

# PENTECOST 26

## *Proper 28 - Year B*

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*Note: During the 2024 Season after Pentecost, Sermons That Work will use Track 2 readings for sermons and Bible studies.  
Please consult our archives for many additional Track 1 resources from prior years.*

### **Daniel 12:1-3**

12 “At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. <sup>2</sup>Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup>Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

### **Commentary from Rachel Joiner**

The experience of being a stranger, an exile, or a refugee is one faced by millions across the world. Daniel is widely known for his stay and deliverance from a lion's den, but before the lions, Daniel was chosen to be educated and serve in the palace of the empire that conquered, exiled, and captured his people. Daniel had no agency, voice, or power, until God granted him visions and dreams, and the ability to interpret them. Daniel gained voice but had to navigate between those in power and honoring God and God's commandments. Daniel bore the weight of knowing – knowing that God had and would deliver the Israelites and knowing that this deliverance would not come soon or without anguish. Like Daniel, many in our day are faithful and courageous, and still burdened physically, emotionally, and spiritually by unjust, oppressive systems. As Christians, we are called to love, serve, and respect the dignity of every human being. This is the work we are called to do, and we, like Daniel, carry the weight of knowing this work will continue until all things are made new.

### **Discussion Questions**

Was there a time when you carried the weight of knowing alone? Did this experience distance you from God or did it draw you closer?

How might you seek and serve those new to your community? How might you lend your voice and agency to those who are marginalized and oppressed?

## Psalm 16

- <sup>1</sup> Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; \*  
I have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord,  
my good above all other."
- <sup>2</sup> All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land,  
\*  
upon those who are noble among the people.
- <sup>3</sup> But those who run after other gods \*  
shall have their troubles multiplied.
- <sup>4</sup> Their libations of blood I will not offer, \*  
nor take the names of their gods upon my  
lips.
- <sup>5</sup> O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; \*  
it is you who uphold my lot.
- <sup>6</sup> My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; \*  
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- <sup>7</sup> I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; \*  
my heart teaches me, night after night.
- <sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me; \*  
because he is at my right hand I shall not fall.
- <sup>9</sup> My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; \*  
my body also shall rest in hope.
- <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon me to the grave, \*  
nor let your holy one see the Pit.
- <sup>11</sup> You will show me the path of life; \*  
in your presence there is fullness of joy,  
and in your right hand are pleasures for  
evermore.

### Commentary from Rachel Joiner

Psalm 16 asks for God's protection and goes on to share ways the Lord is good above all other; God's faithfulness, provision, and presence that gives hope, blessing, and joy.

The Book of Psalms is a place where people find refuge, a place to engage with voices from long ago that sing out to God in praise, ask questions, give thanks, cry out in sorrow, groan in anger, or shout in victory and praise. We hear voices from a different time, culture, and place – but uncannily similar to our own experience of what it means to be human. The psalmists, like us, experienced life within a world full of problems and possibilities, with all its emotions, and with faith in a God who loved them – and us – relentlessly.

### Discussion Questions

Have you ever considered the ancient Israelites singing and saying psalms as they went about their daily lives? What might you see and hear in your holy imagination?

How might we lovingly and respectfully speak of the psalms as something we share with our Jewish neighbors?

## Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18), 19-25

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,” <sup>13</sup> and since then has been waiting “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.” <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

<sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

<sup>16</sup> “This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts,

and I will write them on their minds,”

<sup>17</sup> and he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

<sup>18</sup> Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

### Commentary from Rachel Joiner

It must have been quite a revelation to hear this section of Hebrews preached for the first time. A passage from Jeremiah reframed with the love of God through Christ the Son. The assurance that sins are forgiven and no longer remembered. These concepts of forgiveness, hope, and love are difficult to grasp (For Christ-followers of any century). This may be why the author of Hebrews goes on to assure the audience that Jesus is so much more than the priests they have seen in the past. Those who believe in Christ are to approach him with boldness and confidence – a confidence born of the faith, hope, and love Christ gives us as we journey with him, provoking one another to love and good deeds, to gather together, and to encourage one another. Notice that “one another” does not seem to be limited to an exclusive group. The idea of provoking love and good deeds among all God’s beloved children seems nearly as revolutionary as a God that forgives, remembers our misdeeds no more, and loves us forever.

### Discussion Questions

Do you struggle with accepting God’s grace and love? How might this passage from Hebrews assure you of God’s love for you?

How might we provoke one another to love and good deeds? What might that look like in our communities?

## Mark 13:1-8

**13** As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” <sup>2</sup>Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>3</sup>When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup>“Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” <sup>5</sup>Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup>Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup>When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup>For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

### Commentary from Rachel Joiner

Some things must end for new things to begin. This passage from Mark is one of the ‘little apocalypses.’ Oftentimes, the space between knowing and realizing can feel apocalyptic. Take childbirth, for example: Mothers are told about what is to come, they have a knowing, and then they experience the realization of what they have learned about and prepared for. There is pain during birth as changes for mother and baby begin. The baby leaves the sanctuary of its mother’s body, its body changes as its lungs breathe air for the first time. The mother’s body is changed; some changes are welcome, others not, and still others like the phenomenon of microchimerism, are miraculous. Microchimerism allows a bit of baby’s genetic material to pass into and remain in mother’s blood and brain tissue for the rest of her life. A connection unlike any other remains.

Jesus, like Daniel in our first reading, carries the weight of knowing the pain of what is to come for him, and the grief and confusion those who follow him will endure. Stones will be thrown down, one will roll away, and out of death will come eternal life; separation will be destroyed, connection and full relationship will be restored. There will come a love like no other, connecting us forever to the one who loved us into being.

### Discussion Questions

What in your life might be ending? Is this ending painful, necessary, a relief, or a combination of emotions and realities?

How have previously experienced endings given birth to new journeys, relationships, or unexpected possibilities?