

1st October 2023 – HARVEST CELEBRATION ‘God’s great repair shop’

Does anyone watch the TV series ‘The Repair Shop’?

If you haven’t watched it, the idea is that people bring in precious items which have fallen into disrepair and ask a team to repair them. These items are not usually financially valuable, but are of **great value to the person who brings them – there’s a story**. Maybe it belonged to a much-loved relative, or it meant something precious to them in earlier times.

I wonder what you would bring? I have two things, one of which I couldn’t find – but I this is the other one –**show ‘Slowly’ toy & explain**.

Today’s theme is a ‘world renewed’, and the point is that our world is God’s Great Repair Shop. The passage was maybe a bit difficult to understand but the basic point is that one day God will renew it completely. That’s what v21 means when it says: ‘the *creation itself* will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.’

As Christians we celebrate the idea that God saves *people* – but His plan is also to save our world, the whole of creation. The creation itself, St Paul says, will know the glorious freedom of the children of God.

But it’s not just at the end of time that this great repair happens. God has designed our world with a great capacity to repair itself. We’re going to think about one great example today, and it’s all about these – **SHOW LEAVES**.

Leaves are nature’s great repair shop – and today we’ll learn why.

Time of year when leaves fall off trees. Why do leaves do that? ASK and EXPLAIN – tree hold on to nutrients, sugars and all good stuff for winter.

So actually the first part of the repair is that leaves fall to save the life of the tree. **FIND WINTER TWIGS**

Now the leaves are on the ground and that's really valuable, too. They provide homes & shelter for lots of creatures – **FROGS & HEDGEHOGS**

They also provide food for lots of creatures – beetles and (as it composts) worms – **BEETLES AND WORMS**

Finally, as it turns back into soil, it feeds the tree. The special material in a leaf is lignin – when lignin goes back into the soil it helps the soil to hang on to its nutrients. So, the tree in spring gets lots of extra vitamins which help the tree to bud again – **SPRING BUDS**

So leaves are a vital part of God's Great Repair Shop. And harvest is a time, not just to be thankful for our food and for God's provision, but to remind ourselves that we are called to look after our world. Our world is God's great repair shop, and we are made in God's image – we are called to be those who heal our world not destroy it, just as our Maker intended.

The creation waits eagerly, St Paul says, for the children of God to be revealed. That's partly looking ahead to God's renewal of all things. But it also applies *now* – because followers of Jesus, the children of God, have a special calling to be stewards of our world.

Just like the objects in our repair shop, the world is old and precious. It also needs repair. Although it has a great capacity to heal itself, now we're putting so much strain on it, that it struggles to do that. Signs are all around us, and all over our news, too.

But **the leaf reminds us that out of death new life can come.** The idea of new life out of death lies at the heart of our faith – so let's be inspired by these leaves today, and recommit ourselves to be people who look after our world, bringing new life.

Because our world is God's Great Repair Shop.

PRAY – Thank you, Lord, that the world is your great repair shop, precious to you and to us. Help us to look after our world, as your children, and your stewards. Amen.