



## Biblical Texts and Teachings related to Divestment and Reinvestment

The Bible offers a number of teachings that are directly applicable to a discussion of fossil fuel divestment and investment in a clean energy future. We'll describe four Biblical themes, with some accompanying passages, which speak to these topics.

***Biblical Theme #1: God wants us to prosper responsibly. We're accountable for how we use our financial resources.***

### Biblical Texts

Psalm 112:5

It is well with the man who deals generously and lends, who conducts his affairs with justice.

Wisdom 3:3

For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans.

Matthew 25:14-30

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.

Luke 12:15, 23, 34

And Jesus said to them, "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does life consist of his possessions. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

### **Commentary**

God wants us to make the most of our resources, working diligently to improve what we've been given. At the same time, God wants us to manage our resources fairly and justly, and to treat the poor and creation with respect. And, the Bible criticizes greed, especially when it distracts us from God and causes harm to others.

### ***Biblical Theme #2: Creation belongs to God. We are its stewards***

#### **Biblical Texts**

Psalm 24:1

The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; the world and all that dwell therein.

Gen. 2:15

The Lord God took the human creature and placed him in the garden to till it and tend it.

Lev. 25:23-24

The land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

### **Commentary**

The Bible teaches that the Earth belongs to God. Faith communities, through all aspects of our lives, are to be its good stewards. This means that our investments as well as our lives should reflect stewardship values and help care for creation while also helping our churches and our institutions flourish.

### ***Biblical Theme #3: In times of crisis, God calls the faithful to re-build society.***

#### **Biblical Text**

Nehemiah 1:17-19; 4:6

Then I (Nehemiah) said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burnt. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace.' I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, 'Let us start building!' So they committed themselves to the common good. ... So we

rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work.

### **Commentary**

Nehemiah, a Jew who worked in the court of the Persian king, returned from Persian exile to Jerusalem, because he had learned that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins. He motivated his fellow Israelites and organized the re-building of the walls as a sign of the renewed faithfulness of the people of Israel.

A commitment to the development of a clean energy economy would represent a similar expression of leadership by the faith community – a new way for people of faith to serve as a “light to the nations.”

***Biblical Theme #4: When it is time to act or when we know what is right, we shouldn't procrastinate.***

### **Biblical Texts**

Luke 9:58-62

Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

James 4:13-17

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." ... Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." ... Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

### **Commentary**

In certain circumstances, Jesus calls us to act with urgency. And when we believe we know God's will for our lives, we should act – and not procrastinate. Investing in a clean energy future is an urgent imperative that will save lives, protect future generations, and increase the well-being of the entire human family. We must act now.