

PENTECOST 17C
COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR OCTOBER 5, 2025

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

- We know nothing about Habakkuk other than this book. He seems to be writing near the time of the Babylonian Exile. Some traditions place him as a contemporary of Daniel – thus, just after the Exile. Other traditions have him as a contemporary of Isaiah and Jeremiah – thus, just before the Exile. The power of this book lies in the question-and-answer format that Habakkuk has with God. Habakkuk questions why injustice prevails and why the wicked seem to win. God responds with a call for patience and an encouragement to the righteous to “live by their faith.” Habakkuk is one more Biblical example of voicing our anger and our complaints toward God. If we are yelling at God, at least we are still in a relationship with God!

Psalms 37:1-9

- Like Habakkuk, the psalm seeks to provide encouragement when confronted with the question about why evildoers prevail. Thus, it counsels the following:
 - *Commit your way to the Lord* – Even though others have fallen astray, the psalmist calls on the people to renew their faith in God, despite the prevalence of evil.
 - *Be still before the Lord and wait patiently* – Like Habakkuk, the psalmist counsels patience, seeing that God will make everything right in the end.
 - *Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; do not be provoked* - Do not stoop to the level of the evildoers.

Which of these pieces of advice is easier for you? Which is harder?

2 Timothy 1:1-14

- 2 Timothy is set up as a letter from Paul to Timothy and perhaps is one of the last letters written by Paul. At the beginning of these verses, Paul extols the influence of family as he speaks of Timothy’s mother and grandmother. But note that this gift of faith must become our own, as Paul encourages Timothy to “rekindle the gift of God that is within you.” How did your family influence your faith? How do you “rekindle the gift of God” within you?
- What does it mean to you to live by these words: “God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline”?
- Throughout this passage, Paul encourages Timothy to faithfulness, reminding him that God will guard him and that the Spirit will help him. When have you needed encouragement to faithfulness? What promises helped you at that time?

Luke 17:5-10

- Though we do not hear the first four verses of Luke 17, they provide a context for our words:
Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, “I repent”, you must forgive.’

After this severe warning about not causing others to sin and promoting a model of radical forgiveness, the disciples ask for an increase of faith. Jesus responds that even a little faith will have a large effect. When we feel that our meager efforts are not enough, Jesus tells us to step out and act in faith. God will supply the effect. When have you needed such encouragement?

- At the same time, Jesus also reminds the disciples that they are not to take pride in their efforts. We act in faith, we respond in love, simply because “we have done only what we ought to have done.”