

Dear Friends,

Over the past couple of weeks, I have been involved in several conversations linked to the changes which begin on 1<sup>st</sup> June to the rubbish and recycling collections in the city. This is involving many people altering their collection day. We're all having adjustments to what is being collected when and what container to put it out in. We're all being encouraged to recycle more and for less to go to landfill. God created the world in which we live and which was created for the delight of all people.

Sometimes our recycling takes the form of upcycling and seeking new transformative expressions of furniture, equipment or whatever it might be. By doing so, materials that might otherwise go to waste are turned into something new or which gives better value environmentally. It might be as simple as taking a pair of well-worn jeans and turning them into a handbag or an apron. Maybe a glass jar can be decorated so it becomes the new pen holder for the desk. Tennis rackets become mirrors or spanners become coat hooks or whatever it might be.

We know how important it is to care for God's creation. We also know we haven't lived up as a human race to all we should have done to do that. Maybe upcycling can become a metaphor for how God, through Christ, takes some of the things of our actions or character we would prefer to lose and helps us through the Holy Spirit to make something new. We are given a fresh beginning and for something new and beautiful to emerge.

God always seeks for something new and for us to be made whole in him. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we read, 'so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!' We can relate this to many things including the world or society as well as our own lives. It reminds us there is always something new to come which should bring us huge encouragement.

God's story is about restoration and redemption. It is not about replacing something with something else and potentially wasting it. It is about allowing transformation to take place. We see this in and through Christ. The cross and resurrection show us this most clearly. And there is more that is yet to come as we see in the book of Revelation.

Over the next few weeks, what might we want to bring before God to ask Jesus to upcycle and transform into something new and beautiful? It might be a prayer of longing for the world or it might be something very personal to us. Let us recognise all God longs to do through the restoration and redemption that only God can do through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us rejoice and give thanks to God who offers his love and grace so freely so that 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.'

God bless,  
Chris