

# Cold comfort

by [Kathleen L. Housley](#) in the [June 2, 2009](#) issue

The way Herod liked to listen to John the Baptist, summoning him from his cell for private chats but could make no sense of what he said; the way Festus kept the apostle Paul locked up for two years because he enjoyed hearing him talk, although his words made him afraid; the way the German guards, terrified by night bombings, sought out Pastor Bonhoeffer, even though he was, by his own account, a provider of cold comfort, writing to a friend, “I can listen all right, but hardly ever find anything to say. Yet perhaps the way one asks about some things and is silent about others helps suggest what really matters”—did not stop the sharp rap on the prison door or the words “get ready to come with us” as if for one more quiet conversation about what really matters.