

Thursday, October 1, 2020

**The way of the Star Thrower**

**- Pastor Hank French**

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy (Matthew 5:7).*

Loren Eiseley, a well-known and respected American anthropologist, educator, philosopher, and natural science writer, wrote a profoundly moving essay titled "The Star Thrower." In the essay he tells and then reflects upon the following story:

"One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up, and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, "I made a difference for that one."

That's the attitude Jesus was looking for when he told those around him, "Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy...."

Confronted with all the suffering in the world, all of the anguish, all of the misery, it is easy to just turn away convinced that we "can't make a difference." But we can. One act of mercy at a time, one act of compassion at a time, one act of kindness at a time and we become "star throwers."

At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his followers: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

When they asked when they had done all that, Jesus replies that when we do such things for others, we are doing it to him. And we can look at those we have been merciful and compassionate and kind to and know that we made a difference.

Prayer: Merciful God, lead me in your way, the way of the Star Thrower. Amen.