bless you.

Dr Lisa Adjei

18th March 2025