

## Pentecost 6 (Proper 8)

June 30, 2024



### 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.*

*Let your heart be strong and at ease in your trouble, for we have yonder a true mediator with God, Jesus Christ... He has such great power over sin and death that they cannot harm us, and he is so heartily true and kind that he cannot and will not forsake us, at least if we ask his help without doubting.*

—Martin Luther—

*A Letter to His Father, February 15, 1530*

### Lamentations 3:22–33

Have you ever had a horrible day and just wanted to go to bed and try again in the morning? There's something about a good night's rest and the new beginning that a sunrise offers us each day. God's love for his people is as sure as tomorrow's sunrise.

In these verses, the prophet Jeremiah has just finished his lament about the suffering he endured because of his disobedience to the Lord. Now he lists the reason for hope, namely God's steadfast love (*hesed*) that never ends. God's loyalty to those he loves is limitless.

Even though there are consequences for sin, God's love is based on his everlasting covenant with his people. Scripture proclaims the fresh start God gives each day by saying, "His mercies are new every morning."

- *Why is it so hard for us to imagine that there is nothing we can do to break God's love for us? Is it because we are prone to fail at loving others?*
- *When we get to a point in life where we recognize that all we need is God (like Jeremiah), how much sweeter is our relationship with the Lord?*

### Psalms 30

This psalm is one that would have been used at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. It begins by recognizing God's protection against Israel's enemies, but then it moves into something akin to a confession of sins. As a psalm "of David" — it recalls God's anger over a time when the king was feeling secure in his prosperity and ease of life.

- *How is it different to be satisfied with life versus being at ease with things on the basis of our own hard work? Which do you think David meant in verse 6?*
- *Who made David strong according to the psalm? What happened to David when God turned his face from his servant?*

The Hebrew words used in this psalm for "sorrow" are *be-ki* and *mish-ped*. These words not only describe grief over death, but also grief caused by guilt.

- *In what ways are these two kinds of mourning the same? How are they different?*
- *What does it mean that mourning and grief would not simply be replaced by, but "turned into" joy?*
- *How does the idea that there will be joy in the morning connect to God's faithfulness, which is as sure as the sunrise (Lamentations 3)?*

### 2 Corinthians 8:1–9, 13–15

Paul used the example of the faithfulness of the Macedonians to encourage the Corinthian Christians to give generously. He cited the trouble and affliction that the Christians in Macedonia faced and how their response to the trials was not self-pity over their poverty, but rather an insistence to give beyond what they could afford in order to help out Christians in Jerusalem. Paul emphasized that his words were not meant to spark a competition among churches, only to serve as encouragement to faithfulness and generosity.

- *How can the subject of offering and tithes deteriorate in the church and lead to a competition?*
- *How is "learning" to be generous gives a part of the discipleship journey? Have you experienced moving from a position of giving what is "left over" to giving generously of your first fruits? Explain.*

Paul makes his words very clear so that no one will misunderstand his intentions: no one should be overburdened, just as no one should have it too easy. It is a matter of fairness. According to the Apostle, when a person has much, he is to be generous; when a person is lacking, he shall be provided for, according to his need. This mutual care for one another in the Christian community is a matter of faith in the one who grants us all that we need for the day.

- *In what ways can we get a bit touchy in the local church about who is giving how much to support the ministry? What does it mean, do you suppose, when we resist the message to give generously?*
- *How might this passage help disciples understand stewardship as something we engage in together and not a burden imposed on the few?*

### Mark 5:21–43

As Jesus went with Jairus toward his house to lay his hands on the man's failing daughter, a woman with a bleeding disorder managed to get close enough to him to touch Jesus' clothing. Jesus felt power going out of him, and turned to his disciples and demanded to know who touched him. The disciples were astonished at the question since they were surrounded by so many people in the crowd.

- *Why do you suppose Jesus asked the disciples, "Who touched me?" Don't you think he knew already who it was?*
- *Jesus addressed the woman as "daughter." What made him feel such compassion for her?*