



Epiphany 5

February 9, 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.

This only is a really strong faith: if a heart can believe what it does not see and comprehend, believe against all senses and reason, and cling solely to the Word...

– Martin Luther–

Sermon on John 4, 1522

Isaiah 6:1–8, 9–13

Isaiah had a vision of heaven where the Lord was sitting on his throne with seraphim surrounding him on all sides. The train of God's gown was so immense that it filled the entire temple. This image suggests that God's gown stretched from heaven to earth and only the hem filled the Jerusalem temple. The seraphs sang out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." Isaiah's description of this vision characterizes Yahweh as the exalted one who is worthy of praise and adoration.

- How does Isaiah's vision point to the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan and purpose for the creation?

As the foundations of the temple shook and the air was filled with smoke, Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me!" He knew that he was unworthy to speak the Word of the Lord and yet, at that moment, one of the seraphim touched his mouth with a burning coal. This represented God's cleansing and forgiving power in Isaiah's life.

- When have you felt like God's plan and purpose for your life was beyond your capability and/or worthiness?
- In what ways does God remove all barriers in our way when he calls us to act on his behalf? How does that help you in your discernment of God's call?

Psalms 138:1–8

Two things have been exalted by God above all others: his name and his holy Word. In this psalm of thanksgiving, the psalmist praises the Lord and give thanks to him with his whole heart because the Lord has increased his strength of soul by hearing and responding to his pleas. In due time, the psalmist proclaimed, all the kings of the earth will have heard God's Word and will bow down and give him thanks. He ends the psalm with confidence in the Lord's work in his life, saying that God's purposes for him will be fulfilled.

- Do you ever yearn for a time when all the kings, queens, presidents, and rulers of the world will know God and bow down to him? What would life be like on earth if that were the case?
- How confident are you that God has a purpose for your life and that he will fulfill those purposes?

1 Corinthians 14:12b–20

St. Paul was adamant that spiritual gifts ought to be used for the building up of the church of Christ and for no other

reason. He had no problem with speaking in tongues, in fact he reported he possessed that particular gift himself, but there needs to be someone to interpret the word for the sake of the faith community. Otherwise, what use is it? Further, he encouraged those who spoke in tongues to pray for the gift of interpretation so that their minds would be fruitful as well. No one can say, "Amen" to a prayer in tongues if they don't know what is being said.

- How does this remind you of the middle ages where preaching was done in Latin and no one understood what the preacher was saying?
- In what ways is it evident that God distributes spiritual gifts to everyone so that not one person has sole power, authority, or wisdom?

At the heart of this portion of his letter, Paul was encouraging believers to be mature in mind and faith. "Do not be children," he said, for what is at stake is the drawing in of unbelievers to Christ. Chaos and unintelligible prayers or sermons do not draw unbelievers into the faith. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ," Paul said in another letter (Romans 10:17).

- In what ways are all Christians commissioned to speak so that others will hear?

Luke 5:1–11

People had gathered close to Jesus who was on the shore of the lake. They had a great desire to hear him speak the word of God. Noticing there were two fishing boats nearby, Jesus got into one of them and asked Simon, the boat's owner, to push the vessel out into the lake a bit. Jesus then taught the crowd from this floating pulpit.

- Have you ever been in a situation where people were so hungry to hear the Word of God that they pushed their way closer in order to hear? Imagine if our churches were filled with such people! How might that encourage our proclamation?

After Jesus was finished teaching the crowds, he told the fishermen to let their nets out again into the deep water. Simon protested a bit saying, "We worked all night and caught nothing!" Even so, he obeyed Jesus' command and was rewarded with a glorious catch of fish. This humbled Simon Peter so deeply that he dropped to his knees before Jesus and confessed his sin of unbelief.

- Has there ever been a time when you didn't believe that God would come through for you? When he did, how did you respond?