

Pentecost 2

June 22, 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.

The Law did not want mere works, nor would it be satisfied with them. It wanted to be loved and to be satisfied with love. Without love it would not let us go or be discharged...

Our conscience constantly faulted us as sinners and transgressors and threatened us with death and hell until Christ came and gave us His Spirit and love.

– Martin Luther

Sermon on Galatians 3 (1522)

Isaiah 65:1-9

A new beginning was coming for the nation of Israel. The word of the Lord came to Isaiah in the midst of the exile to Babylon, promising that God would save the faithful and preserve the righteous. There were many who had turned from God, rejecting him outright by practicing pagan religions, disobeying dietary laws, and engaging in necromancy. Through it all God availed himself to his people saying, “Here I am. Here I am,” but many would not listen and certainly did not bother to ask for him. Still, God promised that a new Jerusalem would be created for the steadfast in faith – this new reality would be open to all people, including Gentiles.

- *In what ways do humans continually provoke the wrath of God? Did that change when Christ came?*
- *What did change about how God treated sinners once Jesus died and rose again? How was that “change” part of who God is/was from the beginning of time?*

Psalms 3

It can be very difficult to see God as our protector in a world where tragedy strikes daily, hunger abounds, and violence and destruction regularly make the nightly news. We might ask ourselves, “Is God truly our protector?”

- *What sort of salvation is the psalmist speaking of here? Is it for the real-life struggles of this world, or the hope of a future eternity?*

The psalmist asserts that the Lord is his deliverance, his very salvation from his enemies. The Hebrew word “deliverance” (ESV) in verse 8 is יְשׁוּעָה (yesh-u-ah). This happens to be the Hebrew version of the name “Jesus.”

- *Reflect on the meaning of the name Yeshuah. What does this say about God’s ultimate mission in deliverance from sin?*

Galatians 3:23-4:7

St. Paul addressed the issue of the Law amongst believers. The Law was created by God to address sin — both as a restraint of evil, and the way God reveals to us our sin. Paul likened the Law to a guardian, called a *paidagogos* (Greek: παιδαγωγός pronounced “pie-da-go-gos”), whose job it was to accompany young boys as they went to school and about town. The guardian would keep the child safe, but would also instruct him in manners, and proper behavior. It was not unusual for such a guardian to beat a boy with a disciplining staff if he stepped out of line.

- *Why did Paul say that the Law is oppressive and ultimately keeps people in bondage rather than setting them free? How is the Law’s function different from the way Christ works in us?*
- *In what sense are we set free from the law through faith in Christ? Does this mean the law goes away? Or is the change something that happens in us?*

Luke 8:26-39

Once again, the demons that possessed a man recognized Jesus for who he was. They were terrified that he would torture them physically, or throw them into a bottomless pit. At the time, most human beings couldn’t discern Jesus’ true identity, but the demons recognized right away the power and authority Jesus had over them.

- *What do you suppose the demons picked up on about Jesus that they “knew” who he was and what he could do?*
- *What might this say about our human inability to recognize spiritual realities? Why do people, even believers, at times have a hard time discerning Christ’s presence and power?*

In this story, after Jesus cast out the legion of demons that possessed the man, the man was free and sat at Jesus’ feet “clothed and in his right mind” (v.35).

- *In Psalm 51 we pray “renew a right spirit within me.” In times of guilt and despair, why is what the spirit puts in us as important as the spirit that God drives out of us?*

It is easy to understand how the man was free and how quickly his life was transformed. It is harder to understand why the people who witnessed this transformation were “afraid” of the man who had been freed.

- *Are there times in life when you are more comfortable with the bad things you have come to expect, rather than face the change it would take to experience something good?*
- *Where do we often see similar emotions of fear in the face of genuine healing and freedom from burdens?*

When Jesus cast the demons out, he had them enter a herd of swine that were nearby. We know that the rearing of swine and the eating of pork was forbidden by Mosaic Law (as was mentioned in the Old Testament lesson for today). The demons were the ones who asked Jesus to let them enter the pigs rather than be cast into the abyss.

- *Could there be a deeper meaning here, that the demons were cast into a swineherd? What might that mean?*
- *Did the demons survive as the pigs plummeted to their physical death? Where are they now?*