

Richard Rohr:

Our daily meditation theme this year is called as you know perhaps The Prophetic Path, and I think it's not an accidental phrase because I offer it to you in contrast to what most of us were trained to think of Christianity in general, not as a prophetic path, but as a contest, a contest which immediately frames reality in terms of win, lose winners, losers. The Prophetic Path says there's a way of moving toward winning that includes losing. It doesn't exclude it. You see the genius of that. It's what you've often heard me call perfection is the inclusion of imperfection. Sin is part of the journey towards salvation. Once you hear it, I hope you can say, well of course, that's obvious. But most of us prefer the language of courtroom and judgment and contest where there's a few winners really and lots of losers. This has not served history well.

And so The Prophetic Path talks about a journey of two steps forward that necessarily to continue includes one step backwards, and that falling, that failing, that suffering, use whatever word, it becomes the energy for the next two steps forward. This is wisdom literature as opposed to contest literature. So we're going to use the teachings this year to try to illustrate that, that the Christian way is a prophetic path. The prophets were Jews but they also critiqued Judaism. Do you see the step backward in that? And each of us has to be able to critique our own group, our own self, our own teaching. And it's that counter movement that becomes wisdom. There's point and there's counterpoint and we need both.

If you allow reality to show itself to you in the daily news, in your own heart, you'll see that it almost always deserves sadness, disappointment, what the Bible calls lamentation, that things are not as they could be. Things are not as they should be. Now don't think of that in a sentimental way, but think of it as opposed to a judgmental way. It's bad. Get rid of it. No, it's a lesson and that leads you towards solidarity with the suffering of the world. Today many of us are joining that suffering through the lens of Ukraine or many of the drought ridden countries of the world. We can't ignore that. We can't say this is not happening. But what it leads us to is not judgment or thinking we can eliminate it, not that we shouldn't do our bit to help, but we enter into solidarity with it. And that indicates the character of the life of prayer, a life of solidarity with universal suffering.

If you hear the gospel in a contemplative, non-dual mystical way, be prepared to be surprised, radically surprised, and it takes away your capacity for rash judgment, for certain judgments. I know who's good and I know who's bad. I know who's going to heaven and I know who's going to hell. I don't need you to the point where you, I'm sorry, but you question the very existence of hell because it's all mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy. But let's get there through the study of this year.

I thank you for your humility in trusting that I'm not a heretic. This is not incorrect teaching. In my opinion, it's the gospel and that's why we call the gospel good news, not bad news. And what we have now is largely bad news

which is why so much of the world is abandoning Christianity. It doesn't offer them a balm in Gilead as the Hebrew scriptures say. It doesn't offer them salvation or healing. That's what the word salvation means, healing. We need healing. We don't need winning. The winning mind is a ego mind. The healing mind is a loving mind. So thank you if you can trust me on that. And trust the mystics, too. They all got there. But most of them aren't mainline Christians and it still isn't mainline Christianity. It sounds a little dangerous. I promise you it isn't. Right hand, I promise you it isn't. Amen.