



Epiphany 6

February 16, 2025 (Year C)

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.

He who would preach the Gospel must go directly to preaching the resurrection of Christ. He who does not preach the resurrection is no apostle, for this is the chief part of our faith...

—Martin Luther—

Exposition on 1 Peter 1:3, 1522

Jeremiah 17:5–8

At the beginning of chapter 17, we hear the heart of the problem being addressed by the prophet: Judah has given themselves over to false fertility gods. Their offense is serious, which is indicated by the comment made by the writer, “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart...” (17:1). To engrave something is to give it permanence. Their loyalty to false gods being engraved on their hearts indicates the people’s stubbornness and hardness of heart.

- *Do we ever know when our hearts are hard like stone? If so, how? If not, why not?*

Humanity keeps on making the same mistake: trusting in ourselves or in other humans, rather than putting our ultimate trust in the Lord. When we put our trust in the flesh, Jeremiah says that our hearts turn away from God. This is basic First Commandment stuff! Sin always stems from our desire to be in charge of our own lives.

- *Read Matthew 6:24. How does Jesus’ statement in this verse reflect our human error of putting something other than God first?*
- *Even though we all have people we love and trust, why would we think they are more faithful to us than the Creator?*

Blessings come when we put our trust in the Lord God. We thrive like trees planted near water. We need not fear changes in weather (life’s challenges and trials) because we have the Lord on our side. We need not be anxious about anything! (Philippians 4:6)

- *In what ways have you been blessed by trusting the Lord?*

Psalms 1:1–6

The psalmist picks up on the theme of blessedness in the Lord when he notes that those who delight in the law of the Lord are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season. On the other hand, those who are wicked and ignore the Lord’s statutes, are like chaff that the wind blows away.

- *How are these agricultural images about faith and life with God helpful to you? What else might you say about what it looks like in your life when you are blessed by God?*

1 Corinthians 15:1–11, 12–20

Paul addressed the problem in the Corinthian church about the right belief concerning the resurrection of Christ. He

reminded them of what he had previously taught them, namely that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and on the third day was raised from the dead. He appeared to his disciples after that and then also to Paul himself.

- *Why does Paul remind the Corinthians that Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection?*

The issue was that some said there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul explains the illogic of that statement since Christ was raised from the dead. If he had not been then their faith was in vain and they would all perish because of their sin, even those who died in the faith.

- *What does Paul say are the present and future hope of believers? From where does that hope come?*

Luke 6:17–26

Jesus came down onto the plain and gave a sermon about what it means to be blessed (see Matthew’s version in Matthew 5–7). Many had gathered around to hear him because they had heard of his great teaching and healing power. Luke doesn’t say that “some” were cured that day, he says that Jesus “healed them all” (v. 19).

- *Why is it important that Jesus healed everyone who gathered on the plain that day and not just a select few?*

Jesus then addressed his followers with a set of beatitudes that indicated the reversal of fortunes that will occur for those who love him. To be poor means to possess the kingdom of God. To be hungry now means to be satisfied later. To mourn in the moment means laughter later on. When people hate you because of Jesus and what he does, you are in good company and you will be blessed in heaven.

- *How does Luke’s retelling of Jesus’ sermon point more toward socioeconomic conditions rather than the more spiritual outcomes found in Matthew’s version? Why are they both important?*

Jesus isn’t finished after he proclaims the beatitudes. He quickly moves on to proclaiming “woes” for those who are living it up in the present time. The reversal of fortunes goes both ways! If you are rich in the present time, you have already experienced your consolation. If you have full bellies right now, one day you will understand hunger. If you are laughing and carefree in the moment, one day you will mourn and weep. If people revere you in the present time, one day those same people will turn on you as they did to the prophets of old.

- *What do the “woes” say to you personally? Do these verses challenge you in any way?*