

MEMORIAL DAY SUNDAY 2020
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church;
Pastor Tom Olson; May 24, 2020

HYMN: "AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL" Katharine Lee Bates (1859-1929)

**O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!**

**O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine!**

**O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!**

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: *John 17:1 ...Father, the time has come...* Have you ever driven a big farm tractor (hold up toy tractor)? I know you can drive one of these but some day you can drive a big one. Would you like that? I have two and I would be glad to show you how when you are about 10 years old. I showed Rebekah how a couple weeks ago. It is a little scary at first but she smiled once she got used to it. She drove the Ford and the Farmall both. This summer

Elijah will try the John Deere Lawnmower I am sure. Jesus went to heaven and let his disciples take over the church and bring the gospel to the world. I am sure that angels would love to do it but Jesus lets us tell people what he has done for us. Just like I watched Rebekah and shouted instructions, Jesus watches us from Heaven and guides us too. It is fun to participate in tractor driving and in sharing the good news of Jesus with the world.

GOSPEL READING: *John 17:1-11* *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. 6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-the name you gave me-so that they may be one as we are one.*

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: THE TIME HAS COME Pastor Tom Olson, 5/24/20

“I SHALL RETURN.” Words of General Douglas MacArthur in 1942 as he left the Philippine Islands during World War II. Japanese forces were about to conquer the Philippines, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt had transferred MacArthur to another location in the Pacific. It was time for him to go and let the people of the Philippines face the harsh reality of the Japanese dictatorship. If MacArthur had stayed, he would likely have been killed. But the United States regrouped, fought the Japanese from a different angle and eventually returned to liberate the Philippine Islands from Japan. He had to go so he could prepare to return!

Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed, *“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”* The time will come in a few years for me to turn this church over to a younger pastor. I don’t look forward to it. But when the right time comes it will be the best thing for me and for the church. The time comes for our children to leave home. It is very hard to let go of them but it is the right thing to do so they can live an adult life and spread their wings and fly. When I was learning how to fly an airplane, it was scary for me and my instructor to fly by myself for the first time. But the instructor said, “Today is the day.” And as scared as I was, I still remember the excitement, joy and pride I felt as I took off, flew and safely landed. The time had come.

Now it is time for the disciples to take hold and bring the gospel to the world. But Jesus had to go so he could send the Holy Spirit and give them the gifts they needed. It was a very hard, but necessary, moment for Jesus and his disciples. **THE TIME HAS COME.** Let's talk about it.

I. PREPARING TO GO

John 17:4&5 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

CHRIST'S MOTIVE: GLORIFY GOD Christ shows us the deepest and truest motive for serving the Lord. The author of the Westminster Catechism that the Episcopalians and Methodists once used says that the chief end or the chief purpose of man (humanity) "is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." The focus of our faith is right if we enjoy God so much that it is our highest delight to honor him and magnify His great Name. Too much religion is duty and drudgery...and that is horrible. Our faith is not right if it is not so delightful that we can hardly stand to spend a moment apart from the presence of Christ.

CHRIST'S METHOD: COMPLETE THE WORK The best way to honor God is to do what he wants you to do, no matter how seemingly insignificant. People who are well known Christians doing great works all over the world are no more pleasing to God than a housewife that is changing diapers for God's glory or a house painter, doing a good job of painting houses as a testimony for Christ. ***Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do your will, O my God."***

CHRIST'S MOMENTUM: RETURN HOME There is a time to get out of the way so that the larger work of the Holy Spirit can be accomplished. One of the great challenges in life and ministry is to move from "doer" to "encourager," ...to get out of the way and let new and younger people get involved. Being an encourager is a great way to multiply the work.

The Apostle Paul was at one point the "hands on main man." He ended up far from his churches and eventually in prison for his faith. But he wrote the letters to the churches that make up much of the New Testament as an encouragement to younger people to be good leaders of the Church of Christ. By being out of the way he multiplied his ministry and his words still guide and inspire us today. Our Nellie has been quarantined in her apartment but has been spending her time writing a second book to encourage others.

II. PREPARING TO STAY

John 17:8&9 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them.

A SOLID FOUNDATION: GOD'S WORD "***For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them.***" The solid, objective Word of God is the only place to build. I made the mistake of putting a building on top of an old silo pit that was filled because it just keeps sinking down without fire ground under it. Good theology is not an option, it is the only way to build something solid that won't crumble when emotions ebb and flow. We need a foundation for our faith that is more solid than our ever-changing emotions. ***Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."***

A LIVING FAITH: KNOWING JESUS *“They knew with certainty that I came from you,”* The assurance of salvation and a living relationship with Christ are absolutely necessary. Martha tried to substitute activity for relationship. Mary desired relationship. One marriage enrichment question I have for us married folks is this, “Do you want to be with your spouse...in spite of what they are doing?” If not, why? You see “dating couples” and men are in the store with the girl and women at the tractor pull with the guys. When does that change and why? Wanting to be with Christ is much more important than wanting to do things for Christ.

ABUNDANT FRUIT: CHRIST’S INTERCESSION *“I pray for them.”* WE ARE NOT ON OUR OWN. There is “dunamis” and Holy Spirit life. Jesus is cheering us on, praying for us, sending us gifts and supplies...and He works THROUGH US! Life is the result of thousands of small choices. Jesus prays we will make good choices resulting in a fruitful life.

THE TIME HAS COME...I have a question for you today. What season are you heading into? What is the “time that has come” in your life? LIVE IN YOUR SEASON OF LIFE, NOT IN A PAST OR FUTURE ONE. LIFE IS NOW. Is God calling you to mentor and encourage several people to serve the Lord and multiply the work rather than do it yourself?

REMEMBER: This Memorial Day weekend we think about so many young people who died in war around the age of 20 so that we could live lives in freedom. They left so that we could stay and bear fruit. Jesus left, so that he could send the Spirit and multiply the gospel witness to the ends of the earth. May God help us to live fruitful lives to honor those who have died for our freedom and to fulfill the great commission of bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth as Christ has asked us to do. When every tribe, nation and tongue has received the gospel, Christ will return. And when that TIME COMES, time shall be no more and our blessed eternity begins. “What a day, glorious day, that will be.” Amen

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