



We Waited Too Long

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Normally I try to get this article done early in the week, but, I dunno, this was a busy week. I had several meetings during the day. In the evenings, I wanted to enjoy time with family. I felt like I had plenty of time. I procrastinated. No sense of urgency was driving me to write. I was wrong. I hadn't been watching the signs or, if I had, I didn't think things were going to be as bad as they actually were.

Even as late as Tuesday evening, I was unconcerned. My family drove to Cedarburg to have dinner and play team trivia. We knew it might rain, but hoped we could enjoy our meal on the patio before it started. My son-in-law showed the weather system moving quickly on his phone, but it didn't mean a whole lot to me. The restaurant took the weather warning more seriously and had moved the game indoor. Because we don't feel comfortable eating indoor at restaurants with our two unvaccinated children, we decided instead to get some takeout and head home.

By the time we got home, the storm was in full force. Cars were skidding in the deep puddles; branches littered the road. Neighbors on either side of my children had huge tree limbs break off, one covering the entire driveway and swallowing the car parked there. Both of us lost power, and we ate our takeout by candlelight. Hundreds of thousands of people lost power, and we saw a house engulfed in flames from some sort of accident. Our sump pump failed. We hand bailed water last night, but two inches of water cover our basement floor this morning because the power's still out.

We waited too long. We didn't get the batteries for our lanterns or sump pump when we had the chance. We didn't cut down those branches hanging over the power wires. We talked about it, but never got it done. And, I didn't write my story while I had electricity for my computer and WiFi to send it for publishing.

This week we received the UN report on global climate change. It, too, reflects that we've waited too long. The physical world is in peril, and we are living through it every day: thunderstorms, fire, flood, drought. The Earth is moaning, but, you know, we've been busy. We've maybe take some small steps like recycling our trash or, for some, buying electric cars. At the national level, however, there has been resistance to steps that would lower our carbon footprint or impose emission restrictions. It would seem we're in it for the short-term gain despite the call as Christians to be good stewards of all of God's gifts, including this planet.

I feel the inconvenience of water in my basement; islanders feel the despair of being swallowed by the ocean. I grumble about losing power at my house; Californian families watch their homes burn down in uncontrollable wildfires. The science is unequivocal that we caused this, but I don't care whether everyone believes that or not. If we have the ability to make it better, then we must...no matter who or what caused it. The damage to some areas is so severe that it will not be repaired in our lifetimes, or our children's.

The Code Red that has been sounded must not make us throw up our idle hands. Instead, we must do our individual part and urge those with more authority to take even bigger steps. Please pray for this planet and pray to understand God's will for its sustainability. Pray to discern God's call to you as a partner in service, and then act. We don't have time to wait.