

A REFLECTION ON WATER

By: Caroline N. Sharp

I would love to tell you about when I fell in love with nature but to be honest, that connection has always been there for me. I remember as a child always being drawn to water. It is still a thin spot for me today where I feel closer to God. I recall being fascinated by all the living things in the water -- crawfish, minnows, tadpoles, water lilies -- as well as the life surrounding water -- dragon flies, mosquitos, spiders and moss. But I've always been annoyed at all the garbage that surrounds our bodies of water.

Now as a farmer and graduate student in environmental studies, I can vouch for the complexity involved in climate change and will adamantly claim that everything is connected. Everything we do has a ripple effect. From the food we eat to the clothes we wear, humans have had a massive impact on the health of our planet. There is no denying the effects that agriculture and especially the Industrial Revolution have had on degrading our environment. This saddens me to no end as it does the young people who have to live in this world that we are leaving them.

As Christians, we have a duty to care for and protect this world. I want to highlight 2 verses from the Bible in particular. Genesis 1:28 says *God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.* This verse in Genesis has often been taken out of context and has been used in ways that support our growth in industrial advancement (as well as industrial agriculture). This verse, to me, explains our role as caretakers of the earth. I often compare this verse to babysitting a younger sibling. We are put in charge. If our parents return to see that the younger child has been harmed in any way then they would not be pleased and we would suffer the consequences. Another way of looking at this is to see our planet as a gift from God. What would it say to the giver if we took their gift to us and trashed it?

The second verse is Luke 10:27 *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.* We are caring for others when we are good stewards of the earth. When we support local farmers who practice organic and regenerative methods, we are keeping harmful chemicals out of our watershed and are supporting a local economy. When we practice moral economics through wise purchasing decisions that do not harm the earth (such as buying into fast fashion), we are helping those who live in poverty and drought in other areas of the world. Everything is connected! As you journey through the season of Lent, I humbly ask that you are mindful of your use of water. Whether you be flushing the toilet, running water in a sink or doing laundry -- think of those who do not have clean water to drink or those who are hungry because of drought.

God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave the living waters
so that those who taste them would never thirst,
God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty,
for there was none to quench his thirst,
listen to all those who truly confess
and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water,
become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water,

and gain wisdom in conserving and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples.

Amen.

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