



*We should fear and love God so that we do not despise his Word  
and the preaching of it, but acknowledge it as holy,  
and gladly hear and learn it.*

— Martin Luther —

*Explanation to the Third Commandment  
Small Catechism*

## 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.*

### Deuteronomy 5:12–15

The account of the giving of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy has a few more instructions in it when compared to the account in Exodus 20. One of the main differences is the focus on rest for all servants, so that they “may rest as well as you” (Deut. 5:14). The word *shabbat* has its root in “cease” or “stop.” God rested on the seventh day, and so people and animals should rest, too.

- *With the busyness of our society, why has it become so foreign for us to simply take a day to rest? Is there an inherent judgment put upon us by the culture if we rest?*
- *Why is rest so important for the other six days of the week? According to Martin Luther (see above), what is our Sabbath meant to consist of?*
- *How well does your congregation encourage folks to take time for Sabbath with the Lord?*

The second difference in the account of the commandments in Deuteronomy is the addition of the reference to the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt and what God did to bring them out of bondage. Both texts have that as the starting point to the giving of the law, but in Deuteronomy God insists that the people remember they were slaves and that with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, he delivered them. It is for this reason that they should observe the Sabbath day.

- *Why would God make mention of Israel’s slavery in Egypt? What does that have to do with rest and worship?*

### Psalms 81:1–10

The psalmist recalls God’s actions on behalf of Israel, whom God freed from slavery. In this psalm, God’s people are referred to as Joseph, rather than the usual “Jacob.” God relieved the Hebrews from the burden of their work, which was building great structures for the Egyptians. They would haul dirt and other materials, basket by basket, in a human chain. When they were in distress, God answered their cries from the thunder.

But now, it seems as though God’s people were not listening to him. They were bowing down and worshiping foreign idols. This angered the Lord and so he gave them over to their enemies.

- *How does this psalm express God’s desire for his people to remember him and not go astray? For what purpose did God allow the stubborn Israel to go their own way?*
- *Do you think there are times when God turns from his people*

*today when we are stubborn and disobedient? Why or why not?*

### 2 Corinthians 4:5–12

St. Paul defended his ministry and the ways in which he proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, saying that he has spoken nothing but God’s truth. He made sure to say that he was not promoting himself in any way, but was focused solely on Jesus Christ and him crucified.

- *How easy is it to focus on ourselves and our faith journey, rather than keeping the focus squarely on Christ and the cross? Why is this such a temptation?*
- *How does the light of Christ help us to faithfully preach Christ rather than ourselves or our own agenda?*

Paul referred to the treasure that God has given us in Jesus Christ as being contained in “jars of clay.” We humans are weak and frail, prone to giving in to temptation and taking credit for ourselves. But Paul was very clear: All power belongs to God; we can do nothing on our own, not even faithfully proclaim the Good News of Christ. Even though we are at times afflicted with illness and persecuted for the faith, we are never destroyed because of God’s power at work in us. Paul phrased it like this, “Death is at work in us, but life in you.”

- *In what ways are followers of Christ in union with his death? In what ways are we granted his life?*
- *How does the metaphor “jars of clay” resonate with how you see your own life, body, and existence on this earth?*

### Mark 2:23–28 (3:1–6)

As Jesus and his disciples made their way along on their journey, the disciples picked some grain from a field. The Pharisees who saw it were horrified that Jesus’ disciples would “work” on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by recalling the time when David and his companions were hungry and David ate the bread of the Presence from the temple because nothing else was available (1 Samuel 21). Jesus went on to say, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)

- *How does Jesus point here to the true reason for the establishment of the Sabbath day? Where do the religious leaders get this wrong? How does it become a burden when we get it wrong?*
- *Jesus has authority over all things, including the laws of Israel. In what ways does his mercy for his people free us from the rigid observance of the law?*