

Pentecost 6 (Proper 9)

July 5, 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.

“Sin is a powerful and cruel master and tyrant over all humankind on the whole earth, and no one can resist it, however wise, high, learned, and mighty he may be. ... Jesus Christ alone is the hero who can thwart that cruel, unconquerable foe. But it costs our Lord very dearly, for he must lose his life in doing it.”

— Martin Luther —

Lectures on Galatians, LW 26

Zechariah 9:9-12

This passage from Zechariah calls to mind Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. While the great generals and commanders of the day would ride into a city dressed in glory and majesty, God in the flesh entered the Holy City humbly, riding on a donkey. Despite the fact that his victory over sin and death puts to shame all earthly rulers with their short term victories, he does not come among his people with a demand for accolades and reverence. This is one of the most shocking realities of God's presence among us. He chooses to shroud himself in humility. He chooses to take on a lowly place for the sake of his people.

This marks quite a difference from most rulers. Most earthly leaders can't wait to take on the trappings of power and glory. Even the most humble of leaders among us ends up caught up in the will to draw honor and praise to ourselves. In Scripture, the One who actually is worthy of honor and praise does not seek it out. Instead, he comes with promises of setting prisoners free, restoring those who have fallen, bringing peace to a world scarred by violence. This is what it looks like when our king comes to us.

- *How do our own rulers and leaders reflect or not reflect what Zechariah shows us about God's presence among us?*
- *How do we hold together the humility described here with the majesty we usually associate with the Living God?*

Psalms 145:1-14

This psalm is an acrostic psalm which praises God for all of the great things he has done. Though the psalmist does not list anything specific that the Lord has done, he praises his name for His compassionate, loving, and faithful character.

- *In what ways is the psalmist seeking to share God's good reputation with the world? Why would that be important to do?*

Romans 7:14-25a

“I don't know why I did that.” How often have we thought or said those words? The best intentions — to lead a better life, to make better decisions, to be a better person — give way to the same old sins again and again and again. There is, within us, a war going on between the old and the new. The new person of faith wants to live according to God's will. The old person of sin in us refuses. We do the things we hate, things we know are wrong, things that don't square with who we want to be in the world, but we can't stop ourselves.

Sin takes the reins and drives us into darkness. There is no escaping this by our own will. Admonitions to just try harder — to be more diligent, to make a better effort — only lead to despair. They lead to an endless quest to accomplish what we cannot accomplish. It is for this reason that we need a Rescuer. We need one who will come into this situation, enter our hearts — where only darkness dwells — and shine his light, breaking the chains of sin and death. Thanks be to God that Christ Jesus came into the world for this very purpose!

- *What are some examples of doing those things we hate? What does it say about us that we persist in those things that do harm to our neighbors and to ourselves?*
- *When does the preaching of the law (what we do) need to give way to the promise of the Gospel (what he has done)?*

Matthew 11:25-30

The creation of faith — the reality that some people are grabbed by the Gospel while others are not — is one of the great mysteries of Christianity. Here we see a brief glimpse behind the curtain. The Father has hidden the truth of the Gospel from some and revealed it to others. He has hidden it from the wise and intelligent and revealed it to infants. The very people who should be at the leading edge of the Christian movement are stuck in the darkness of sin, while those no one would expect are propelled to the forefront.

- *How does the notion that God reveals the Gospel to some and not others strike you?*
- *What does the reality of election (God's choice) mean for the life of faith? In what ways does a teaching like this shape our evangelism efforts? In what ways does it undermine them?*

Jesus makes it clear that his yoke is for all those who are weary and carrying heavy burdens. Those weighed down by the power of sin are invited into the presence of Christ. The Gospel is only for sinners — and that is not a designation the religious and spiritual leaders are willing to accept. The refusal to recognize our sinfulness is what closes our eyes and ears to the Gospel. This is what the Spirit must break through in order to create faith. When that happens we are given the gift of trading our heavy burden of sin and death for the gentle yoke of righteousness and life. This finally, brings the rest and peace we are desperate for.

- *What does the Gospel sound like in the ears of those who do not think they are sinners?*
- *How does the image of weariness and carrying heavy burdens help shape our preaching/hearing of God's Word?*