

Lent 3A - 2023

A New Creation

Once there was a man on a train going across the desert in Arizona. He was the only person in the car who had not pulled down the window shades to keep out the glare of the hot sun on the parched earth. In contrast to the other passengers, he kept looking out his window, and seemed actually to enjoy the dismal scene.

After a while the curious man seated across the aisle, asked,
"Sir, what do you see in that wasteland that makes you smile?"

"Oh," he replied, "I'm in the irrigation business, and I was thinking if we could only get water to this land that the desert would become a garden."

That's what Jesus is teaching His disciples. He wants us to see the world's people as He sees them. Every one of them is precious in His sight. By divine grace, they can become a new creation, made beautiful in holiness.

(by Robert E. Coleman from *Evangelism: Behold the Harvest!*)

"Water is life."

Mohandas Gandhi, India's great Champion, proved to the whole world that a person can go without food for a long, long time - for weeks - but water is something else. I don't know how long someone can live without water, but it isn't very long. A baby who can't keep down fluids will dehydrate and die in just a few days. Adults last only slightly longer. The only life-sustaining substance that we need more frequently than water is air. Water, then, is essential to life. In one sense, water is life.

Where there is no water, there is no life. Cactuses and camels and gnarled trees and grasses of the desert can adapt to conditions of low water, but there isn't any living thing on this earth that can adapt to no water. — "Water is life." Lack of water is death.

To be thirsty is to stare death in the eye. — It's no wonder that Jesus turned water and thirst into spiritual teachings as he sat there by Jacob's well, that ancient and sacred place for quenching thirst. If thirst of the body is the very taste of death, then thirst of the soul is the very picture of spiritual despair.

(<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Before I Build a Wall...

One of my favorite poets is Robert Frost.
Of all his writings, my favorite is "**Mending Wall**".

It's the story of two New England farmers who go out each spring to mend the rock fences that have fallen down over the winter. They do it every spring, under the belief that "good fences make good neighbors". But this particular spring, one farmer is beginning to question that long held assumption.

As they work their respective sides of the fence, wearing their fingers raw with the rocks, he begins to reason.

"He is all pine and I am all apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across and eat the cones under his pines.

Why is it that we need to build these fences back every spring?"

Then he says this:

Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know

What I am walling in or walling out

And to whom I am like to give an offense

For something there is that doesn't love a wall

That wants it down.

Friends come in when the rest of the world is going out. And this day Jesus stopped to befriend the woman at the well. That's the Jesus I want to know. Do you know Him?

(by J. Howard Olds from *Faith Breaks*, www.Sermons.com)