

# bread for the journey

## If God would only talk back

Preachers preach as if what we say from the pulpit are the words of God.

Yes. Preach with authority. Carry the word from God. Preach it sister. Preach it brother. The mantle of Elijah is upon us. That's what ordination is. We carry the mantle of authority. Don't leave home without it.

This "Bread For the Journey" is an example of taking that conviction to another level. I am particularly passionate about the subject. In May, we saw many young people strive in their recoveries, but we also lost a couple of young men to this disease. Rosecrance staff share both joy and sadness with each other. And we brought our pain to God. To whom else can we go when our hearts are full of happiness and pain at the same time? Who else could make sense of it all?

Instead of leaving the subject at the chapel door after a time of reflection and remembrance, I imagined myself carrying on a conversation with God. I imagined God talking back to us. Much of my personal prayer life involves imaginary interviews with God. I think it captures the spirit of AA's step 11, "sought... to improve our conscious contact with God..." Here's one imaginary interview I had with God following the deaths of two dear children for whom we cared and loved.

### Do you care what happens to us and to our troubled world and especially our children?

*Of course I care. More than you obviously know or trust. But—talk to me. I'm listening.*

### How do you explain suffering—atrocities committed against children and our kids who died?

*The question wearies me. Why do you always blame me for untimely deaths or natural disasters but especially human fallibility? Learn to take care of your selves. Suffering children? I hate it. It makes me sick. But being God doesn't mean I could or should stop death. Death*

*happens. In weird ways. Strange ways. Unfair ways I will not explain. Luck of the draw? Poor decision making? Perhaps. Then, people ask if I have a plan. I don't understand that word—"plan." You are always making plans, strategizing, and making vision statements. I don't do that. I wrote: "Live and let live," and "Die and let die." Death is not the end of the world. It is a consequence that comes with life. Besides nothing I create ever really dies. Changes form. Moves into a different dimension. But it doesn't just go "poof" and disappear. Don't ask me about the details. I haven't worked it all out yet. I've just gotten over the Eden disaster for God's sake. But believe me—it will all be okay.*

### Is there a purpose to life? I mean, "What's the meaning of life?"

*You philosophers! Just live it. Make it happen. Create it. Work in a lab. Go into medicine. The first heart transplant brought me to tears of joy. I did not think you could pull it off. But you did. Fix stuff. Tend the garden. Make stuff flourish. I like farmers. They get it. Plant stuff in the spring. Harvest it in the fall. Make sure there is enough for everyone. It freaks me out when anyone goes hungry. I often hear the word "deserve" floating around among you. Some people don't "deserve" stuff. Says who? Who in the world came up with that idea? "Deserve" has nothing to do with it. Does anyone "deserve" to get born? No. Take care of each other for Christ's sake. (Did you like that pun?) Jesus and people with the heart of Jesus had the right idea: it's about compassion. It's about giving until it hurts.*

### Justice. Let's talk about justice. What about justice?

*Let me tell you about justice. Justice is about equity. Equity is the right of everyone to eat and be safe from harm. It's the freedom to choose who you are and how you live—as long as you don't hurt anyone. My "chosen people" had it right when they instituted a "Year of Jubilee." I forget the details but it had something to do with every generation offering a fresh start and cancelled debts to everyone who needs a hand up. By the way, the Jews were no more chosen than non-Jews. Every people and every tribe is my "chosen people." Jonah finally got that right when he went to Nineveh like I told him to do. That fish story was a whale of a tale by the way. And, Jesus got it right, too, after a "foreigner" taught him that need is need no matter what tribe you are from.*

(continued on back)

**Last question: What about drugs?**

*What about drugs?*

Kids and drugs? Kids who die from overdoses? Kids who die from violence.

*Makes me sad. And not a little angry.*

That's it? What are you going to do about it, about kids using drugs?

*No. What are you going to do about kids using drugs? I am watching and waiting. Fix it. I count on you. I count on all of you to fix the*

*problem. When kids die from overdoses I weep. And I wait on you.*

Thanks for talking. *No problem. Bless you. Keep working at it. Never give up. I cheer for you.* 



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