

Easter 3

May 4, 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.

You know the real basis and foundation of your salvation, on which you must rest your confidence in this and all troubles, namely Jesus Christ. . . If he has overcome the world, surely he has overcome the prince of this world with all his power. And what is his power but death? He is the Conqueror, the true Hero, who in these words, 'Be of good cheer,' gives me the benefit of his victory. I shall cling to him. To these words and comfort I shall hold fast.

—Martin Luther—

Letter to his Mother at the Death of his Father, 1531

Acts 9:1–22

Saul, who persecuted the church and thereby Jesus, was called into a life with Christ. Soon he would become familiar with what it was like to be on the side of Jesus, persecuted and imprisoned for preaching the Gospel. But for now, Jesus humbled him by taking his sight away and making him dependent upon the goodness of another man named Ananias.

- *Why is it so humbling to have to be dependent upon another person?*
- *Why do you think Jesus created this particular situation for Saul and Ananias? What did each learn from their interaction with the other?*

Psalms 30

In any given moment in your congregation, someone is experiencing the depths of despair. Perhaps it is a diagnosis, or an unfavorable prognosis. It may be the death of a dream they held dearly, or the loss of a loved one that has shocked them and left them in deep sorrow.

The words of David in this psalm capture very precisely the human emotions associated with grief and feelings of abandonment. Each of us knows what it's like to be in the "pit" of despair. We can imagine ourselves and others in the place David describes — at the bottom of a well, hanging on for dear life to the bucket that is tied to the rope, but with no one to pull us up. David's song reminds us that God will always be there to draw us out of that darkness, even if it means that we die. Even in the depths of Sheol, the place of the dead, we are brought up by our Lord. The promise to God's people, which was fulfilled through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, is that "weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

- *Even though we know the promise of new life, we is it so difficult for us to hold onto when trouble strikes?*

Revelation 5:(1–7) 8–14

Have you ever felt the great need to weep and have someone say to you, "Stop crying!" It seems rather harsh, doesn't it? There are times when our emotions get the best of us and the only thing we can do in response to our despair and lack of hope is to wail in mourning.

In this throne room vision that John received, there was

a scroll with seven seals on it. This scroll was the list of judgments that were to be exacted on earth before the new reality of Christ's return would be fulfilled. John is caught in this vision, by the fact that no one in heaven, or on earth, or in Sheol, could open the scroll. How would he know what was in the scroll? It was completely inaccessible and this caused John to wail in discouragement. One of the elders called out to him, "Stop crying! Jesus has won the victory!" At that moment, John saw the Lamb of God, Jesus.

- *How does John's experience of despair, followed by an immediate vision of Jesus, mirror your own experiences with grief and comfort from God?*

John 21:1–14 (15–19)

There are times in our lives when we go back to what we know and do best. Perhaps we do it because it's familiar, or comforting to be in an element where we don't have to think so hard about how to do something. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to his disciples several times. Still, Peter went back to his former occupation instead of gathering the others together for the sake of the mission, as Jesus commanded him to do.

As Peter and the other fishermen disciples went out to fish, they caught nothing in the long hours of the night. However, in the morning light, Jesus appeared to them yet again and instructed them to try their nets on the right side of the vessels. The amazing catch of fish was a sign to the disciples that as they started this new venture of sharing the good news of Christ's resurrection, they would be provided for in abundance. Jesus would not send them out into the world, only to abandon them.

- *Have you ever struggled with something in your life so much that you felt you needed to just get away from it for awhile?*
- *How did Jesus encourage the disciples to keep going on this mission by showing up at the Sea of Tiberias one more time? Would you have needed an extra nudge, do you think?*

When the disciples went fishing that night, they were in familiar territory. Not only had they spent their lives fishing those waters, but this was also the site of at least three other miracles of Jesus: Jesus calmed the storm (Mark 4:35–41), Jesus walked on water (John 6:16–21), First miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:4–11).

- *When Jesus appeared, do you suppose the disciples thought, "Wow, we've been here before!"? Have you ever felt that way in a moment when Christ revealed himself to you?*