Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed” (2 Timothy 3:15).

2 Tim 3:10-17; Mark 12:35-37

Paul’s letter to Timothy reminds us that faith is passed down and learned. He tells Timothy that it was his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice who formed him in the faith before Paul appeared to ordain him as leader of that Christian community. Paul also emphasizes that faith is grounded in the Scriptures. Salvation history is written there, and familiar phrases filled with holy breath are the continuum on which each successive generation is riding forward.

All of this was on display today for those who watched or took part in the memorial in Minneapolis for George Floyd. Gathered around his body, members of his large family said goodbye during a ceremony that was both deeply personal and unabashedly political, a chance to mourn him but also to rally support for the reforms his death has demanded. Evident in the family stories they told was the role of his late mother, who held everyone together and passed on her own experience and faith by word and example.

The eulogies and hymns were rich with biblical promise and imagery, and by welcoming God into the calculus, showed how faith can inspire and empower what human effort alone cannot accomplish. History has shown that social progress occurs when the time is right and often tragic events suddenly tip the balance from resistance to resolve and from despair to hope.

The Scriptures are so embedded in our language and in popular culture, even the unchurched can be moved by the majestic cadences of many familiar texts. Once the Living Word is proclaimed, it becomes true again in people’s hearing because it captures the moment. When a simple, familiar text like Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” is spoken, it takes on the force of inevitability. Past witnesses to the struggle for justice are invoked, and their voices are heard again. Martyrs rise up to compel the present generation to takes its place in the long but unfinished march of history, until “justice rolls down like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24).

Paul was encouraging the next generation of pastors and church leaders when he told Timothy to “fan into a flame” the spirit he had received. Perhaps what we are witnessing in today’s complex and disturbing events in our streets is the hand-off

from veteran apostles and activists to their reinforcements, young people filled with idealism and the desire to live their lives not on the sidelines but on the front lines of history. We all are once again invited to remember what we have learned and believed.

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