

Christmas 2

January 3, 2027



... Solomon calls folly all that which proceeds without God's word and works. A wise man, then, is one who guides himself by God's word and works; a fool is one who presumptuously guides himself by his own mind and notions.

— Martin Luther —

LW 35:262

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.

1 Kings 3:4-15

How often have you imagined that someone would show up and grant you your deepest desire like some genie out of a bottle? What would you request? A million dollars or more? A bigger house or a sports car? Perhaps you'd like to live forever.

God is no genie; he is not offering young Solomon three wishes. But he tells the king to ask for whatever he wants, knowing that Solomon's heart was in the right place.

- God gave Solomon what he asked for and what he didn't ask for: riches and honor. In what ways has given you what you've asked for but also what you didn't ask for?
- Why is wisdom one of the greatest gifts we can receive from God? Are there other, more important gifts in your opinion?
- Read what Jesus says to his disciples in John 14:12-14. How can we learn from Solomon's example what it means for us to pray in Jesus' name?

Psalms 119:97-104

Psalms 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible. It is an extended poem in praise of God's Word. This lesson is just a small portion of that psalm.

Here the psalmist asserts something that all who believe in God should know, namely, that contemplating on God's holy Word brings us a deeper connection with the Lord and gives a wisdom we would never have on our own. In this section of the psalm, the writer maintains that this wisdom is greater than the wisdom of his enemies, and it is always with him.

- In what ways do those who dwell in God's Word gain a greater insight and wisdom about the ways of God and the ways of the world? Have you ever found yourself to be hungry for such understanding?
- In what ways do we come to carry God's Word with us wherever we go? When have you found that to be helpful?

In verse 101, the psalmist claims, "I hold back my feet from every evil way." In verse 104, he says "I hate every false way."

- How does faith in God not only lead us to what is good, but also lead us away from evil? In what way does repentance figure into all this?
- If it is true that we hate evil, why do we still succumb to it? What is our underlying problem? Read what Paul says in

Romans 7:14-25. Where does he find hope?

Ephesians 1:3-14

Paul used some descriptive words to characterize the believers in Ephesus: chosen, beloved, holy, blameless, predestined, adopted, forgiven, sons and daughters. He says that all of this work on God's part is according to his will and desire. Paul also asserts that God has made known the mystery of his will to those he loves.

- How do you understand what is the mystery of God's will? How can you be sure?

Because it pleased God to choose believers, he gave the church all of the spiritual blessings needed for his purposes. No one person has them all individually, but collectively we possess all the gifts needed to do God's will.

- How is ministry like being a part of an athletic team? On this team does the coach make any cuts?

Luke 2:40-52

It was time for the Passover festival and Jesus and his family went to Jerusalem to the temple. The 12 year old boy remained behind, but his parents didn't realize it until days later. When they returned to look for him they found him in the temple talking with the religious leaders. The leaders were amazed at Jesus' wisdom and understanding, even as his parents were shocked by his level of comfort among them.

- Do you think Mary and Joseph were at all impressed with Jesus' wisdom? Why or why not?

Luke tells us that when Jesus' parents found him they made it clear that it was time to return home.

- Have you ever lost a child for a period of time (even a few minutes)? How did it make you feel?
- In what ways did Jesus submit to his parents' authority? Why is this impressive? Should it be impressive?
- Why do you think we, as human beings, often have a negative view of authority?

In Ephesians 5:22 where Paul speaks about wives "submitting" themselves to their husbands as they do to the Lord, it's the same verb used in this story about Jesus.

- How is the submission of faith a positive trait and not the description of a weak or timid character?