

Pentecost 2

June 14, 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.

Now, Christ uses this trait or nature of the animal as an illustration in explaining that he is the good shepherd. In this manner he plainly shows what his kingdom is, and wherein it consists, and would say: My kingdom is only to rule the sheep; that is poor, needy wretched men, who well see and realize that there is no other help or counsel for them.

– Martin Luther –
Church Postil, 1523

Exodus 19:2–8a

While Israel was camped out in the wilderness of Sinai, God summoned Moses up the mountain. The Lord spoke to Moses while he was on the mountaintop, telling him that he should go down and remind the people that it was God who carried them out of Egypt, away from their oppressors, and brought them to himself.

- What is the significance of Israel camping at the foot of Sinai? What will God do for them while they are in this place?
- God promised to make Israel a holy nation, a royal priesthood, if they would but live in obedience to him. What is their response? How long does that last?

The image God used was that of an eagle carrying his young on his wings. If they would follow the Lord in obedience and trust, he would make of them his treasured possession. This is the God who made heaven and earth and he is choosing them, out of all the nations of peoples on the earth.

- What comes to mind when you think of the symbolism of God being like an eagle who carries his young to safety? (See Psalm 91)

The Hebrew word used here for “treasured possession” is *segullah* (seg-ool-law). Literally it means “valuable property.” This word is only used eight times in the Old Testament but it carries a significant meaning for God’s people. To belong to the Lord God, creator of all that exists, is to be a cherished and valuable person.

- How does this title, “treasured possession,” give you confidence in your relationship with God?

Psalm 100

The psalmist is joyful in the notion that he, along with all of Israel, are beloved sheep of the Lord’s pasture. This is cause for praise and thanksgiving to the one whose love is from of old and endures forever. There is great joy in serving God and singing praises to his holiness.

- Why do you think the psalmist exhorts the people to know that the Lord is God? Isn’t that obvious? Why or why not?
- Does the image of God as shepherd ever lose its power to convey the great love God has for his people? Why or why not? Is it something we have become too accustomed to hearing, or is it still a powerful image?

Romans 5:6–15

God’s timing is perfect. He is never too early and never

too late. Paul proclaimed that God’s timing for salvation came at the right time as well. That time came “while we were still weak.” As humanity was stuck in sin and in need of redemption, the Son came to earth in human form to reconcile the whole creation to the Father. Christ’s incarnation, life, and death shows us the depths of God’s love for us.

- Who deserves God’s love? Who receives God’s love?

Paul makes the argument that one would scarcely die for a righteous person, meaning it could happen if the one who laid their life down was brave enough, bold enough, and the one who was saved was worthy enough. It would be a rare occurrence indeed for one to die for someone who was deemed “no good.” If that happened, we might lament such a sacrifice. But Paul reminds us of our own need and our own unworthiness which makes Christ’s gift to us all the more incredible and treasured.

- How does the blood that Jesus shed on the cross make us, who are sinners, into the righteous? Why would Jesus go to all that trouble?
- How does Jesus’ sacrifice for humanity make all the difference in the world?

Matthew 9:35–10:8 [9–20]

The Gospel writer tells us that as Jesus travelled around visiting cities, towns, and synagogues, he ran into a lot of people who were sick and lost. “He had compassion for them.” His heart went out to them because they were like sheep without a shepherd: lost and wandering aimlessly.

- How are humans like sheep in that we need someone we can trust to follow? Why do we get lost so easily?

Jesus sent his disciples out into the surrounding areas to heal, cast out demons, and have compassion on people in the same way he did. There was a great need for laborers in the kingdom of God, Jesus said, but there are few who are willing to do the work. The work is hard, and it is risky; it can be dangerous and hostile.

- Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to take anything extra with them?
- Why is it so hard for us to trust that Jesus will give us all we need for the day, and all we need to do his kingdom work? Doesn’t he have a stake in this business?
- How are human beings at being compassionate? Do we have our limits at times? How does our sin get in the way of our compassion?