A lament for the Amazon

I am sorry.

I’m sorry that we’ve taken your creation for granted. Sorry that in our pride, our greed, our stubbornness, we’ve forgotten our duties of stewardship. I am sorry we’ve forgotten that by disrespecting your Earth, we are disrespecting you, our God. I am sorry.

I am sorry we ignored those who rely on the Amazon. The people who live and breathe it, who eat and drink it, who feed and nourish it. I am sorry we forgot that we depend on it too. You gave the rainforest the breath of life, just as you did us. As distant as it is, it gives us water, oxygen. Life. The distance between us makes it easy to forget. Easy to assume its destruction is not our problem. That is not an excuse, and I am sorry.

I am sorry that it’s taken us so long to realise what we’ve done. The Amazon is being destroyed, piece by piece, acre by acre, every day and we have failed to stop it. We have failed you. I’m sorry that we might not have time to reverse our actions. I’m sorry that we left it so late. Forgive us, Lord, and have mercy on us that this time we might change. I hope that we do, selfishly, for my own sake.

I am weeping. The Bible tells us to weep with those who weep, and I am weeping with the people who are losing their livelihoods. With every flick of flame, more knowledge is lost beyond recovery. I am wailing. I’m sorry I wasn’t before. But now, now I feel the burning, I feel their pain. I see it in my peripheral vision when I try to turn my face away. I feel heat of the flames now my eyes are open. I feel a pain that cannot be put into words, and yet it is the tiniest reflection of theirs. I am sorry to feel it. But the more of us who do, the easier it will be to bear.

I weep for the Amazon, and for a larger world being destroyed. Weep with me, those who call yourselves Christians. Weep with me, those who call yourself human. Weep for the people whose livelihoods are burning. Weep because we are not blameless. Weep because the Bible tells us so. But know that tears alone can’t douse a flame.

We weep but we don’t close our eyes. Help us to pray. To be stewards. To show love, compassion, respect and care that can only come from you, oh Lord.

Please hear our prayer. Please use us in your world.
As the fires in the Amazon continue to burn, please continue to pray.

• Pray for Jair Bolsonaro, President of Brazil. Pray that he might be wise and compassionate when tackling these fires, and that he would enforce necessary policies against deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

• Pray for indigenous communities being affected by the fires. Pray that people will stay safe, and that they will find comfort in God in the face of extreme loss.

• Pray for world leaders and international communities to come together and seek the most effective solutions to protect the Amazon for future generations.

• Pray for BMS worker Laura-Lee Lovering, working in the Amazonas region of Peru. Pray that she will use her passion for creation stewardship to teach others how to care for the world they live in.

• Pray for BMS World Mission as we commit to doing as much as we can to protect our environment.