

## Easter Day

April 20, 2025



### 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.*

*Faith and hope are different affections, for faith is not hope nor hope faith; and yet, because of the great affinity that exists between them, it is impossible to separate them.*  
*By faith we began (our spiritual life), by hope we continue it, and by revelation we shall obtain the whole.*

–Martin Luther–

*Exposition on Galatians 5, 1531*

### Isaiah 65:17-25

Have you ever had the experience of having someone taunt you to your face? Perhaps it was a schoolmate or a coworker who had some issue with you and they continually provoked you, trying to make you angry or just aggravate you. The prophet Isaiah recounts how God's enemies did that to him by idol worship and unholy living. They pushed God so long and so far that finally he simply turned his back on them and focused on his joy for his people, Jerusalem.

- *Do you think that there are those who defy God so long and so hard that they are beyond his grace? Why or why not?*
- *What does the good news of the resurrection of Christ have to say to human defiance and disobedience?*

### Psalms 16

Until very recent years, parents and teachers would discourage a child with a left hand preference from using that hand. It was thought that being right-handed was the only "normal" way of being. There are colloquialisms that coincide with that notion, such as "right hand man," which means a person is very helpful or trusted. Traditionally it was thought that the right hand was the stronger of the two which explains the desire to force lefties (who are between 10-30% of the population based on various studies) to use their right hand. The psalmist says that the Lord is at his right hand, and that at the right hand of God are "pleasures forevermore." He is grateful for the strong presence of the Lord. God is his helper, the one in whom he trusts above all others.

- *In what ways does the psalmist compare his existence with God with the existence of those who defy God? How is related to "whom" we put our trust?*

Human nature never changes, does it? That's why the psalms (and the entirety of scripture) are still poignant and relevant today. Long ago, in this passage, the psalmist proclaimed, "The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply." This is still the case with human beings in the 21st century! When we turn to an idol instead of worshipping the One god, we are met with nothing but sorrows eventually. Our troubles multiply as we are swayed by the traps of idolatry and lose focus on the only One who can save us. So many things, even good things, can become idols in our lives. For example, faithful people can mistake the church for God and worship the aspects of the institution rather than the Lord of the church. A building

can become more important than the mission. A piece of furniture can become a focal point in an argument about the worship space, and thereby causing a great distraction from what's central – Jesus!

- *What are the gods that humanity runs after in our day, that are similar or different to the ones David sang about?*
- *In what ways is it always about trusting in our own judgment and power, rather than in the One God's judgment and power?*
- *When David says that the Lord is the source of his power, at his right hand, how is he putting aside his own will and trusting in God's will?*

### 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Paul used the word ἐλεεινός (*el-ay-in-os*) "pitiable" to describe the condition a Christian would be in if our faith in the resurrection was a faith in something false. How pathetic would we be if we followed Christ, sacrificed riches and status, exposed ourselves to ridicule and persecution, only to find out that it was all done in vain? But Paul iterates that our hope will not leave us disappointed! Our hope in Christ is a hope the resurrection that assures that this life is not all there is.

- *Why is the promise of eternal life so hard for many to believe? Where is the hope for those who do not believe? Is their life any better than those who believe? Why or why not?*

### Luke 24:1-12

Have you ever spent a great deal of time preparing to do something and when the time came for that event to occur it didn't happen after all? The women who came to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body for burial never got to complete their task. "Frightened and perplexed" is how Luke described the emotional state of the women who came to Jesus' tomb to tend to his lifeless body. They had seen already where Jesus was laid because they followed those who took his body to the tomb, so they knew where he was. They also were ready with the spices because they had gone home after seeing where he was buried and prepared the ointments for his embalming. So then, when they arrived early that Sunday morning, of course they were at a loss about the situation. No doubt it was all they thought of for the hours they waited to do their last act of love for their Lord. This time, not having a job to do was a relief and a new beginning.

- *How did the women's plan of action indicate their devotion to Jesus?*