**Trees of life**

**Reading: Daniel 4: 4-27**

**Sermon summary**

Theme:

To show the role of trees in many parts of the Bible, and to consider the impact trees can have today in restoring degraded environments and addressing climate change. Story from Daniel used to illustrate how trees can be successfully regrown from tree stumps, and how World Vision uses this to help restore forests, increase biodiversity and improve incomes and livelihoods of some of the poorest communities around the world.

Introduction:

Explain the purpose and aims of Climate Sunday.

Give outline of talk

Part 1 – What does the Bible say about trees?

Mention how many times trees appear in the Bible – including first page of Genesis, first Psalm, last page of Revelation. Trees mentioned more in the Bible than any other living being other than people and God.

Bible characters associated with trees: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Zacchaeus.

Kingdom of god is like a mustard seed, which grows into a large tree, and Psalms and Jeremiah both describe a tree planted by streams of water – this demonstrates the importance and benefits of trees.

Part 2 – WV’s project in Nyatike, Kenya

The role of trees in helping to tackle poverty in communities like Nyatike.

Trees can be source of food, fuel and timber.

Trees also help to improve soil fertility and reduce erosion, can improve crop yields, and can provide children with places to play

Part 3 – Why tree planting is not always the best thing to do

In areas with a shortage of water, planting trees, or saplings, doesn’t necessarily result in fully grown trees, as the saplings have small roots that can’t reach the water table, so many die before they become established.

Plantations of single tree types is not the answer as it reduces bio-diversity and leads to further soil degradation, although it is a quick and easy way to plant lots of trees.

Part 4 – Bible Story: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream – tree stump

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about a tree being cut down at the ground level, leaving just a stump. This symbolised him being removed from his throne and driven out of Babylon. However, the tree that had been cut down still had its large root system and so had access to water and nutrients from the soil, and so new shoots grew from the stump, growing back into a full tree, to symbolise Nebuchadnezzar being restored to his throne once he had honoured and glorified God.

Part 5 – Re-growing Trees through ‘Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration’

World Vision promotes a technique very similar to the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s tree, which we call ‘Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration’ (FMNR). This is a process of regrowing, or regenerating, trees from existing stumps through pruning excess shoots, to encourage and manage the growth to just a small number of shoots, so that the tree can be restored in a very short period of time (within a couple of years).

The pruning also provides the farmer with wood for fuel and for animal fodder.

The restored trees help to improve soil quality and improve fertility, leading to increases in crop yield, providing more food for the farmer, and more income. Can also result in less flooding as rainwater becomes more absorbed into the ground.

*Everything is connected video:* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-terQL6RO0&feature=emb\_logo*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-terQL6RO0&feature=emb_logo)

Part 6 – Story of Naaman and his mother Pamela

Story of 13 year old boy Naaman and his widowed mother Pamela, learning ‘FMNR’ from their neighbour Peter, and being able to grow fruit trees, providing guava, avocado and wild fruits, almost doubling their harvest of maize.

Part 7 – Conclusion

* Climate change is making things harder for many, but they can be helped to adapt
* Trees are important but it can be better to regrow trees rather than plant new trees
* Trees need to help to increase bio-diversity and restore the range of plants and wildlife that God created for us.
* Pray for the climate change meetings in 2021, that they will create real change to tackle climate change
* Pray for Naaman and his community in Nyatike as they adapt to climate change
* Pray that God will show us how to reduce our own negative impacts on the environment and respect God’s creation.

**Speaker notes – More about World Vision**

**At World Vision, our focus is on helping the most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience fullness of life. We help children of all backgrounds, even in the most dangerous places, inspired by our Christian faith.**

World Vision has over 70 years of experience working with communities, donors, partners, and governments to create opportunities for better futures for vulnerable children … even in the toughest places.

We tackle poverty at its roots. Our integrated approach includes water, healthcare, education, child protection, and income generation, so every child can grow into who God created them to be.

If you would like to learn more about World Vision’s work and how you and your church community can join us, please get in touch –

Email our Churches team: [churches@worldvision.org.uk](mailto:churches@worldvision.org.uk)

Visit: [worldvision.org.uk/get-involved/resources/](https://www.worldvision.org.uk/get-involved/resources/)

Join us in prayer: [worldvision.org.uk/get-involved/resources/pray-together/](https://www.worldvision.org.uk/get-involved/resources/pray-together/)