Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me” (John 5:30).

*Is 49:8-15; Jn 5:17-30*

Famous craftspeople often inspired schools that continued their designs and style. A furniture maker would also pass on his secrets for joints, glues and varnishes to his son, so that the finished pieces would be recognized as expressions of the same tradition.

Today’s Gospel offers a profound theology of the intimate relationship between Jesus and his heavenly Father, but it could also be describing his time in the carpentry shop with Joseph. We imagine him growing up helping Joseph complete his work. He does what he sees Joseph doing. Everything Joseph does he shows Jesus how to do. Intimacy produces imitation. Jesus is the carpenter’s son, but he is also the beloved Son of the heavenly Father, and this same dynamic of imitation occurs because they are one.

The works of this Father and Son are not furniture but Creation itself. As the Creator made human beings in the divine image, so the Son restores that image by healing the sick and driving out evil spirits. As the Creator gives light so the Son opens the eyes of the blind to see and live in that light.

In the fourth Gospel, many of the miracles remind us of Creation. Like God forming Adam from the clay and breathing life into him, Jesus makes mud with his spittle and smears it on the blind man’s eyes. He puts his fingers into the ears of the deaf mute and whispers an Aramaic command, *Ephatha!* “Be opened!” Jesus is restoring Creation to its original wholeness.

When Jesus first appears to his disciples after his resurrection, he breathes the Holy Spirit into them and gives them the power to forgive sins, another way of restoring them to new life after the chaotic days of fear and failure following his death. As he forgives them, they are to forgive one another. Because the Father is the source of all life, Jesus also has this power to give life. When the dead hear his voice, they will rise out of their tombs, a preview of the raising of Lazarus.

Discipleship puts us into a parallel relationship with Jesus similar to the one he has with his Father. Intimacy leads to imitation. We do whatever we see Jesus doing, even as he does what his Father is doing. We pray to see Jesus at work. We do what

we see him doing. We say what we hear Jesus saying.  We listen to God's Word to learn and know what we are to say and do.

As disciples and co-creators, we are to take up the work of Jesus, even as he took up the work of his Father.  "I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (John 5:30).  In our own discipleship we ask, "What would Jesus do?" Intimacy leads to imitation.

This imitation will be the pattern of the Last Supper discourses in Chapters 13-17 of the fourth Gospel, also known as the Farewell discourses. In concentric expanding circles of creative power, Jesus loves his disciples as the Father has loved him. They in turn love one another as Jesus has loved them. This example is the model as the discipleship preach to others.  So, by word and example, the Gospel is extended into the world.  This pattern is formed in us by faith to be the church, the body of Jesus active in the world.