

**Sometimes Jesus simply says no!**

This week in Western Canada they had one month's rain in less than 1 day. The earth gave way and land slid everywhere. The earth filled up and the flooding was catastrophic.

This comes after a record-breaking season of wildfires in the same area, and just before that, a heatwave which killed 100's of people in British Columbia.

"It's just this awful feeling of being right – and not wanting to be right. This is exactly what the best available science has predicted for years." Said the author of numerous studies on environmental concerns in this part of Canada. Dr Peter Wood.

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In the US, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado are plagued by wildfires even as they head in to winter. Even as they prepare for snow, the fires burn even hotter.

The ground is dry, the winds fierce, humidity is low, it's warm ... and the snow is late ... very late.

The Colorado state governor said, "We used to talk about a fire season, now it's a year-long phenomenon.

It is so dangerous to fight these fires; they are so big, so hot, they move at such a bewildering speed and the terrain is so rugged, that they don't really use firefighters at all ... only small planes with payloads of fire retardant on them. Many of the pilots of these planes have been killed, trying to save lives, buildings and the creation.

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A long time ago, a young man, the leader of a tiny group of odds and sods from a Roman occupied backwater called Galilee, stood before that Empire and was asked a question. “Are you the King of the Jews?” It’s a political question. Is your kingdom like ours? Is it based on our Kingdoms values? Does it have the same aims as ours? Does it treat people and all of creation like we do?

“Are you like us?” Pilate asks.

This empire which was the mightiest the world had ever seen. This empire which was built on military aggression, economic power, the expansionist take-over and use of natural resources, a general disregard for the ideas, thoughts and practices of others, asks this young man, this question.

His reply is very simple ... if he is a King, his kingdom is not one the Empire understands. If he is a King, his kingdom is not one based on military aggression or economic power. It is not one that takes from others or exploits the creation.

This Kingdom of which this young man may or may not be king, is based on truth. The truth that love conquers hate, the truth...that creation belongs to God and is a gift to us ... it is our home ... and should be treated accordingly.

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Cop26 has just finished and the dispossessed people of Jesus time – the world’s indigenous and occupied peoples ... are disappointed.

Progress is too slow. Agreements are never honoured. Funding never arrives.

There is nothing ... but wrangling over details ... meanwhile the world burns, or drowns, or both at the same time, depending on where you live.

An indigenous people’s spokesperson simply says, “Cop26 didn’t do enough.”

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Back here in good old NZ, in July, the New Zealand Army was deployed in the Buller District on the West Coast, following torrential rain and warnings for people to evacuate.

In the town of Westport, it was another once in a 100-year event. In the end the local river was 13 metres above it’s normal running height. 800 homes were emptied and 3000 people evacuated.

The town’s population is only 5000.

Climate change and poor flood planning are the likely causes.

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“Are you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked Jesus. It’s a political question. Is your kingdom like ours? Is it based on our Kingdoms values? Does it have the same aims as ours? Does it treat people and all of creation like we do?

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**Sometimes ... Jesus simply ... says No.**

Amen.