



Green Anglican
Anglican Church of Southern Africa Environmental Network



South African
Council of Churches

World Water Day

March, 23. 2025
SERMON NOTES & PRAYER GUIDE

"The river of God is full of water"

Psalm 65:9

**In the beginning, you created the universe,
and your Spirit was moving over the waters giving birth to all life.
Forgive our ignorance, wastage, and pollution of the sacred gift of water.
Inspire us to preserve and take care of the dams, rivers, reservoirs, and seas.
Help us to use water sparingly for our own sake and others.
Remember your people, animals, and plants whose lives are affected by water shortages.
As we were baptised by the living waters, so grant us the love and spirit to preserve the
precious gift of water, through Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen!**

(South African Council of Churches Prayer for Water Conservation)

SERMON NOTES: WHEN THE RIVER FLOODS

Luke 13: 1-9

Water is the sacred gift of God, but increasingly we are seeing that the rivers are flooding leading to great devastation.

Luke 13:1-9 contains two short passages concerning the need to repent and produce good fruit. The heading in some Bibles, 'Repent or Perish', shows what a stark choice the Gospel provides.

The story of the tragedy of the Tower of Siloam is only found in Luke. It touches on theodicy: why does a good God allow innocent suffering? Jesus is clear God doesn't send tragedies to punish people but that we should learn from them. Suffering in nature – disease, disasters – have always been there but are increasing in a world of Climate Chaos, hitting the poor and defenceless

hardest. If we do not listen to the scientists and change our ways we will indeed perish.

KZN and other provinces are being hit by devastating flooding with people losing homes, businesses and tragically some have lost their lives. Some areas are battling to recover from the floods of previous years and infrastructure has not yet been replaced. The causes of such devastation are an increase of heavy rain and flooding, due to warming oceans because of climate change.

Climate change is leading to more frequent and intense rainfall events, including tropical storms, which exacerbate flooding risks. Poor Urban Planning and Infrastructure is also a problem with settlements on floodplains or wetlands particularly at risk. Plastic pollution clogs the storm water drains leading to devastating flooding in informal areas.

Our response should be repent - 'metanoia' (vs.3, 5) which is more than repentance. It is a complete change of mind and attitude leading to transformed behaviour. We need to change our ways, we need to protect the poor and vulnerable with better infrastructure. We need to protect our water sources and reduce flooding by protecting eco-systems such as wetlands. And we need to stop pumping carbon pollution into the atmosphere which is leading to climate change.

Like the fig tree (6-9) our 'metanoia' should result in good fruit. We can apply this not only spiritually but ecologically to our lifestyles, our churches. What is good fruit in a situation of ecological chaos? The growing impacts of climate change are primarily seen in water - an increase in drought in some area and an increase in devastating floods in others.

It is time to 'repent or perish' to change our ways before it is too late.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We give you thanks for the wind
that swept over the waters of creation
for the voice that brought forth light,
for the life you formed from the seas,
slowly transforming simple cells
into breathing beings
for the spirit reforming women and men
into your image

Through the great flood you saved Noah
so humanity could start anew.
You stood the waters of the Red Sea
on their feet so your people could pass
to freedom on dry land.
In the muddy Jordan you healed a leper.
By the rivers of Babylon
your people sat down and cried
remembering home,
hoping for the day when they would return.
You promised streams in the desert
and water for everyone who thirsts
and bread without money or price.

In the river your Son was baptized by John
and anointed by the Holy Spirit.
A voice echoed from the water, the Beloved
with whom I am well pleased.

In his baptism, you adopt us as your daughters
and sons,
heirs of your promise, servants of all.
With the rebirth of your Spirit you name us
your own, your beloved,
clothing us with grace and truth,
anointing us to be a priestly people, caring
for the least so they, too, know they are
beloved by you.

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as ruler forever.
May the Lord give strength to the people!
May the Lord bless the people with peace!

Amen

