

Pentecost 11 (Proper 13)

August 4, 2024



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.

God wishes to show us how he cares for us in all our needs and faithfully provides for our daily sustenance. Although he gives and provides these blessings bountifully... yet he wishes us to ask for them so that we may realize that we have received them from his hand and may recognize in them his fatherly goodness toward us.

– Martin Luther –

The Lord's Prayer, Large Catechism

Exodus 16:2–15

You have heard it said that the trouble we are familiar with is often less frightening than the change we anticipate — even when that change is for the better. The Israelites were headed into the wilderness having been saved at the Red Sea as certain death faced them on both sides: Pharaoh's army was on their heels, and the Red Sea offered no refuge. Yet, God instructed Moses to strike the sea, and the people of Israel walked through on dry land to safety.

But it was not long after being saved that the people complained to Moses, accusing him of wanting to kill the whole group by starvation. They had been on their wilderness journey for less than three months and they were tired of it already. They had no idea how long it would last, or how God would provide for them on the route.

- *Even though we have seen God come through for us over and over again, why do we, like the Israelites, question whether God will take care of our needs?*
- *Why do we sometimes choose to stay in bad situations simply because they are familiar, rather than move toward the ways in which God is leading us out of bondage?*

Psalms 145:10–21

This psalm is a song of praise and blessing for all that God provides “for every living thing” (v. 16). Further, this psalm proclaims the need of every person to pass on this recognition of God's goodness to the next generation, as the psalmist sings, “They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds...” (v. 11, 12)

- *In what ways do we teach our children about God, especially the goodness of God? Is it something that you are intentional about in your family or in the church?*
- *Thinking of the providential nature of God's goodness in your life and in the life of the church, how does that bring you joy? How does worrying take away our sense of joy and delight? Do we really have to worry with God on our side?*

Ephesians 4:1–16

The word *peripateo* in biblical Greek means “to walk.” It refers not just to an aimless “strolling around,” but to a purposeful movement forward. Metaphorically, to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,” indicates a deliberate way of life. Life in Christ is a

life lived in love, for we know ourselves to be loved by Christ and so we share that same love with the world.

- *What makes our “walk” worthy? Is it something we do? Or something Christ does in us?*
- *Even though we are forgiven and restored by grace daily in this Christian life, why is it still important that we conduct our lives in a manner that is pleasing to God?*
- *What is our calling? Do we all have the same call? From where does our calling originate?*

John 6:22–35

The crowd seemed to be confused that Jesus was no longer there in their midst, having watched one boat launch from the shore without Jesus in it. Not to be dissuaded from their search, the people got into their own boats and headed toward Capernaum. There they found Jesus and questioned him about how he had arrived there.

Jesus knew they weren't looking for him for the sake of meeting him and learning from him, but for the singular purpose of what he might do for them. He fed them on the mountain the day before. Jesus chided them for seeking food that perishes. Even the miraculous manna in the wilderness rotted and could not be stored; what Jesus wanted to give was more than mere food for the stomach.

- *Why doesn't Jesus answer the crowd's question about how he got to the other side without going with his friends? Can we ever know what exactly Jesus is up to? How does that show the importance of faith?*
- *Why do we often worry more about what satisfies us physically than about our life in relationship to Christ? How does this story help us understand our most basic human need?*

It seems in this conversation with the crowds that they are unimpressed with Jesus' one time giving of bread to eat. God gave manna daily for forty years; this event was one meal. They missed the point that Jesus is God — the God that not only “gave” the manna (past tense) but the God who “gives” (present tense) himself for eternal salvation. Jesus, the Bread of Life, is the one who satisfies all needs and desires, and lasts for all time.

- *How does the Bread of Life sustain us in the here and now, as well as in eternity? Which one do we often fail to think about?*
- *In John's Gospel, how are the two images of Christ as the living “Word of God” (John 1) and Jesus as the living “Bread from Heaven” (John 6) related to each other? By what means does God “feed” our faith?*