

Thanksgiving (US)

November 28, 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.

Because everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given, sustained, and protected by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

– Martin Luther –

Large Catechism, First Article of the Creed

Deuteronomy 8:1–10

The Word of the Lord given to Moses continued with a caveat for the blessed people of God. He warned them to take good care of remembering what he had done for them, lest they get so comfortable and forget that God was the one who rescued them from slavery in Egypt. He was the one who brought them through the terrors of the wilderness and fed them with manna and quail when they were hungry.

- *Why does it always follow that when we forget who is the source of our blessings and we come to rely on ourselves, that we end up in deep spiritual trouble?*
- *What does it mean to say that God will always provide for us?*

Psalms 67

The psalmist asked the Lord for a blessing for the express purpose of making God's name known in all the earth and his saving power among all the nations. There will come a time when all people will stand in judgment before the Lord. The psalmist seemed concerned that all would know God's name and his mighty works before that time comes.

- *Why do we want every person on earth to know the holy name of God? What will knowing his name do for them and their lives?*

In Israel, the *shekinah* ("the glory of the Lord") was the visible representation of God's holy presence among his people. It was sometimes described as a cloud and sometimes as an aura of shining light.

- *Why does God's blessing usually include his face shining upon his people?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit akin to the concept of the shekinah in the Old Testament? How do both exemplify the active and energetic power of God?*

Philippians 4:6–20

Writing from prison, Paul explained to the Philippians that he was willing to do whatever he needed to do in order to follow Christ. If he had to endure hardship, imprisonment, or abuse, he would do it because he could do "all things through Christ who strengthens" him. Paul has helped the church to better understand that in Christ our weakness is not a burden or a failure, rather it is the very opportunity for God to take over in strength.

- *Why does weakness frighten us so much? How do Paul's words help us to embrace weakness and welcome Christ's strength in our lives?*

- *Does having faith mean that we are simply good at everything? How do people sometimes use this verse in matters that do not reflect the great hardship in which it was written? What do you think is the deeper point here?*

As Christians freed from sin and the law, in our freedom we are duty bound to love our neighbors as we love God. This means that piety and morality flow out of our understanding of what Christ has done for us on the cross.

Paul closed his letter by encouraging believers to act in the manner in which he taught them so that the peace of Christ might dwell in their hearts and minds. He commended them to attend to "whatever" is of Christ: truth, justice, honor, purity, loveliness, commendability, and excellence.

- *How does faith in Christ result in a different way of life for believers?*
- *Which of the virtues in this list is most important to you? Which do you struggle the hardest to maintain?*

Luke 17:11–19

When Jesus was met by the ten men stricken with leprosy, he healed them all. Each one asked for mercy from the Lord but only one expressed thankfulness to Jesus.

- *Does the fact that all the men asked for help necessarily indicate that they had faith in Jesus' healing powers? Or might they have asked anyone who came along to help them?*
- *Do you think the other nine lepers in this story were not thankful for what had happened to them? What was different about the one man who returned to Jesus?*

In Scripture, "leprosy" was a general term applied to a number of contagious skin diseases. Lepers were considered both physically and ritually unclean. They were not allowed in the worship of the larger community, and were often quarantined into leper colonies. Under the law of Moses, only a priest could give them a clean bill of health (Lev. 13).

- *Jesus told the Samaritan that his faith had made him whole. How is this healing more than a physical restoration? Does healing always mean physical restoration? Can healing be spiritual without the body being cured? How so?*

Jesus commented on the fact that the only one who returned to thank him was a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans traced their family trees back to a common root but they disagreed on proper worship.

- *Why was it such a big deal that a Samaritan thanked Jesus? Was Jesus also pointing out the negligence on behalf of his own people to appreciate his power and authority?*