

Pentecost 3

June 29, 2025



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.

All works except for faith have to be directed to the neighbor. For God does not require of us any works with regard to himself, only faith in Christ. That is more than enough for him...

Therefore, think nothing else than that you do to your neighbor as Christ has done to you. Let all your work and all your life be turned to your neighbor.

– Martin Luther

Advent Postil, 1522

1 Kings 19:9b–21

As believers and followers of the Lord, we can understand Elijah's feelings against those in Israel who were worshipping false gods and forsaking the One God. Things had gotten so bad that the people destroyed the sacred altars and were now after Elijah to silence him.

We see a lot of idolatry and forsaking of God in our culture. It grieves us that many would rather worship the gods of money, success, and status rather than the God of Life. We, like Elijah, can become "jealous" for the Lord.

- Does God need our "jealousy" for him? Does God need a human defender? Explain.

God instructed Elijah to take his place on the mountain whereby God demonstrated his power through natural means. A strong wind swept around the prophet causing rocks to fall, an earthquake shook the land, and fire raged. But, God was not in any of those places. Then came a whisper and God spoke to his servant in a quiet voice, sending Elijah back to the wilderness of Damascus to anoint three persons for service to His kingdom.

- When have you been sent back to deal with a group of people that were hostile to you? What was that like?
- When Elijah felt alone against a world of rejection, what did God do for him? (See v. 19–21) How does God provide this same kind of support for you?

Psalms 16

Throughout the Biblical narrative, believers proclaim that God is a refuge, a place where they are safe from evil and calamity. Here, the psalmist asserts that those who seek after other gods, rather than the One God, will only have sorrows and calamity.

- What idols have you been prone to seek after? How has that caused you sorrow and pain in your own life?

It is part of our human nature that we seek other gods. One way to define Original Sin is "the human inability to trust in God." We all suffer from this condition.

- In what way is idolatry (our lack of trust in God) the source of all our sin?

Galatians 5:1, 13–25

Paul taught the Galatians that the whole Law was fulfilled in one command — to love one's neighbor as one's self.

Fighting amongst each other can only lead to the devouring of each other. It is the Spirit of God that keeps believers from doing harm to one another and to the self; without the Spirit living in us, we end up doing things we really don't want to do, things that are according to the flesh. We were called to "freedom" Paul said, but we often misunderstand the nature of that freedom.

- In what ways in your life, has serving others in Christ's name, helped you to refocus on him and not on yourself? How is this a "freedom to" rather than just "freedom from?"
- Self-denial is a theme that runs through the lessons for today. How are you doing at "self-denial?" Why is it so hard?

Luke 9:51–62

Luke chapter nine gives a rapid-fire account of important events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus had been clear about what would happen to him — as well as what could happen to those who were with him. But here, at the end of the chapter, the evangelist says, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). Two key words are used in the Greek to describe this "setting his face":

- a) The first word is *στηρίζω* (*sterizo* = *stay-reedz-oh*) meaning "to establish" or "determine." Jesus strengthened his resolve, and was determined to see his mission through.
- b) The second key word is *πορεύομαι* (*poreuomai* = *pore-ew-oh-my*), meaning "to go" — indicating that Jesus was moving toward a goal. His purpose was singular in nature and nothing was going to stop him.

- Why do you think Luke emphasizes so clearly that Jesus was heading to Jerusalem with such a strength of purpose? Why is it important to know that Jesus' death on the cross was no accident, mistake, or failure, but the fulfillment of his deliberate intention?

Since Jesus had yet to be nailed to the cross of Calvary, perhaps this comment left the disciples wondering what he meant (those who came after the twelve have the benefit of hindsight in this matter). But Jesus was preparing his followers for the suffering that was about to come. He had already said: "If you want to follow me, be ready to give up your life."

- What excuses did some people make for delaying in their discipleship? What similar excuses do we make to ourselves, when we know full well what God expects of us?