

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 2020
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church; Pastor Tom Olson; April 19, 2020

HYMN: "HE LIVES"

I serve a risen Savior,
He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy,
I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian
Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King
The Hope of all who seek Him,
The Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind

CHORUS He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives),
Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives),
Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart

CHORUS: He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives),
Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives),
Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
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PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: *John 3:8 The Holy Spirit is like the wind...*

GOSPEL READING: *John 20:19-31 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." 24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

MESSAGE: WHAT DO PEOPLE NEED? John 20:19-31, Pastor Tom Olson, 4/19/20

ZOOM: I am enjoying our ZOOM Bible studies with Dave Fischer about the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. I encourage you to join us on line. Dave will help you get set up if you call him. It isn't hard...even I am learning how to do it! Some day I will even be able to lead one. So what are we learning in

Bible study? We are seeing that the gospel changed lives and set people free. We are also seeing that God worked with signs and wonders and miraculous power through the Apostles. And in contrast to the joy of salvation and the power of the Holy Spirit, we see Paul and the early church simultaneously facing fierce opposition and persecution...troubles, stoning, shipwrecks as the devil retaliates for souls that have been saved and set free. The Christian's life today is a similar mix of the joy of salvation, the power of God, the attacks of the devil and the trials of life. Churches that felt immune to the Coronavirus and continued meeting found out that true believers also get sick and die of viruses. One pastor defied orders to stop having public services and he got the disease and died and many church members suffered because of their decision to keep having services. So, what do we need to live through this crisis or any crisis? Our gospel lesson for this Sunday after Easter gives us some excellent answers. Let's talk about it.

I. PEOPLE NEED PEACE

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

LOCKED IN: The disciples were locked into the upper room, likely confused and terrified on that Resurrection Sunday. Some felt Jesus was alive, others felt his body was stolen, all knew that the religious leaders had it out for them and they were in grave danger. What were they feeling? ...fear, anxiety, tension, exhaustion, apprehension, regrets...? This is not unlike the powerful emotions that are raging through our minds these days as we are afraid of this disease, we mistrust the motives of our leaders, we are confused by conflicting information, we all wonder what the future will look like and if life will ever be the same. Very few people have what is needed for health, sleep, energy and hope and that is peace. Jesus entered that room filled with tension and told them the thing they needed to hear when he said, "PEACE BE WITH YOU." Listen to God's Word again and let the words soak in, "PEACE BE WITH YOU." Without peace we lose health, make poor decisions and lose hope. We all need a deep infusion of peace and it can be found in no other way than the disciples found it. PEACE IS PRESENT WHEN JESUS IS NEAR.

CLOSER: CNN can't give you peace, FOX can't give you peace, Fauci can't give you peace, Trump can't give you peace, Pelosi certainly doesn't give me peace...but Jesus gives us peace. He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, all powerful, victorious over sin, death and the power of the devil, risen from the dead and coming back to make all things right and new. The closer we draw to Christ in the Word and prayer, the greater our peace will be. Jesus wants us to have ***"the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension."*** (Philippians 4:7). ***John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.***

II. PEOPLE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 20:21-23 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

NORWEGIAN: This is an interesting passage in the Norwegian language because the word for breath and Spirit are very similar. In English it would say *he breathed on them and said, "Take to yourself the Holy Breath."*

FILLED: In Dave's Bible study we noticed that the people were ***"filled with the Holy Spirit."*** Pastor Richard Anderson, was with us on line from Elk River and even Wayne Hanson, from Arizona, joined us this week. Pastor Andy asked and answered the question "What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?" Andy is a gifted teacher and he made four points about 1) the baptism of the Holy Spirit; 2) being filled with the Holy

Spirit; 3) the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and 4) the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The thought that came to me after the discussion is this: "I really need the Holy Spirit."

HYMNS: I understand the feeling of the hymnwriter, Edwin Hatch, when he wrote, "Breathe on my, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do." J. Edwin Orr spoke to AFLC pastors over 30 years ago before he died. He told us of a great tent revival meeting in Australia that he was a part of. Lives were powerfully transformed by the Lord in that revival. He was so moved by what he saw that he stepped out of the tent and penned the hymn, "Search Me, O God," and the last verse says this, "O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee; Send a revival, start the work in me..."

MORE: We desperately need all that the Holy Spirit gives: ...salvation, assurance, joy, life, gifts, power, faith and more. If we are going to be like ***"the men of Issachar who understood the times, to know what Israel ought to do"*** (***I Chronicles 12:32***) and have the wisdom we need and the power we need, we are going to need to let the Holy Spirit have more and more access to every area of our lives. We need to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit!

HOW: How do we get a fresh filling? The Bible tells us that there are several things we can do like ask, repent of sin, be filled with the Word of God and yield our stubborn wills to the kind of obedience to the Lord that God can bless. There is a fullness of the Holy Spirit that most Christians never step into and if ever we needed that it is right now. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us and comfort us and enable us. We invite the Holy Spirit right now to have more of us.

III. PEOPLE NEED THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

John 20:29-31 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

SAVED: Jesus saves! Many people today are afraid of dying because they are not sure they are going to heaven. Some people are expressing on social media that they think they have done enough good deeds to go to heaven. I once thought that way and I never was sure if I was good enough because I kept sinning in one way or another. People don't have a clue what Jesus did for them on the cross, neither did I, even though I was in church every Sunday. The pastor talked about grace all the time, baptismal grace and grace in Holy Communion but I just saw baptism and communion as two more good deeds I needed to do to earn my way into heaven. When I finally came to the end of my self-effort and saw Jesus dying for ME on the cross, then I quit trying and believed in Jesus and found peace. Most people I meet lack that peace. If you ask them if they are going to heaven they say, "I hope so, I am trying to be good enough." Beloved, one sin alone would keep us out of heaven because God is holy. We don't need good deeds, we need pardon, we need forgiveness and that is found in the holy and precious blood of Jesus shed on the cross for you and for me. You can't earn it, you can't deserve it, but you can believe it!

Ephesians 2:8&9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast."

FEARLESS: Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Jesus rose from the dead and conquered death. If I would get the Corona Virus and die from it, I would go to heaven and have ***"fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore."*** (***Psalms 16:11***). What does that do for me? IT TAKES AWAY MY FEAR. I stopped at the Farmington bakery and an older couple were in there with face masks on, staying as far away from people as

they could. I am sure the face masks were wise but what they mask could not do was hide the fear in their eyes. Beloved, people need the assurance of salvation and those of us who know Jesus need to help them come through to the peaceful, Spirit-filled life that comes with this blessed assurance that Jesus is mine. They need a taste of glory divine.

OPPORTUNITY: I don't think there has ever been a better moment in my life to bring people the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and coming again. Souls are thinking about death and eternity. They are open to hearing about forgiveness and the gift of eternal life in Christ. Let's get up every day and say, "Lord send a soul to me that needs to hear about Jesus." PEOPLE NEED THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION, and we can help them find it. PEOPLE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT, and He is ready and waiting to fill us with the breath of God. PEOPLE NEED PEACE, and that is the fruit of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is just as alive and well as He was when he appeared to the disciples after the resurrection. He offers us everything we truly need in this time of crisis. Won't you accept His gifts today? They are only a prayer away. Amen

CLOSING PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen