

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 2020
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church; Pastor Tom Olson; May 3, 2020

HYMN: "TO GOD BE THE GLORY" Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)

1 To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life gate that we may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he has done!

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
To ev'ry believer the promise of God;
the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus forgiveness receives.
[Refrain]

3 Great things he has taught us, great things he has
done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer and higher and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.
[Refrain].

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: *John 10:4 ...His sheep follow them because they know His voice.* If you shut your eyes do you know the voice? Try it. Mom or Dad or someone else say something? Do they know your voice? Do you know the voice of a stranger? God's children know his voice and they are uncertain when other "voices" want their attention. This is good. Follow the voice of God in His Word and you will have a good life.

GOSPEL READING: *John 10:1-10 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. 7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

NIV

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: VOICES YOU CAN TRUST Pastor Tom Olson, 5/3/20

The other day I was working by some hunting dogs and they were barking and howling. Nothing I could say would stop them. But the owner told them to be quiet and they instantly stopped barking. Why did they obey him so well? They know his voice. He treats them very well. He is kind to them. He loves them and they love him. His voice is precious to them and they obey. Today we look at voices we can and can't trust. Let's talk about it.

I. INFILTRATED

John 10:1 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber."

There are dangerous people who come into the sheep pen to do harm to the sheep. They have to sneak in secretly over the fence. Jesus is talking about false shepherds that have infiltrated the religious system for the wrong reasons and are harming the sheep and leading many astray. They don't know the Lord. They have a selfish agenda. Our former AFLC president, Eldon Nelson, was on a gospel team to a church in California where the pastor came the last minute, did the service and got out of there without even talking to the people. He said that he became a pastor because he thought that it was a job where he could get by with as little work as possible. How do you know these people?

- There is a secrecy about what they do.
- They don't care about lost souls.
- They don't care about hurting Christians.
- They don't believe the Bible.
- They don't deal with the whole counsel of God from sin to Calvary.
- They are focused on money and pleasure and not on the flock entrusted to their care.

We must be careful because the church of every generation has been infiltrated by false guides with empty promises that don't lead to God. They are in it for themselves and say what we want to hear to get us to give them money or service. The church is INFILTRATED.

II. INVITED

John 10:2&3 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

The true shepherd comes in by the "front door." There is nothing sneaky. He is not in a rush to get power or important positions. Jesus openly came in his public baptism, he taught in the public for all to hear, there was nothing secret. Notice here what the watchman does.

1. **HE OPENS THE GATE:** he invites people to true salvation and makes sure they know the Lord.
2. **THE SHEEP KNOW HIM:** true believers sense that he is a man of God. He is not shooting for a public image on stage but is the real deal in personal life and dealings.
3. **HE KNOWS YOUR NAME:** He loves his sheep and wants to be with them. He cares about individuals and has time to hear what is on their hearts. He knows his sheep by name. He prays for them by name.
4. **HE LEADS THEM:** a true shepherd is a good example, he wants his sheep to grow and be healthy, he feeds them nourishing food.

Jesus invites us into a real and living relationship with him by faith. He wants us to get to know Him in His Word and in prayer and in life experiences.

III. INCLUDED

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Christ's desire is to forgive our sin, save our soul for all eternity and give us a meaningful and abundant life. Notice what happens here when we listen to his voice and invite him into our hearts:

1. **SAVED:** we are forgiven, our sins are washed away, we are adopted into his forever family and we are safe from evil, even in the toughest times of life. When we die we go right to heaven to be with the Lord in perfect peace and joy.
2. **FREEDOM:** you go "in and out." This virus has taken away our freedom. Sin is like that. It promises pleasure but delivers pain, loneliness, fear, disease and bitterness. But when Jesus reigns on the throne of our life we have a new freedom from sin, freedom from fear, freedom from bitterness. The world sees following Christ as a burden but it really is the most free and joyful life you can find. Ask any drug addict how free they are. The drugs promised escape and joy but they delivered bondage and pain.
3. **SATISFIED:** Jesus said they will find "pasture." A pasture is a peaceful meadow of good grass that nourishes animals. An animal can graze in safety with the shepherd watch. That animal can be free from fear of poisonous plants because the shepherd brings it to a good place. Then the sheep or cow can lie down and rest, filled and secure. That is what the Lord does for us. He feeds us good things in safe places and we are satisfied.

Dear friends, are you **SAVED, FREE AND SATISFIED**? Have you been following false shepherds that have promised freedom and delivered heartache? Turn away from vain philosophies and false guides. Listen to the voice of the one who willingly went to the cross to pay for your sins. See his body, nailed to the cross. Look at and receive His innocent blood, shed to pay for your sins. Invite Him into your heart to be **SAVED, FREE AND SATISFIED**. Do you hear him calling you by name? Come now, his banquet table is prepared.

HOLY COMMUNION

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*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION: *Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread. And when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, "Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, when He had eaten, He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you, and for many, for the forgiveness of sins; this do, as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of Me."*

RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME OR IN CAR: "The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you."

DISMISSAL: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! Now may the holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in the true faith unto everlasting life. Peace be with you. Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER: “We thank you Father for giving us Jesus to be our Savior. Help us to love one another as Jesus has loved us. Thank you for the strength you give us to face the trials of life. We continue to pray for wisdom for our leaders and protection for those in harm’s way. Thank you that we have a blessed life in heaven to look forward to because of Christ purchasing our ticket with His blood. Please use us this week for your glory. In Jesus’ Name. 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