



*If the Word of the prophets has been received,
the Gospel of Christ should be received all the more,
since it is not a prophet who is speaking but the Lord of
the prophets, not a slave but a son, not an angel but God,
not to the fathers but to us ...*

– Martin Luther –

Lectures on Hebrews, LW Vol. 29

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.

Isaiah 52:7-10

The great city of Jerusalem sits just over 2600 feet above sea level. There are considered to be seven different mountains surrounding the city, though they might more properly be called “hills” due to their relative size compared to other mountains in the world. When a messenger came to Jerusalem, they would have to cross the mountains that surrounded the city, thus the words given to the prophet Isaiah, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news...” (v. 7).

The messenger of which Isaiah speaks is one who pronounced victory over Israel’s enemies and a new beginning for God’s people. The news the messenger brought was the promise of salvation, happiness and peace. Upon receiving this news the people lifted their voices in joy.

- *Have you ever felt a spontaneous impulse to “sing for joy” (v.8)? What were the circumstances? In what sense is joy an expression of praise and thanks to God welling up in us?*

Isaiah proclaimed the good news to the people Israel, but its impact was not only on them. “All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” God’s peace and salvation is for the whole world. There will come a time when all people will know the Lord and rejoice in his saving love (Philippians 2:10-11).

- *When you hear the word “salvation” or the phrase “being saved,” what is the first thing that comes to mind? How is the salvation of Jesus a past, present, and future reality for us?*

Psalms 2

The Lord sits in heaven and laughs at the plot against his anointed one. What do the people think they can do to hurt the Almighty? Just his words uttered in rage terrify them.

- *Do you ever think that the world has lost appropriate fear of the Lord’s power? Have we turned the Almighty into a big “teddy bear”? What is the danger in this?*

Psalms 2 carries a message that, at first glance, comes across as pure threat. Scripture says that the Lord will come in wrath and fury against the unfaithful to “break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (v. 9). But at the same time, the psalm announces that “Blessed are those who take refuge in him” (v.12).

- *In what ways is it hard to fully comprehend what the psalmist is saying when in one verse he spoke of being dashed and in the next he says to take refuge in the one who is able to crush?*

In this Old Testament psalm, written centuries before the birth of Jesus, we hear reference to God’s anointed (Messiah) and to God’s only begotten Son.

- *In what sense is Jesus the fulfillment of this prophetic psalm? Why is it important to know God spoke this in advance?*
- *As Christians, we acknowledge that our sin has brought God’s wrath upon us? In this context, what does it mean to “kiss the Son”? (Compare Romans 5:6-11.)*

Hebrews 1:1-6 (7-12)

The author of Hebrews is one of the primary places in the New Testament where the topic of God’s living Word comes up (another is the Gospel for today.) God has spoken to his people throughout time in many ways by the prophets. The author of Hebrews proclaimed that in these last days God has spoken to us in an even more important way – through his Son who is the exact image of the Father.

- *How does God speak to us not simply through Jesus’ words and teachings but through the person of Jesus himself? How does Jesus’ life and mission convey the promise of the Gospel?*

The author goes on to contend that even the angels cannot compare to the Son of God. He is the one who will sit at the right hand of the Father while the angels praise him for his glory. When all things perish on the earth, the Son will remain forever, righteous and holy and without end.

- *God’s Word assures us that his Son is the victor over all principalities and powers of the universe. How does this bolster your faith in times of trial, weakness, and crushing pain?*

John 1:1-14 (15-18)

Children often ask the question, “If God created everything then who created God?” The only way to respond to questions like this are to affirm the one-and-only uniqueness of God.

- *What does it mean to say that God alone is unique in being immortal and eternal? (1 Tim. 1:17) Can you imagine a time when there was nothing except for God?*

Another question that humans struggle with is the one that John addresses in this first chapter, “Where was Jesus when God created everything?” The answer: The divine *Logos* (the Word) existed in the beginning with God, is, was, and ever shall be God. All things were made through him and not one thing was created without him.

- *In what ways does John use the “Word” to explain the complex theological reality of Jesus’ true identity? If only God is eternal, and Jesus was there before time, what does this prove to us?*