

Monday Quotes



Grain

“People may spend their whole lives climbing the ladder of success only to find, once they reach the top, that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.” –Thomas Merton

Field

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” Mark 1:9-15

Thoughts

For every bear you see in the wild about ten more have seen you; at least, ten is the number I recall from “The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek” by Sid Marty, writer, and retired park ranger. His book was a piece of non-fiction, except for the chapters written sympathetically from the bear’s perspective, about a bear that terrorized an area near Banff in Alberta, Canada.

The wilderness in the New Testament can seem like a place to retreat and find solitude for Jesus and for us. But it is a space where you don’t want to get too lost in thought without noticing your surroundings. In the Gospel lesson each first Sunday of Lent, Jesus enters a wilderness with danger and temptations. Creatures, who were not evil but just wild, noticed Jesus. Satan who is the culmination of evil powers, also noticed Jesus.

Mark’s Gospel doesn’t give us a thorough description of Jesus’ temptation in the desert. But we know he emerges after 40 days proclaiming the Kingdom of God and a message of repentance. The wilderness was an unsafe, unpredictable environment, where he was tempted to find home somewhere other than in the Reign of God. Doesn’t a wilderness experience, either literally in the wild or within the uncertainty of our environments sometimes lead us to reach more deeply for answers, or tempt us away to cling to things that exacerbate our insecurities?

Expect temptations to forget about the Reign of God, a place without maps but that is our true home. Expect to fail sometimes, settling for quick rather than deep answers, going along with biases, and valuing our egos over love. Expect controversy when we remain rooted in the Reign of God.

In the wilderness, I imagine Jesus sitting with dangerous creatures watching him and evil voices of temptation tugging at him while he remained still and also noticed the angels. May we begin Lent knowing how much we belong to God and where we can always return. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy