

Pentecost 11

August 24, 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.

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own
choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord
Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same, And He must win
the battle.*

– Martin Luther–

A Mighty Fortress is our God

(Source: cyberhymnal.org)

Isaiah 66:18-23

There will be a time, says the Lord, when he will return his people to Jerusalem and restore them as a people. There will be a time, also, when the Messiah will come and he will be a sign of future salvation among God's people. At that time God's Word will also go forth to the nations, to those who have not yet heard. They will finally know the truth about what God is doing in the world, as they are gathered in the Holy City, the new creation.

- *How did the prophet Isaiah proclaim the extension of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to all nations? Was this a new message for Israel?*
- *How do you think Israel received this message of God's mission being extended to the nations? How does this drive our evangelical witness?*

Psalms 50:1-15

The Word of the Lord came to the psalmist. He is the righteous judge who will not keep silence. This song was a message of judgment to those who failed to keep God's commandments. Those who made sacrifices were the ones who were called "faithful." Yet, it was the way in which God's people offered a sacrifice that made the difference. If they brought him a goat or a bull with the attitude of doing God a favor, as if he needed it for sustenance, then they were rebuked. God doesn't need anything from humanity! The proper offering is one that comes from the heart; one that shows thankfulness and true praise of the Almighty.

- *How does it make you feel when someone just mouths the words of thanks, rather than being truly grateful? How do you know the difference?*

Hebrews 12:4-24 (25-29)

The author of Hebrews continues to discuss the life of faith with his audience. He urged them not to grow weary as they serve, in fact they have yet to suffer the worst of persecutions. He cites Proverbs 3:11-12 which says that the Lord disciplines his children because he loves them. This discipline could have been a minor correction, such as a verbal rebuke, or something harsher such as the infliction of physical pain.

- *Is it difficult to imagine God inflicting physical punishment on those he loves? Why or why not? Does that make you uncomfortable at all?*

- *What are other forms of discipline that help children (and adults) learn to be disciples?*
- *Why does the author of Hebrews insist that discipline is for our own good and leads us into holiness?*

The writer goes on to speak of two covenants and the warnings that accompanied them: one that was given on earth, through Moses in the time of Israel's journey to freedom from slavery, and one that is to come that will be issued from heaven. The new covenant is nothing less than Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for now he sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

- *Why is it hard for us to hear warnings when they come?*

Luke 13:22-30

Previous to this lesson, Jesus had taught many times about who will part of the Kingdom and who will be left out. Among those who will be left out were those who denied him (12:9), those who layed up treasures for themselves rather than treasuring Christ (12:21), those who fell asleep waiting for the master to return (12:39), those who failed to interpret the signs of the times (12:56), to name a few.

Jesus warned that the way of salvation is a narrow door. There will be many who want to enter, but will not be able; they will be left outside knocking. Entry through the narrow door is not gained simply by knocking. There is actually a struggle that occurs. This is the cost of discipleship, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer would call it. To follow Christ requires something of us. It requires our lives.

- *What is the difference between earning our way to salvation and there being a struggle to follow Christ in faith? Who is the focus in each scenario? How do we often mistake the two?*
- *Why is it so hard for us to imagine that some people will be left out, cast out, or rejected?*
- *From where does our confidence come when we think about eternity? Do we have reason to wonder about our ultimate fate? Why or why not?*

The good news is that we are not left to ourselves to do the striving it takes to reach the narrow door. Jesus is always with us, on our side, guiding us, teaching us, and walking alongside us. And all the way, we are growing in grace, faith, and love.

- *When you look back on your life thus far, how have you grown in your striving for the Kingdom of God?*