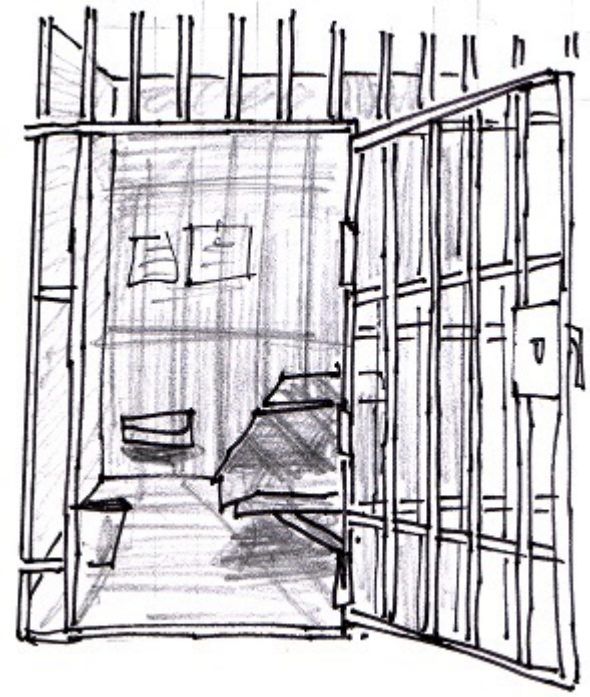
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Why do you not judge for yourself what is right?” (Luke 12:56).

Eph 4:1-6; Luke 12;54-59

Today’s Gospel begins like a weather report. Jesus gives tomorrow’s forecast based on current conditions. A cloud in the west means probable rain. A wind from the south means a hot day ahead. But he is only stating the obvious to weather conscious farmers and fishermen in the audience. His real message is that if people can interpret such signs, why don’t they read the signs of the times?

The term can encompass large historical or social patterns that reveal underlying cause and effect relationships. Injustice causes social unrest; Environmental neglect produces adverse effects on human health. Large, long-term factors or human variables can be harder to predict. Marshall McLuhan once described technology’s influence as only seen only in the rearview mirror as society speeds forward into an unknown future.

Jesus applies weather predictability to dealing with human conflict: It is always better to resolve differences early before things get worse. Settle on the way to court, he counsels, because if it goes to a judge you may lose the case, end up in jail or with a fine you must pay to get out. His example is a metaphor for how to deal with conflict. We say,“Don’t let the sun go down on your anger” or “See the handwriting on the wall” to urge people to get out ahead of crisis.

How many families have members who won’t speak to each other because of some past difference that stirred pride and hurt? People become imprisoned by anger and the brooding that burrows into their consciousness. The longer this goes on the harder it is to root out. Only deep humility and a desire for reconciliation can release people from emotional lockdown.

Many of Jesus’ miracles of healing may have been about freeing people from deep conflicts that had made them sick or paralyzed their ability to let go of hurt, shame and guilt. Forgiveness was the remedy people needed to live again. Parables about fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, focused on the power of reconciliation to restore health and harmony.

Honest reflection and self-awareness are necessary to face unresolved conflicts that tie knots in the lifeline and deprive us of energy and peace of mind we need to live. The courage to write a letter, send an email or pick up the phone to ask forgiveness has set many siblings or old friends free of past hurts. Reading these intimate signs of the times can alter the emotional weather for whole families, turning storm clouds into sunny days again.

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