

## Pentecost 4

July 3, 2022



### 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.

“Brethren,” he says, “if any man be overtaken with a fault, do not aggravate his grief, do not scold him, do not condemn him, but lift him up and gently restore his faith. If you see a brother despondent over a sin he has committed, run up to him, reach out your hand to him, comfort him with the Gospel and embrace him like a mother.”

– Martin Luther

Commentary on Galatians 6 (1535)

### Isaiah 66:10–14

God’s people had repeatedly defied him with their idolatrous practices (v. 1–4), provoking the Lord to anger and punishment. However, the Word of the Lord came to the people through Isaiah, saying that God would cause a new birth for Zion and nurse her like a mother nurses a newborn child. This interaction with God is comforting and nourishing at the same time.

- How does the image of a mother nursing her child give the picture of God’s tender love for his people?
- In our culture, nursing a baby is mostly a private thing, but in other countries it is not. Is God’s salvation a private matter?

The Lord promised to bring “peace like a river” to his people as he restored Jerusalem. He vowed to grant her glory like an “overflowing stream.” Images of flowing water in great abundance is a welcome thought for those who are thirsty, especially those who are thirsty for righteousness in the Lord.

- How does God’s faithfulness grant us peace and life abundant? In what ways have you experienced this for yourself?

Verse 14 spells out clearly what will be the fate of God’s servants versus the fate of his enemies. The humble and faithful ones will thrive and flourish like grass, but the enemies of the Lord will receive his indignation and punishment.

- Go back to the first five verses of Isaiah 66. Who will be the receivers of God’s mercy? Of his enmity?
- What is the good news for those who love God?

### Psalms 66:1–7

The psalmist encourages those who love God to sing praises about him, recalling his great and glorious deeds. “Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!” Though we only have a portion of this psalm as a lesson for today, we can see that the entire song is committed to recalling God’s acts of salvation for his people in the Exodus event, specifically allowing the people to walk on dry land through the Red Sea and squashing Israel’s enemies who pursued them.

- Why is it hard for some to speak out to others about what God has done in their lives? Is it fear of rejection? Is it a lack of confidence in having the right words?

### Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

Sin has devastating consequences in our lives. When we

betray our friends, loved ones, or even those we aren’t close to, there are negative effects from our behavior. One result that sin causes is a lack of trust in relationships. Trust is something that be hard to get back, once it has been breached.

Paul ends his letter to the Christians in Galatia urging the Body of Christ to care for those among them who have sinned. He acknowledged the problem of temptation, having had some experience with it himself. But his advice to his brothers and sisters in the faith is to “restore” one another in a “spirit of gentleness.” And not only that, but to go the next step and bear their burdens. By this graceful action, they will be fulfilling the law of Christ.

- Why is it so difficult, even for believers, to forgive readily and to restore one another with grace and mercy? What is at stake?
- What does Paul mean when he says, “If anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself”? How are we are “nothing” in regard to God? Who changes that for us and how?

When Paul used the word here for restore (Greek: καταρτιζω pronounced “cat-are-tee-zoh”) he meant for them to make that person completely adequate or qualified, as in being trained for a vocation. This is not something that will happen in one interaction; it will take a long time and great commitment.

- How is part of our living together in Christian community a matter of making a commitment to the spiritual growth and maturity of one another?
- Is that what Paul means when he said, “Let us not grow weary of doing good?” (v.9) To whom are we to “do good?”

### Luke 10:1–20

Jesus prepared his followers for an inevitable consequence of the ministry in his name — rejection. The 72 were sent out into the places where Jesus was about to go himself.

- Why would Jesus send the evangelists out into places he intended to go?
- What does this passage teach us about discipleship?

When the men returned to Jesus they were thrilled that they had experienced power in His name. Even demons submitted to them. Jesus acknowledged that he had given them authority over the power of the enemy.

- What did Jesus urge them to be joyful about, rather than the power they had experienced on their journey?