



We must point out the place where Christ may be found, which he himself points out when he says that he must be in his Father's house, which means that he can only be found in the Word of God.

- Martin Luther -

Sermon on Luke 2, 1523

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.

1 Kings 3:4-15

Wouldn't it be wonderful if God would come to us in a dream and ask, "What can I do for you?" We know that God loves us and is willing to answer our prayers, but to be as explicit about it as he was with Solomon? That would be an incredible exchange. Would we trust the dream was an authentic encounter with God?

- *What would you ask for if God asked you such a question? Do you think your request would be as in line with God's will as Solomon's request?*

Before Solomon dares to answer, he takes a step back and honors the Lord by praising him for what he had done for his father, David.

- *How might our requests before God be different if we first remembered all that he has done for us, before we ask something of him?*

Solomon was a very young man at this time. He knew that he had no experience being a ruler for the people. His one request was to have the wisdom to be a good leader for God's people. He wanted nothing more than to be able to discern between good and evil. God was pleased with Solomon's request, and pleased that he didn't ask for riches, power, or honor.

- *In what ways does God's wisdom, and the humility to ask for such wisdom, qualify Solomon for the task at hand? Why is it so important for leaders to be humble?*

Psalms 119:97-104

Psalms 119 is an acrostic psalm devoted to the law of the Lord. In this section of the song, the psalmist rejoices in the wisdom of the Lord that has been bestowed upon him. By meditating on the law of the Lord (might we infer the entirety of the Holy Scriptures?), the psalmist has become wiser than his enemies. He understands even more than those who are much older than him!

- *How have you found this to be true in your own life and in the life of those around you who dwell in God's Word? Is wisdom something earned, or is it something given by God?*

Centuries later, Paul wrote these words to young Timothy, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

- *How is Paul saying much the same thing as the psalmist about*

the benefit and function of God's holy Word?

Ephesians 1:3-14

The words of Paul, here, are filled with gratitude for the many blessings God has given his people. We have been blessed with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," he proclaimed. The Greek word used here for blessing is *ευλογία* (eulogia).

- *What do we usually think of when we hear the word eulogy? How is a eulogy meant to be a blessing, or a recognition of God's blessings, more so than a list of accomplishments of the deceased?*

Paul lists some of the spiritual blessings that have been bestowed by God upon his people: chosenness, holiness, forgiveness that allows us to be presented as blameless, adoption into his family, redemption through Christ, and knowledge of the mystery of his will for humanity, to name a few.

- *Which of these blessings have you experienced? Which do you wait for?*

Luke 2:40-52

Jesus, at the tender age of twelve, was already filled with great wisdom. How could he not be?

This story reminds us how Mary and Joseph had to come to understand the true identity of their son. We might think that they, of all people, would have known how special Jesus was, having received messages from angels about him, receiving visitors who worshipped him, and spoken to prophets who waited for his birth. Still the couple hadn't quite internalized the extraordinary nature of their child. They, like all parents before them, had to learn who their child was, one day at a time.

- *Reflect on what it must have been like to be Jesus' mother and earthly father. How do you think your parenting would have been the same or different for Jesus than for your other children?*

This trip to Jerusalem would have been a special occasion. The Passover only happened once a year, so the family would not have gone to Jerusalem on a regular basis.

- *Do you suppose this visit to the Temple gave Jesus an immediate sense of purpose? Do you think he was learning what his life was meant to entail as any young boy would have to learn? Why or why not?*