

## Sermon September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

In many places in the scriptures God is stated as the God of the cosmos, the universe. Not just creator of this planet. This belief has led many religious people over the centuries to try and learn more about the universe. To see how vast, complex, and beautiful God's creation is. To create technologies like the telescope, the rocket ship, the satellite, robotics in this quest to learn more about God's universe, and our place within it.

Unfortunately, throughout history, many of these scientists have faced push back within their religious traditions as their findings often challenged how the majority saw the universe, as well as, Earth's place within the universe.

Some faced ridicule. Some faced imprisonment. Some faced exile. Some faced death.

And yet, they kept exploring. They kept learning. They kept creating. They kept teaching.

*Take a minute to share with your neighbour something you learned about the universe that challenged your beliefs. How did you react? Did this newfound knowledge change your beliefs in some way?*

Like the challenges scientists faced, and continue to face within their religious communities from space exploration, we are reminded that in being a disciple of Jesus we face challenges too. Whether it is the sacrifices we have to make to put Jesus first. Or the push back we have to face from those who feel threatened by Jesus' way. Especially when we stand up for marginalized groups

in our community. Especially when we stand up for changing the way we do things.

As disciples we are invited to love one another as Jesus loves us. Part of this invitation includes loving God's creation, which comes with sacrifice. Self-sacrifice as we try to change our behaviours to be more environmentally friendly. Social sacrifice as we face push back from those people who feel threatened when we voice our concerns for God's creation.

*Take a minute to share with your neighbour a time when you faced pushback for sharing a concern of yours about the environment.*

It isn't easy to speak out. It isn't easy to change our behaviours. But when we take up our crosses, though we risk death, we also see new life emerge. We see God's promise of healing and restoration come to fruition. We see a better world, cosmos, for our grandchildren.

Let us pray, gracious God, we give thanks for scientists and technology that have allowed us to learn more about your mysterious yet wonderful universe, as well as, how to take care of the planet we inhabit. Like scientists past and present, help us carry our crosses. Help us face the challenges of being your disciples. Help us change our behaviours, and voice our concerns for your creation. Help us be active participants in your healing and redeeming work. **Amen.**