

## Pentecost 5A - Comments/questions on the lessons for June 28, 2026

### Jeremiah 28:5-9

- Our passage comes in the middle of a conflict between two prophets. Hananiah calls out Jeremiah and proclaims that those in exile in Babylon will return within two years and that the power of Babylon will be broken. Jeremiah in response affirms the wish and desire that Hananiah proclaims, while emphasizing that peace will only come ... when peace comes. We proclaim God's word not out of our desire but out of our faithfulness, a faithfulness rooted in reality. So how can we know when to proclaim hope and when to proclaim justice? How do we know when we are being faithful and not acting out of our own desire?
- Whenever we face a national or international crisis, we experience a similar impatience, longing for the crisis to be over. In a symbolic gesture, after the words of this passage Hananiah breaks the wooden yoke that Jeremiah bears to signify Babylon's power being broken. Jeremiah responds: "You have broken wooden bars only to forge iron bars in place of them!" (28:13) When we desire to rush a resolution, are we in danger of breaking "wooden bars only to forge iron bars in place of them"?

### Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

- For as triumphant and hope-filled as our psalm is today, this represents only the beginning of a psalm that ends in a long lament: "How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? ... Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?" (89:46,49) The psalmist seeks to remind himself and his people of God's faithfulness in the past so that they might make it through the difficult period that they are living in.
- When have you needed to remind yourself of what God has done in the past to get you through difficult circumstances?
- As we reflect upon such words of hope and trust in the God who has been with us in the past, it is important to remember that the future will not look like the past. We look to the past not in order to return to a nostalgic or glorified past. We look to the past to remember that God what God did before. We then look forward to a future that God has in store for us. But when God does it again, things will not look the same.

### Romans 6:12-23

- Paul gives a useful definition of freedom in this passage. Freedom does not mean that we are free to do whatever we want. We are set free from sin so that we might "become slaves of righteousness." Martin Luther put it this way: "A Christian is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one."
- Note as well that Paul does not say that the wages of sin is hell. The wages of sin is death. Sinful behavior, destructive habits, is that which destroys life. We are called to the ways of God that promote life.

### Matthew 10:40-42

- The passage is simple, but the implications are profound. Welcoming is not simply about looking to the righteous one or the prophet. Welcoming is an attitude we each carry with us and can be shown through the simplest act of sharing water with "one of these little ones." How have you shown such an act this past week? How can you show such an act in this coming week?