

## Pentecost 3 (Proper 7)

June 21, 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.

St. Paul takes up the special work of faith, the struggle which the spirit wages against the flesh to kill off those sins and desires that remain after a person has been made just. He teaches us that faith doesn't so free us from sin that we can be idle, lazy and self-assured, as though there were no more sin in us. Sin is there, but, because of faith that struggles against it, God does not reckon sin as deserving damnation.

– Martin Luther –

### Jeremiah 20:7-13

These verses give us a key insight into the nature of Jeremiah's ministry, as well as how he felt about his calling as a prophet. This was not something he had chosen for himself, or even would have been interested in choosing. Instead it was a burden placed upon him by God himself, from which he knew he would never be free.

- Why did Jeremiah wish he could cease being a prophet, and just keep his mouth shut? Have you ever wondered if life might actually be easier apart from faith?
- In verse 7, of what does Jeremiah accuse God?

In the story of the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24), the two disciples speak of their experience in hearing Jesus words by saying, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32)

- How did Jeremiah use a similar metaphor in verse 20:9? Did Jeremiah experience this "burning" as a positive or negative thing?

In the midst of his fears and misgivings, this lesson ends with a strong statement of faith from Jeremiah. His words are ones of strength and victory, in spite of circumstances that suggest the opposite.

- Given the pain and hardship we often experience in faith, what is the Gospel promise in which we live? What assurance does God give us?

### Psalms 91:1-10 (11-16)

This psalm is an expression of trust in God's protection and rescue. Multiple metaphors are used to describe the refuge and safety we find in the Lord, including the image of a protective fortress, deliverance from a hunter's snare, the shelter of a mother-bird's wings, and a shield in hand-to-hand battle.

- Which of these metaphors do you most resonate with? Why? How might each be applicable in different situations of life?
- Is this psalm suggesting that nothing bad will ever happen to people of faith? Or is there a deeper promise here?

### Romans 6:12-23

In this text, Paul confronts the inevitable false assumption that people often make when presented with the Gospel of grace. "If our sins are forgiven, why not go on sinning..."

- How does this question itself show a lack of spiritual maturity

on the part of the one arguing?

Paul is straightforward and sensible in his teaching. Forgiveness and grace is not given to us by God to make it easier for us to sin, but as the means by which we would have the opportunity to struggle against sin.

- What does our struggle against sin actually look like? How would you describe it to someone who doesn't understand?
- In your faith experience, does being forgiven make you want to sin more? How does God's forgiveness give us hope that our sin can be conquered?

Paul points to the fact that sin can become a king in our lives when he phrases it, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions" (verse 12). The word reign is the same word for what a king or queen does, they reign over their kingdom (*basileo* in Greek).

- How do we become obedient to our passions? What impact does that have on our obedience to God?

### Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

Does it bother you to be called a fake or a liar? Does it strike you in the heart and make you want to prove yourself? Jesus' enemies called him the devil: Beelzebub! Imagine that! Calling the very Son of God the absolute antithesis of who he truly is. Talk about getting things backwards!

- How often do people get things backwards when it comes God's will, identity, purpose, etc? What causes this misinterpretation?

No one, certainly, likes to be pegged as a deceiver or one who is untrustworthy, but Jesus wanted his disciples to know that even though it was God's call on their lives to follow him, it would not be easy and they would be persecuted, rejected, or even killed. However, if we are labeled as such, we are in good company because Jesus went through this first. He warns very clearly that relationships will be torn apart for the faith because Christ has to come first in our lives. There is no other way to live as a disciple.

- Have you experienced broken relationships because of your obedience to Christ? How has that affected you? What brings you consolation?

Jesus told his disciples not to fear such ill treatment from those who did not believe in him. He assured them that their body could be destroyed, but their souls belonged to him.

- When you find yourself worrying, is it more about your body or your soul? Why is that?