

## Pentecost 10

August 14, 2022



When God's most holy Word arises, it is always its lot that Satan opposes it with all his might. At first he rages against it with force and wicked power. If that promises no success, he attacks it with false tongues and erring spirits and teachers. What he is unable to crush by force he thus seeks to suppress by cunning and lies.

– Martin Luther –

Personal Letter to the Saxon Nobility, 1524

### 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.

#### Jeremiah 23:16-29

Just like today, many in Jeremiah's day held to the tenet, "Follow your heart!" However, when what is in our hearts is not put there by the Lord, then it can be dangerous over the long term. We cannot trust our own emotions to lead us; feelings are unreliable. But if we listen to the prophets who speak the Word of the Lord, then shall have true hope in the only promises that are reliable — God's promises.

- *Where you do you hear, these days, empty words from public figures who want to sway you to their thinking? What do those words sound like?*
- *How do you know if a person's words are trustworthy and from the Lord, rather than from their own internal perspective?*

Jeremiah gives the reason why false prophets should not be trusted: they have never stood in the presence of the Lord. (Jer. 23:18) We long to hear a positive message in a world fraught with violence, terrorism, inequality, and disease, but Jeremiah warns God's people not to succumb to a flowery message that will not deliver the outcome they hope for. Many will say, "It will be fine," and "If you but trust me on this, you will see," but it's not necessarily so. There is one source of Truth and righteousness and He is the beginning and ending of hope for our lives. Apart from the Lord, the words of those who seek to capture our attention and submission must be put to the test.

- *In what ways do you sit in the council of the Lord? How does that affect the words that come from your mouth? (See v.28)*

#### Psalms 119:81-88

The psalmist cried out to the Lord to save him from his enemies who sought his life. Even as he cried for the Lord's salvation in the midst of his great sorrow, he spoke of his hope in the meantime. Though he yearned for relief and new life, he kept the commandments of the Lord. Though he likened himself to a dried up, shriveled wineskin he waited for deliverance.

- *Why is it so hard to wait for God to act when we are suffering? Have you found this to be the time when your faith is strengthened?*

Martin Luther wrote in The Large Catechism (Lord's Prayer, "but deliver us from evil.") "Thus you see how God wants us to pray to him for everything that attacks even our bodily welfare so that we seek and expect help from no one but him... his name must first be hallowed in us, his kingdom

come among us, and his will be done. In the end he will preserve us from sin and disgrace and from everything else that harms or injures us."

- *Why is it considered faithful to call out to the Lord in our weakness?*

#### Hebrews 11:17-31 (32-40) 12:1-3

The author of Hebrews continues to recall the righteous servants of God who acted in faith, following God's will and commandments. Still, they did not have the complete promise because Christ was not yet born. "God provided something better for us," which was his Son, who lived, died, and rose from the grave so that we might have new and abundant life. It is only through Christ that the saints are made perfect. Though the faithful of the Old Testament were deemed faithful, it is only through Christ for whom they waited that they gain salvation. The Law could not offer them that, but Christ does, even though they are dead.

- *Do you think it's easier for us to trust and be patient than it was Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the rest, because we know that Christ has come and they were still waiting? Why or why not?*
- *In what ways does the great cloud of witnesses support our faith journey and make difficult times more bearable?*

#### Luke 12:49-53 (54-56)

We love the image of the peaceful, tender-hearted Jesus. It's only natural for us to be drawn to the Jesus who pulls children on his lap, puts his arms around sinners, and heals the sick and weary. This is still Jesus who is presented in today's gospel, but here we see a side of him that is fed up, distressed, and wanting people to listen carefully. It's almost as if we hear him shouting; people didn't hear when he spoke softly and gently! "Do you think I came here to bring peace?" That had to get their attention; it certainly captures ours. "No! I came here to cast fire. I came here to call people to follow me and following me means division and leaving others behind if they won't follow too."

- *This life of discipleship is one where relationships are severed as the Holy Spirit calls us to a single-minded purpose. Has your faith ever caused you to have to leave someone behind?*
- *Read Luke 3:16. What is the connection between John's words about Jesus and Jesus' statement, "I came to cast fire"? What is this fire?*
- *Why was Jesus so upset about the people's inability to discern the signs around them?*