

Pentecost 7

July 27, 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.

Let this be the first and most important point, that all our prayers must be based and rest upon obedience to God, irrespective of our person, whether we be sinners or saints, worthy or unworthy. And we must know that God will not have it treated as a jest, but be angry, and punish all who do not pray, as surely as He punishes all other disobedience.

– Martin Luther

Large Catechism, The Lord's Prayer

Genesis 18: (17-19) 20-33

The beginning of chapter 18 recalled the hospitality of Abraham toward God as He came to his servant in the form of three visitors. Abraham acted graciously toward the men by taking care of their need for food and rest. As Abraham escorted the visitors toward the direction of their journey, the Lord revealed to him the wickedness of the people in nearby Sodom and Gomorah.

- *Why do you suppose the Lord asked, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"*
- *What are the reasons cited for God choosing Abraham to be the father of many nations (verse 19)?*

Abraham challenged God, whom he called "the Judge of all the earth," to do what was just when he asked the Lord if he would, indeed, sweep away the righteous with the wicked. Abraham appealed to the Lord's mercy and begged him to save the town that God was angry with. He was certain there were innocent lives at stake.

- *Does it seem strange to you that Abraham would "discuss" God's actions with Him? Do you ever do that?*
- *What does this say about our relationship with the Lord? Does he listen to our prayers? Can we affect God's actions in any way?*
- *What does it tell us that, finally, Sodom and Gomorah were destroyed?*

Psalms 138

The psalmist sings of God's ever-present help in times of trouble. In this psalm of praise, he proclaimed that God's name and His Word are lifted above all else. All the kings of the world will sing the Lord's praises because He is faithful and brings strength to His people.

- *In what ways do you rely on God's favor?*
- *How is your faith strengthened when you notice that God has been working in your life?*

Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)

Sometimes the best way to learn a new skill is to walk alongside someone who is adept at that skill themselves. There are many things we can learn from a book, but actually practicing is the key to honing our skills. This is true for athletics, craft-work, and even how to be a capable pastor.

- *What sorts of things have you learned by working with someone who was already skilled in what you wanted to learn? How did it help you to spend time with them?*

Paul talks about this walk of faith saying, "as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." To "receive" is not something we do of our own accord. Rather it is something that Christ does to us (in Greek = παραλαμβάνω *para-lam-ban-oh*) as he "brings us alongside him" on this journey of faith.

- *In what ways has Christ "taught" you how to be a disciple?*
- *How is faith like a very long walk through life?*

Paul goes on to explain that the fullness of deity dwells in Jesus. Jesus is fully human and fully God – this is a major tenet of the Christian confession of faith. In Christ, Paul asserted, we come into fullness. We are made complete through our Savior in whom we have our truest identity. As he died and was raised from the dead, we will die and be raised also since we share a baptism with him and our old selves were buried in the sacrament. This is the source of our life in God and the benefit is true freedom through Christ who walks alongside us on our life's journey.

- *In what ways have you sensed Christ walking alongside you? What has that done for you?*
- *How are we called to walk alongside others on the faith journey and bring them along with us?*

Luke 11:1-13

Jesus' disciples ask him to do for them what John did for his followers: teach them to pray. We have no record of John teaching his disciples to pray, but we can assume that Jesus' teaching was unique. For one thing, John would not have addressed the Lord as "Father." But that's exactly the way that Jesus begins his prayer, "Father, hallowed be your name..."

- *Why is Jesus' reference to God as "Father" a unique convention when it comes to prayer?*

In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther asserted that it is our duty to pray, that the second commandment gives us the order as we are urged to use God's name in prayer and praise, and call on Him with every need.

- *Why are many believers afraid to pray out loud? Do they not realize that they already know the perfect prayer – the one our Savior gave us?*