Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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"The world in its present form is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31).

1 Cor 7:25-31; Luke 6:20-26

To be human is to be both immersed in the world but also detached from it. Time and space hold us to each day's demands, yet we transcend their limits in our longing for resolution. The unfinished work of creation and the desire for justice and peace produce a tension that is bearable only in prayer and by trusting in God's promise of a new world arising from the shell of the old.

Jesus' Beatitudes describe this tension. Disciples live between the now and the not yet. We are in the world but not of the world. St. Paul tells believers in Corinth to live normally but to be alert for God's entry into history and the return of Jesus. The early church lived the Beatitudes, traveling light, always prepared for this world to give way to God's surprises.

Paul apparently thought the time was short and that Jesus would return soon. He resolved the question of refraining from marriage in this light, but the church would gradually adapt its expectations to accept the long-haul idea of God’s intimate presence and active grace as already transforming the world generation by generation. The risen Jesus was already present within his church and would always be in the world through his Spirit until the end of time.

We are that presence now in a crucial moment of trusting that God is as much at work in us and in the church now as in the first century. God is calling heroes and martyrs to live the Beatitudes in all their tensions and invitations.

Experience teaches us how transient the affairs of this world really are. All the more reason to live the Gospel fully and meet each day as though salvation is at hand and grace is being poured out wherever we act for justice and give ourselves away with compassion. Why hold back if God is already and always here in the fullness of time, refueling our efforts and blessing our generosity?

Only one thing endures and is real-- God's will and the grace that invites us to be part of the divine design as free agents and cocreators. The Gospel lifts us up in hope and strengthens us for the tasks at hand as eternity is uncovered in the smallest duties of each day. Blessed are we if we live today with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, for this is how God is loving us.

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