

Pentecost 4A - Comments/questions on the lessons for June 21, 2026

Jeremiah 20:7-13

- Jeremiah depicts the reality of what it means to be a prophet. He depicts how the task can be sweet as honey in the mouth but it embitters the stomach. A prophet's task may comfort the afflicted, but more often than not it afflicts the comfortable. The prophet gives a word that people do not want to hear.
- When have you had to do something or say something that you knew was right but you also knew would cause others to react negatively toward you?

Psalm 69:7-18

- The psalm for the day depicts the cry of one who suffers for the sake of righteousness. We can hear this especially in the first six verses of the psalm:

¹ *Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.*

² *I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,
and the flood sweeps over me.*

³ *I am weary with my crying;
my throat is parched.*

*My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.*

⁴ *More in number than the hairs of my head
are those who hate me without cause;
many are those who would destroy me,
my enemies who accuse me falsely.*

*What I did not steal
must I now restore?*

⁵ *O God, you know my folly;
the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.*

⁶ *Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me,
O Lord GOD of hosts;
do not let those who seek you be dishonored because of me,
O God of Israel.*

- Note how verse 9 – “Zeal for your house has eaten me up” – is used to describe Jesus’ action in clearing out the moneychangers from the temple (John 2:17).

Romans 6:1b-11

- This is perhaps the most vivid and powerful expression of what the crucifixion and our baptism can mean. Here, Paul describes baptism as our identifying with Jesus’ death on the cross. Baptism and the crucifixion is a dying to an old self. Resurrection is thus seen as a rising up to new life. For this reason, Paul encourages us to not use our forgiveness as an excuse to sin more. Rather, if we have died to sin, we then no longer live by our old ways.

Matthew 10:24-39

- This passage follows last week’s lesson, especially the portion about the disciples being dragged before the courts. Jesus encourages the disciples by telling them that they are following in the footsteps of Jesus himself.
- As I read this passage, I am reminded of stories from my grandfather, a missionary in Pakistan, who would tell of those whose families disowned them because of following Christ. That insight helps to deal with the difficult part of this passage about the division within families and the call to not love father or mother more than Jesus. Faith is a call that at times will divide us from families. So, how do we tell the difference between a legitimate call of faith and a cult?