

Pentecost 23 (Proper 28)

November 16, 2025



To those who believe and enjoy the divine promise, this life is merely a pilgrimage during which they are preserved by hope for that future and better life.

– Martin Luther–

Lectures on Genesis 47

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.

Malachi 4:1-6

Malachi wraps up his prophecy with a word about the coming judgment of God. The time of passing over the misdeeds of the arrogant and wicked is coming to an end. God's judgment is going to burn like a furnace, bringing an end to those who oppose him.

- *How is the image of an oven/furnace different than an image of a wildfire? What does this reveal to us about God's judgment?*

While the wicked receive the appropriate punishment for their misdeeds, the faithful will bask in the light and warmth of the sun of righteousness. God himself will bring healing, restoration, and joy. Obedience and repentance will be the hallmarks of his people. It will be a great and awesome day (v.5), marked by the salvation of God's beloved, but with judgment of the arrogant and wicked who do not fear or honor the Lord. The whole sum of the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) will be brought to bear in this coming day of the Lord.

- *Does the image of the great and awesome day of the Lord bring you peace or fear?*

Psalm 98

When the Lord forgets about his people, or seems to forget about them, nothing goes well. The Greeks were relieved when their gods took no notice of them because gaining the attention of the gods almost always meant catastrophe. But Israel understood that apart from the Lord there was no hope.

Remembering God's steadfast love and faithfulness to Israel is grounds for song and celebration. It is what makes it possible to make a joyful noise. And the promise in that remembering is that God's righteousness and equity are going to be revealed to all the world.

- *Is God's righteousness something you celebrate or fear?*
- *When have felt like God forgot about you? How did he show you that he was still there?*

2 Thessalonians 3:(1-5) 6-13

Of all the things we might imagine as being pressing concerns in the life of the early church, "idleness" likely would not make our list. But this is precisely the problem Paul concerned himself with at the end of 2 Thessalonians. It seems there were some among them who were sponging off

of the rest. This may be related to their idea that the day of the Lord was already upon them. Why bother building a bank account if the end of the age is upon us?

But the Thessalonians were reminded that we do not get to leave the field of our vocations early. As long as we are in this world we have certain obligations, and one of them is to carry on our daily work. We honor the Lord with our vocation, whatever that might be, and we stay at our post until he calls us home.

- *In what ways does your daily vocation honor the Lord? How does your vocation serve your neighbors and the world?*

Along with needing to provide for their own food and shelter, an additional reason to avoid idleness is that when we are not busy, we are tempted to become busy-bodies. When we do not have our own work to do we are tempted to concern ourselves with the work of others. This leads to discord in the community.

- *How might this word sound in the ears of those who are idle?*
- *How does it sound in the ear of those who have made an idol out of being busy?*

Luke 21:5-28 (29-36)

The gospel in Luke 21 continues the theme from Malachi regarding the coming day of the Lord. The people who surrounded Jesus wanted to know what signs they ought to be looking for to let them know the time was near. Jesus provided a list of signs, but the list is not especially helpful. Everything he points to as a sign is happening around us all the time. Wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues; we are surrounded by such things continuously.

- *How many of the signs that Jesus identifies could you find in the news right now?*

What Jesus points to here is the reality that we are always living at the end of the age. His kingdom is always at hand. He instructs his followers that in the face of this reality we do not run and hide. We do not separate ourselves from the world. We stand up and raise our heads. We stand ready for the day of the Lord because it is the day of our salvation. Jesus further warned of avoiding "dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life." These are things that can turn our attention and our hearts away from our Savior. Numbing our senses through drunkenness or endless concern about what remains on our "to do" lists have the same outcome. They leave us unprepared for the day of the Lord.

- *Where do we find our hope in the face of these warnings?*