

Pentecost 3 (Proper 5)

June 9, 2024



PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Thus must the Church of Christ continually engage in the work of expelling the devil. Her warfare with the wicked old serpent, who shows his fangs with a bitter determination to establish his dominion, is a perpetual one.

— Martin Luther —

Church Postil, Sermon on Luke 11:14–28

Genesis 3:8–15

Soon after God created a companion for Adam, Satan showed up in the form of a serpent and came to her and planted a seed of doubt in her mind about the goodness of God. The serpent insinuated that a loving Creator would not wish to keep wonderful things from her and her husband. She ate the fruit and offered it to Adam, who also ate from the forbidden tree. Their eyes were opened and they suddenly recognized that they were naked.

- *How does sin cause us to be ashamed of something that God created as good, such as our naked bodies?*

As God came to look for the pair, he called out to them, “Where are you?” The man confessed that he was afraid when he heard God’s footsteps. God continued to ask the two questions and they answered truthfully about their failure. They had been deceived by Satan and did not trust God’s word to them.

- *In what ways are we both innocent and liable for our actions when we have been deceived?*
- *Do you suppose their lack of experience with the deceiver made the first humans vulnerable to temptation? How might experience make us wiser and less gullible? In what ways was this first sin not so much a sin of naiveté, but rather a sin of dishonoring God by putting trust in the self?*

The punishment exacted on Adam and Eve was that there would be enmity between them as husband and wife as well as between themselves and their future children. Even so, grace comes to the first humans, as even though they were banned from God’s presence, God clothed them and covered their shame (Genesis 3:21).

- *Did God create the enmity between the human beings, or was it the natural result of deception, blame, and guilt? Have human beings improved in this area since that first sin in the garden?*

Psalms 130

- *What does the psalmist mean when he said he waited for the Lord?*

As human beings, we are not very skilled at waiting. We get anxious and antsy; we watch the clock, willing the time to come for healing, answers, and opportunities. The word the psalmist uses here in Hebrew is *qa-wah* meaning “to hope for” or “to look for.”

- *In what way(s) is there an element of hope in our waiting for the Lord? What happens if we wait or watch without hope?*
- *Does hopeful waiting signify faith or confidence that God will*

provide for our needs in due time? Have you ever experienced this sort of “waiting for the Lord?”

2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1

There is much to be discouraged about in the world we live in: violence, terrorism, poverty, lack of educational resources in many parts of the world, and the never-ending diagnoses of cancer and other illnesses that plague humanity. What should we do in the face of all of these grim realities? Shall we simply give up? Throw in the proverbial towel? Or is there an alternative to our growing despair?

Paul drew on the faith of Israel as he referred to Psalm 116:10, saying that he believed, and therefore, he spoke. The psalmist uttered these words in the face of affliction, having experienced weeping and stumbling in the faith that brought him near to death. So too, the Corinthians were ones who believed and spoke their faith, trusting that the God who raised Jesus from the dead is the one who will raise them also. Paul urged the faithful not to lose heart — even though the body decays, our inner being is renewed daily through the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is the promise of eternity!

- *How does the good news of Christ’s resurrection carry you through the difficulties of life? Are there any exceptions?*
- *Do Paul’s words, “We believe and so we speak” resonate with you? How do you “speak?”*

Mark 3:20–35

It seems it is part of our human sinful nature to criticize that which we fail to understand. In this lesson, the crowd accused Jesus of working for Beelzebul. Certainly that means that the crowd understood those that were healed to have been possessed by demons. Did it not occur to them that freeing a person from such possession would be the work of God? Freedom from anything that holds us captive is the mighty work of God.

It is ridiculous to think that Satan could (or would) cast himself out of a person. Jesus offers another example from absurdity when he likened this healing miracle to plundering a man’s house. The man must be tied up and subdued before his goods can be stolen from him. No one would willingly allow their possessions to be stolen if they had a choice. Satan would not destroy the very tools he uses to do his evil work.

- *Does the way Jesus responded to his accusers tell you anything about his annoyance with them? Why was he so annoyed?*