

## Pentecost 7 (Proper 10)

July 12, 2026



### 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.

“Where there is faith in Christ, there the Holy Spirit pours both comfort and childlike condescension into the heart. The heart no longer doubts God’s gracious will and help, because he has promised both grace and help, fulfillment and comfort, not because of our own worthiness but because of the merit and the name of Christ, his Son.”

— Martin Luther —

Sermon on Romans 8:12–17, WA 22

### Isaiah 55:10–13

The power of God’s Word to create a new reality is once again on display in this passage from Isaiah. God’s Word, sent out from God himself through his messengers, accomplishes God’s purposes. It does not return empty. The imagery of rain and snow watering the fields is a helpful reminder that the timing of God’s purposes is not under our control.

When it comes to sharing the Word, we might look for immediate results, expecting our proclamation to take a congregation by storm and shape them into new beings overnight. But the image Isaiah gives takes time. The distance between rain falling from the heavens and bread being on the table can seem immense. But that is the kind of timing we can expect from God’s Word. It takes root and grows in the hearer over time.

- How does our patience or impatience impact how we hear these words? Does it ever seem as if Isaiah had it wrong, that God’s will is not being accomplished?

While promising an ultimate fulfillment of God’s purposes, Isaiah also clearly acknowledges that things are not currently as they should be. Thorns and briars still litter the fields. In the working of God’s purposes there is the real enemy of sin and death to be battled. There will be difficulties, periods of drought and damaging storms — but finally God’s Word gets the job done. God promises that.

- How do difficulties in life undermine our confidence in this Word? How do difficulties strengthen our faith? How does a life of comfort and ease undermine the power of this Word?

### Psalm 65

The psalmist begins this hymn in the ESV saying, “Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion...” The Hebrew word translated in this passage as “due to” is *dumiyyah*. This word can be either a positive waiting in “silence,” or an unbearable waiting in silence as in times when we are suffering and cannot hold on any longer as we wait for God to act on our behalf. In this psalm it is a content waiting for God to act; he is the one who blots out our sin, he is the one who draws us into his presence, and he is the one who waters the earth in his perfect timing.

- How have you experienced silence before God? Has it been both positive and negative? What made the difference?
- In what ways have you seen God’s timing be perfect – never late and never early?

### Romans 8:12–17

The distinction between spirit (Gk: *pneuma*) and flesh (Gk: *sarx, sarkos*) is compared to the distinction between adoption and slavery. Through the flesh we are enslaved to sin. We are caught in the realm of death. We live in the fear that slaves experience, the fear of having no permanent place in the household, the fear of being always subject to punishment, even the resentment of freedom lost.

By contrast, through the Spirit we have life and freedom. We are adopted as sons and daughters — heirs, with Christ, to the promises of God. The heir has a known and honored place in the house — a place that is assured. That reality takes away from us the fear that clings to our flesh and sets us free to live the life we’ve been given to live.

Be careful not to confuse this flesh/Spirit distinction with negating the value of life on earth in favor of life in heaven. Faith is an embracing of the life we now live as a life yoked to the Spirit of Christ.

- What is the danger of equating flesh/Spirit with earth/heaven? How does a confusion of those two undermine life in the Spirit?

### Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

The Parable of the Sower and its accompanying explanation present some interesting challenges. What begins as a description of a sower and seeds turns into a discussion of the different kinds of soil. The temptation is to lead the hearers to personal reflection on whether they are “good soil.” The problem is that there is no hope to be found in such a question. Soil can’t change itself. It can’t kill off the weeds or scare off the crows. It can’t turn itself into a rich field instead of a rocky path. It just is what it is. If, upon reflection, one concludes they are not good soil, there is little to be done about that.

The key here is to consider the sower. His valuable seed is tossed about with no concern for where it lands. Roads and ditches, weed patches and plowed fields are all treated the same: They all receive the seed. This sower is not concerned with being careful or frugal with the seed. His mission is to sow it everywhere.

- Why do we so often fall into the trap of wanting to categorize everyone, including ourselves, when we hear this parable?
- What does this notion of an extravagant sower tell us about how God desires his Word to be shared? How does a focus on the sower’s actions shape our reading of the text differently than when we focus on the seed or the types of soil?