

## Pentecost 12

August 31, 2025



*True humility does not know that it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue.*

– Martin Luther–

### 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.*

#### Proverbs 25:2–10

This piece of wisdom literature shows the contrast between God and the kings of Israel and Judah. God is one who prefers to conceal things; he doesn't reveal everything to everyone. On the other hand, kings delight in searching for answers. They love to investigate situations so that they might make proper decisions. By the same token, kings are known to hide what they know from their subjects, choosing not to reveal everything to those whom they rule.

- *Are there certain things that kings have to keep from their people? Why?*
- *Are there things that humans could not understand if God chose to reveal everything?*

It is practical wisdom that says that it is better to be invited to the head table, than to automatically sit there and then be asked to move down. Jesus made a point of this in his teaching as well. Humility is a highly desirable attitude for those who serve God. Again, the writer of Proverbs instructs that it is wise to keep one's secrets to oneself, lest another gets ahold of it and wants to shame a person. Likewise, it is not a person's business to tell other's secrets. In fact, according to the eighth commandment that would be gossip. Waiting until the right time to offer one's opinion is a noble pursuit. Too many talk incessantly with the result that others tune them out.

- *Do you know anyone who is careful with their words and willingly takes a backseat to others in social situations? How do you regard that person?*

#### Psalms 131

David spoke about his childlike attitude toward the Lord. He put his complete trust in God by keeping things simple. He did not spend his time with things that were too lofty for him to comprehend. Instead he kept his focus on the ways of the Lord.

- *In what ways are human beings prone to losing that childlike attitude toward God and his ways? Education? Worldly wisdom?*

#### Hebrews 13:1–17

The author of Hebrews gives a list of actions that believers are encouraged to emulate. Each of these ways of being in the world are signs of discipleship. Show brotherly love. Take care to look out for strangers. Visit those in prison

and be compassionate to their bondage. Help those who are mistreated. Be content with all that you have so that you do not seek more and more. Imitate the faith of your elders and mentors who have brought you along this far on the faith journey. Be careful of false teachers who want to lead you astray.

- *Are there any of these actions that you struggle with in particular? Why?*
- *Have you ever missed an opportunity to serve another person? Would it have made a difference if you knew they were an "angel?" Why or why not?*

The writer goes on to discuss the practices of the ancient Israelites who made sacrifices of atonement outside of the camp while in the wilderness. The area outside of the Israelites' encampment was deemed unholy. It was there that the sacrifices were burned. Into this discussion comes the fact that Jesus himself was killed outside of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus' brought holiness to an unholy place, and, more importantly, to unholy people. The author encouraged Christians to share in Christ's disgrace — to venture outside the city gate to share in Jesus' divine holiness.

- *How are we called outside of our comfort zone in order to serve and love those whom Christ died for?*

#### Luke 14:1–14

When Jesus went to dinner at the home of a Pharisee, he knew that the others at the dinner were watching him carefully. Anticipating their criticism, Jesus asked the question that was on their hearts, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Sitting among them was a man in desperate need of healing. No one had the courage to answer in front of him, so Jesus healed the man on the spot.

- *What did Jesus say to the religious leaders that indicated that people's needs trump the law? How do you think they reacted?*

Jesus then tells the men a parable, based on the Proverbs text for today. The situation was a wedding banquet. Jesus urged the men to consider where they might sit and what humility looks like. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who are humble will be exalted. Further, Jesus encouraged the host not to invite important people and friends to dine with him, rather to seek out those who had no status or power.

- *What parts of Jesus' teaching do you struggle with in your own life? What would you like to be more courageous about?*