

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 2020
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church; Pastor Tom Olson; May 10, 2020

HYMN: "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: **John 10:2 ...I am going to prepare a place for you.** Our moms do many things and most of them could be defined by one word: PREPARE. They prepare food, prepare our beds, prepare our clothes, prepare the flower bed, prepare for vacation, prepare for winter. Moms are great preparers. Proverbs 31 says that an excellent wife is one who is prepared. Today we need to appreciate all of the preparing our moms have done for us.

GOSPEL READING: **John 14:1-14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. 12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

MESSAGE: COMFORT FOR TROUBLED HEARTS Pastor Tom Olson, 5/10/20

I distinctly remember going to my childhood home on the little SW Wisconsin farm after my mother passed away. Nothing had changed outwardly. Everything was just like she left it. Still is. Dad cooked, but not the same. We visited, but not the same. Everyone was nice to be with, but not the same. When mom passes away first, a warm home becomes quite cold and empty. Our moms are so comforting. My wife focuses on things that are so much more important than I do. I am dreaming about my hobbies and she is thinking about the family being warm, fed, birthdays remembered, people being cared for. Someone said that you don't need a marriage counselor because you have a wife, and she is usually right about what you should do...she thinks about marriage, family and faith and I think about personal activities and my projects. That is why most of us would agree that mother is the heart of every home. John 14 reminds me a lot about things my mom and my wife would think are important. Let's talk about it.

I. THE COMFORT OF HOME

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

"Dorothy" said it best, "there is no place like home." When I go home to Coon Valley, Wisconsin I feel a special peace...my childhood home. The farm where my brother lives is great to visit and feels good but I really love to drive past the one little 1940's story and a half house where I lived from about age 8 to age 16...my childhood years. The house was so small I had to sleep in a hallway on a WW 1 army cot. When I see that house, I smell fresh bread and Sunday beef roast dinners. I feel the warmth of the old pot belly wood stove in the basement where we spent a lot of time, I see jig saw puzzles on the table, I see our 90-year-old widower neighbor coming over for coffee and a fresh cookie and talking Norwegian to my mom. I almost cry thinking about it. That is home. You all have a place like that in the treasure house of your memory. For Sharon it is the farm during hay baling season.

Jesus uses this imagery of home to comfort His disciples and prepare them for his leaving them. He doesn't talk about streets of gold or angelic choirs. He comforts his disciples by telling them that he is going to prepare a place, a mansion, a room...I think the best word is somewhere between mansion and room...a home, a place with your very own room where you can relax and feel totally satisfied and safe. The one place where we feel safe in this epidemic is our home. My brother calls me from the farm and assures me he is safe at home. WE LOOK FORWARD TO A COMFORTABLE HOME.

II. THE ASSURANCE OF A PROVIDER

John 14:6-9 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus

answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

When we were children, there was no way we could provide for ourselves. We could not get food, we could not build a home, we could not protect ourselves from the elements. Our parents did that for us. Without the aid of parents, a newborn child, a toddler, even a youth, would die. We have absolute trust that our parents will take care of us. They dedicate their lives to caring for us.

It is no different for us spiritually. We are dead without the Lord. We are lost. Wayne Hanson joined our Bible study from his home in Arizona. He told about how lost he was as a young man and he stumbled upon Rosedale Lutheran in South Minneapolis where Richard Anderson and Laurel Udden were serving as pastors. He told about the marvelous way God saved his lost soul. Then he said an amazing thing. He said it was completely the Lord who chased him down, saved his soul and worked in his life. He did nothing except contributing the sin and rebellion. That is what Jesus is saying here to Thomas, who said that he did not have a clue how to get to heaven. Jesus said to them the way is provided and that He is the way. What he did for us on the cross opened wide the gates of our heavenly home to whosoever will come to Christ. **John 19:30, "It is finished!"** The way is provided. That is a mom thing too...to provide for the needs of the children. Jesus has done that at Calvary. WE HAVE A PROVIDER.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO REACH YOUR POTENTIAL

John 14:12-14 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Our moms do so much for us. They invest their lives in us and then we grow up and just leave them. The empty nest is hard. It is tough for moms to let those children go and be stuck home alone with their goofy old dad. My mom did so much to help me go and reach my potential. I got an offer to go to Alaska right after college to help Oscar Brown in the Cordova Mission. I didn't know if I should go. She said, "You are young, single and free...this is the only chance you have in life to go like this. Go!" Then one day I was struggling about my future career and God was speaking to me about becoming a pastor and my mom, just once, never pushing, said to me, "Have you ever considered becoming a pastor?" That sealed the deal. Then when she lay dying at age 85, when she needed us the most, I got a call to leave Wisconsin and go to Ohio. We knew we would possibly not see each other again and she said to me, "Go, I will be OK."

Even though it hurts them, our mothers let us go so that we can reach our full potential. They give us away to our spouses. They want to see us succeed. My mom even encouraged me to fly an airplane in Alaska but she just didn't want me to tell her about it.

Jesus tells does the same thing. He left his beloved disciples so that they could reach their full potential. He went to send them the Holy Spirit which they needed more than his physical presence at one place at one time. Jesus loved them deeply but he was more interested that they fulfill their callings in life. That is a real mom thing. Many a father has wanted a son to stay on the farm and keep it going but mom has had to tell him to let the son become something else, a music teacher, a mechanic, a carpenter...and let the farm or family business go, as hard as that is. That is because mom senses what the child is meant to be...she feels it. Jesus knows what we are meant to be and wants to help us do even greater works than he did. He delights to SEE US REACH OUR POTENTIAL.

These are mom things...HOME, PROVISION AND POTENTIAL. And these are God things. And best of all, it comes right back to where we started, home, with mom. What do I mean?

CONCLUSION: One day, as children of God, we will close our eyes to sleep and wake up with no more pain, no more worry, to beautiful weather, delicious smells, familiar voices that make our hearts sing, loved ones who have gone on before us, and we will say, "I have not felt this good in many years." Then we will see our godly mom and our loving Savior and they will say, "My child, welcome HOME. Everything is PREPARED. Now you can really reach your full POTENTIAL." Amen

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**