

*The footsteps of those who bring good news are a welcome sound.*

But what if people hear it instead as ‘bad news’ – for fear of change?

There was a very good talk last night by Professor Brian Evesham, CEO of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust on Climate Change and its effect, locally as well as nationally, on our wildlife and eventually on us, too. It’s a difficult subject, demanding change from us whether we like it or not, and, in this sense, existential with the goad of death, of human extinction, as the ultimate threat.

But he didn’t start from there. Rather, he began with the good news of what we can still do to prevent this and all the exciting new species which will arrive on our shores if we can contain it. The hard part is the immense cultural change now demanded of us to make containment possible – to allow both Jews and Gentiles to prosper, if we jump straight into the gospel analogy where Andrew is one of the disciples who brings Gentiles to Jesus. This is the bad news that shocked so many of the Jews of his day, for as climate change demands of us a complete reversal in our respect for and obligations to the rest of creation, including the rest of humanity, so Jesus’ presence demanded a complete re-think by his fellow Jews of what they were for, who they were vis á vis God and everyone else.

And this is where it gets tricky, for not everyone, of course, listens to the Good News. As Isaiah says:

*Lord, how many believed what we proclaimed?*

And this is where Brian doubles down on the Good News as Bad News, being the good preacher that he is: if we don’t act now we won’t be here or, in an alarming aside, when someone else was asked what shall we do about climate change, the response was ‘Don’t be under thirty’. It was an appeal to the heart rather than the head of those on the zoom talk – and the only sort of appeal that will shift both business executives and politicians to effect change. It’s this sort of appeal that Jesus makes to us, only ‘Don’t be *over* thirty’ will perhaps work just as well.

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