

In the Gospel, Jesus acknowledges the ability of the people to interpret the weather, rain comes from the Mediterranean in the west ... or a heat wave from the desert in the south.<sup>i</sup> But there is something missing. The people did not know how to live in right relationship with one another and with God.

Jesus offers some advice. If you are having troubles with those around you, work out your differences. Listen to one another, come to a fair settlement, and avoid sending someone to jail. The greater concern for Jesus is that many do not recognize the presence of the Savior in their midst. Jesus came to set us free from slavery to sin and to teach us how to live in right relationship with God and with our neighbor. People might understand that He is the long-awaited Messiah if they only read the proper signs of the times.

Today is the Memorial of Saint John Paul II who served as Pope from 1978 until 2005, longer than 26 years. He devoted his life to God, and he was good at reading the signs of the times. When he was elected pope, his homeland of Poland suffered under communist rule. People were not able to live in freedom and the government perpetuated a lie that God does not exist.

Pope John Paul II visited his native homeland and invited people to read the signs of the times. Be not afraid of the passing powers of this world. Do not fear communism. Trust in the mercy of God. Love one another as Jesus has first loved you. The people were inspired by the truth he preached. They stood up and demanded greater freedom to worship God and to live in peace. And with God's help, the captive nation was set free.

God works through every culture in every land to try to help people read the signs of the times. When James was growing up in western Alaska, his father would take him outdoors and share his knowledge of the sea and the land, the clouds and all of nature. This knowledge was extremely helpful to survival. Native Alaskans read the signs that God provides in order to stay safe and to avoid the harsh dangers of winter.

James was born 90 years ago when schools were not so readily available in the bush communities. Everyone was home schooled in the traditions and the values of the culture. Honesty and integrity are important. Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect. Cooperation is important so avoid conflict. We must live in right relationship with one another and most importantly with God. We are stewards of the land, and we must care for one another by sharing the gifts that God has given us.

God works through every culture in every land to try to help people read the signs of the times. The songs we sing in church are often helpful in this way to show us how to see God, to follow his ways, and to help others in all we do:

God of all things, in great and small things, so we labor to set all hearts on fire, for your greater glory, O God.<sup>ii</sup>

Be the passion in our soul as we fight for justice and long for the reign of peace  
Be the hunger in our heart as we bring your mercy to all who are bound by shame  
Be the wonder in our mind as we seek for wisdom and walk in the way of truth  
Be the blessing on our lips as we share your promise of hope for the homeless heart

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<sup>i</sup> Gadenz, Pablo T. The Gospel of Luke. P. 248.

<sup>ii</sup> Lyrics to Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam by Dan Schutte