

Pentecost 10

August 9, 2020



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.

That [Jesus] now takes the five loaves and gives thanks etc., teaches that nothing is too small and insignificant for him to do for his followers, and he can indeed so bless their pittance that they have an abundance, whereas even the rich have not enough with all their riches.

– Martin Luther –
Church Postil

Job 38:4–18

Job experienced much pain and hardship in his life. Throughout many chapters, we hear his prayers of heartache. We also hear the words of his “friends” who end up blaming Job for all that has happened to him. Job longs to speak with God himself, saying, “I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know what he would answer me and understand what he would say to me.” (Job 23:4–5)

In the lesson for today Job gets his answer from God — one that he likely did not expect. We can hear the sarcasm in God’s tone as he addresses Job. God never answers the questions of “why” that Job had asked, rather, God questions Job about his power as a man versus God’s power as the Creator saying, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding” (v.4).

- *When we deal with God, are we in a conversation between equals? How was Job’s response from God even more humbling than what Job had already gone through?*
- *Though Job had argued, complained, and questioned God’s justice, how does God’s response show that he had been listening to Job’s prayer? Did Job really need an explanation, or did he need to know that God was still with him? What’s the difference between an answer and a promise?*

Psalms 18:1–6 (7–16)

The psalmist sings joyfully that he has a secure refuge in the Lord, even as he describes the forces arrayed against him. Even in the face of destruction and death, he trusts in the stronghold of protection that comes from his Lord and God.

- *In what ways have you experienced God as your security? Is it always obvious? Does faith assume everything will turn out okay; or does faith trust that God is in control? Is there a difference?*
- *How does this psalm express the very same thing that Job experienced? (see above) Is God strong enough to bear with our doubts and fears, without forsaking us?*

Romans 10:5–17

For Paul, the heart and voice are intricately tied together. When a people have received the gift of faith and trust the Lord with all their heart, they can’t help but express it.

There is a parallelism between the phrases of Romans 10:10, “For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Both go hand in

hand and cannot be separated one from the other.

- *Why is Paul adamant that there will be an outward expression then there is an inward faith and trust in Christ Jesus?*
- *What would Martin Luther say is the source of our being able to call on the name of the Lord in the first place? Why is the ordering of God’s act and our act so important?*

Paul goes on in his letter to indicate that there are those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. He asks a rhetorical question to get them thinking, “How will people call on the Lord if they’ve never even heard of him?”

He challenges the Romans to get out there and preach the Word so that all would hear the Gospel message and come to faith in Christ.

- *What is your role in sharing the Gospel so that others may come to faith? How are you doing with that call? [Does it frighten you? Have you grown in comfort with it? Do you need some encouragement?]*

Back in Romans 1:16 Paul said the Gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...” This is key to our Lutheran understanding of the gift of faith: it is the message that has the power to bring about faith. Through Scripture, preaching, and through believers sharing the good news, the Holy Spirit is active to create faith.

- *Why is it important to give proper credit to God’s Word as the basis for our faith as well as the source and power of our faith?*

Matthew 14:22–33

Right after Jesus fed five thousand people a simple meal of fish and bread, he sent his disciples away on a boat to go ahead of him to the other side of the lake. He went up on the mountain to pray in solitude even as the men in the boat drifted further away from him. A storm kicked up and the disciples became gravely concerned for their own safety. They were terrified when they saw a figure walking across the water toward them thinking it was a ghost. But Jesus shouted out to calm their fears, “Fear not! It’s me!”

In that moment Peter got a great idea to walk out to Jesus on the water and Jesus consented. As the wind picked up, Peter began to fear and started to sink into the water. Jesus reached out for him and rescued him and they all got in the boat as Jesus calmed the storm.

- *How does Peter’s calling out to Jesus give us clear evidence that God was already in Peter? How are we all saved by calling on Christ? How is faith something that Jesus does for us and not something we do for ourselves?*