

Pentecost 25 (Proper 28A)

November 15, 2026



God does all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him.

– Martin Luther –

Explanation to the Third Article of the Creed

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.

Zephaniah 1:7-16

In the decades before Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in the 6th century B.C., God sent many prophets to his people. In this text, the prophet Zephaniah speaks about the approaching “day of the Lord.” God warned that his wrath would be unleashed on those in Jerusalem and Judah who were complacent and denied his almighty power. Their idolatry and disobedience, even under the influence of the good king Josiah, left them with no excuses. They could not blame their evil on their king! In response to their evil God promised to show his power by complete and utter devastation of the earth.

One of the Lord’s major complaints against the people was their complacency. We are no strangers to complacency in our culture.

- *What did the people mean when they said: “The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill”? What is the source of such fatalism and complacency in faith? Have you ever experienced that kind of attitude?*

As with many Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming Day of the Lord, this passage can be understood on different levels. In one sense, it applies to the historical destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred not long after the prophet spoke these words. It can also point forward to the consummation of all things, when Christ returns in glory on judgment day.

- *How are both the historical and future Day of the Lord related? What do both have to do with the spiritual upheaval brought about in Jesus’ first coming, in his death, and resurrection?*

Psalms 90:1-12

The psalmist sang about the steadfastness of the Lord welcoming his people to be with him, “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” The Lord is our everlasting sanctuary, in him we find rest and shelter.

- *In what ways do we honor our dwelling place with God similarly to how we tend to our houses?*

The psalmist acknowledges in this hymn that a thousand days for human beings is like a single day for the Lord. His wisdom and understanding are too vast for us to comprehend. Things change so quickly for us, but the Lord God does not change.

- *Does the thought of God’s power ever cause you to pause and simply be in awe? How does this psalm point you to such wondrous thoughts?*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

As he wrapped up his letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul said that the day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night. He likened it to when a woman is pregnant and goes into labor before the expected time. The infant comes when the time is right; there is no forcing the child to be birthed, and the pain must be endured until the baby is born. There is simply no way around it!

So it is with the coming of the Lord; he will come in God’s good time, and though there will be signs and labor pains, the exact moment is only known by God.

- *Why is it so easy for us to forget that we are waiting for the return of Christ? Are there any signs present today?*
- *What are the “labor pains” we experience as we wait for Christ’s return?*

Paul played on the images of day and night, saying “You are all children of light, children of the day” (v. 5), which he contrasted with people who indulge in the “night life.”

- *In a spiritual sense, what does it mean to “keep awake and sober” (v. 6)? What is Paul encouraging us to do?*
- *Paul used the same metaphor in a different way in verse 10. What does he mean by “awake” and “asleep” here?*

Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus told a parable about a man who entrusted his property to some of his servants, that they would do business for him in his absence. The servants received different amounts of talents (money), all of which were according to their abilities.

Each of the servants increased the number of talents given to him except for one. The servant who received only one talent buried it in the ground and refused to work with it to increase its original value. Upon his return, the master was pleased with the other servants for being faithful stewards of what they were given, but he chastised the one who buried the master’s talent and did nothing with it. The master commended the faithful servants and granted them even more, but the unfaithful servant was cast into outer darkness.

- *How does faithful stewardship require great responsibility? In what sense does our trustworthiness in small things demonstrate our trustworthiness in larger things?*
- *Are the things we have in life ours to do with as we please? Do we deserve all of the things we have acquired? How does the answer to that question show where our hearts really are?*