

News from the Ecochurch Team: A Rubbish Article



The department of the environment says that in 2018 English beaches had on average 642 items of litter per 100m of shoreline, which was an improvement over 2017 when there were 911 items per 100m. Many of these items are plastic. Plastic items break up into microscopically small bits that contaminate not only the oceans, but are ingested by marine organisms and can eventually end up in you and me. It is likely that there are microplastics originating from litter in that cup of tea you are enjoying whilst reading this.

The Department Of The Environment also say that local authorities spend over £699 million a year (around £30 per household) to clear up litter.

Many campaigning organisations believe that the UK should implement a scheme whereby we would pay 20p extra on single use liquid containers and reclaim it when we return the containers. Some countries e.g. Norway already do this. The government does have a deposit scheme in the pipeline, but nothing will actually change until 2025 at the earliest. The Scottish government has a scheme, which they were going to implement in August 2023, but which Westminster has delayed till 2024.

See www.gov.scot/news/scotlands-deposit-return-scheme and www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-64624421 for further details.

So what is the Christian response to this? What would Jesus do? There is not much direct biblical guidance, though I note that after the feeding of the 5,000 the disciples cleared up the waste and filled twelve baskets. Also, Tearfund believe that our waste causes problems for the poorest around the world. See, for example www.tearfund.org/campaigns/rubbish-campaign Certainly litter is unsightly and unhealthy and arguably bad for mental health.

I believe that as well as praying, we should be taking back control and start acting. Four things that you can do:

1. Write to your MP asking why it is taking so long to implement a bottle deposit scheme when other countries have had these for a while.
2. Don't drop litter yourself, but dispose of it properly. "Find a bin and put it in!"
3. When you see litter pick it up and dispose of it properly. You may not have dropped it, but if you don't deal with it, who else will? If it's not dealt with it could end up in a whale's stomach. I have to admit that Kathy is much better at doing this than I am.

4. When you see someone dropping litter it is okay to challenge them. I have never actually been hit, but I have been threatened twice.

It is important to use common sense here. There are hazards associated with both three and four. Doing the right thing often comes with a cost.

Finally I would like to add that littering in the UK is a criminal offence.

Here are some links on the subject you may find interesting:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCjeNZquEPU

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yomf5pBN8dY

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdQjp_phj1s

Let's make God's world a better place.

Michael