

**JUNE 14, 2020 SUNDAY SERVICE**  
**Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

SPECIAL SONG BY PRAISE TEAM

Prayer

CHILDREN'S SERMON: Matt 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Exodus 19:2-6 After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. 3 Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

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

**SERMON TITLE: "CHOSEN"**

ADOPTED: Sometimes a couple cannot have a child of their own. But they really want to have a child so they choose to adopt one. Our congregational chairman at Mineral Point, Wisconsin was adopted. His birth mother simply could not keep him and when it came time to deliver her child she told the doctor that she needed to put the child up for adoption. A doctor and his wife from that same hospital wanted badly to adopt a child. Arrangements were made and that very doctor was there for the delivery and when the boy was born. The infant was handed to the doctor who received him as his own son. As the child of a doctor, he got a good home, a fine education and loving upbringing. His name is Daniel. Dan went on to be an elementary school principal and married a school teacher named Denise and they devoted their lives to educating children in the public schools and teaching Sunday school and leading Vacation Bible School in our church. Everything they did was done very well. And it all came about because a wonderful doctor and his wife adopted this baby out of a difficult situation.

CHOSEN: Not every child that is born is chosen and loved. But every child that is adopted is chosen and most are very loved. Adoption is not easy. Children have a lot of pain to work through when they find out their birth parents did not want them or could not keep them. But given the kind of love and patience that most adoptive parents have, these children usually turn out very well.

ISRAEL: God adopted an old and childless couple in the Old Testament and made them a nation for His special purposes. They were to be a “light to the nations.” God wanted to use this tiniest of nations to proclaim His Word to the world. He gave this nation the name Israel and made the city of Jerusalem their everlasting royal city. Out of Israel came the Messiah Jesus Christ who died on the cross to forgive the sins of the whole world. Through Jesus Christ all people from every nation, tribe and language can be saved and become a part of the family of God. He adopts them as His very own sons and daughters and they become heirs of eternal life in His heavenly kingdom. While on earth, the children of God represent Him and bring His Word to them. 2

***Corinthians 5:20 “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.”***

Today’s Old Testament lesson lays out this principle so very well and gives us two wonderful insights into the heart of God for his people and the intentions He has for us if we stay close to Him. We are adopted and chosen and God sees us as:

## **I. A TREASURED POSSESSION**

***Exodus 19:4&5a 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.***

TREASURED: My friend Dan, who was adopted, went through amazing experience the day of his birth. At the moment of his birth his birth parents gave him up. For whatever reason, they did not want to keep him. Just moments later this newborn boy was handed to the doctor who wanted a child more than life itself. He instantly became a TREASURED POSSESSION. That is a picture of how God feels about us. We are, like the opening song said, “sinners by choice and an alien by birth.” Then God takes us into his loving arms and says to us... “but I want you to be MY child.”

BAPTISM: That is what I love about baptizing a baby. Here is this helpless child, born into a sinful human race, and God says to that child, “I adopt you as my own, I wash away your sin, I give you the gift of faith, I want you to be my child.” An adopted child can reject the parents that chose to take him in but no one can steal him from them. You can be sure that my friend Dan had parents that watched over him better than if he had been born to them. He was a TREASURED POSSESSION.

PHILADELPHIA: This is one of the reasons that God calls upon us to treat one another with brotherly kindness. We studied this in Bible class on Thursday evening. This term “brotherly kindness” is Philadelphia in the Greek language. It means love of the brethren. God wants us to love all of His children because they are his treasured possession. If a great musician handing you his Stratovarius violin, worth millions of dollars, how would you treat it? You would treat it cautiously and carefully. That is how God wants us to treat all his children, because they are priceless to Him.

REASON: I think one of the deep reasons that people riot and vandalize is because they themselves don’t feel like a treasured possession. Many of them were abandoned by their fathers or at least neglected. They destroy property because they feel worthless inside. They desperately need us to go to them, not with angry threats, but with the loving heart of God and help them to know how valuable they are to God and to God’s people. One inner city black pastor said, “Quit talking about the riots and get down town and tell those folks about Jesus. That is what they desperately need.” Most of them have never heard about Jesus and His love.

God’s children are a treasured possession.

## II. A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

*Exodus 19:5b Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'*

ERROR: Some protestants make the mistake of saying that it is wrong for the catholic church to have priests. They say, "We have pastors but we don't have priests." That is not correct. We do have a few pastors but we have many more priests than the catholic church does. We believe in the "priesthood of all believers." God calls Israel "a kingdom of priests." Every believer is a priest of God under Jesus, the great high priest. We are the ones who represent God on earth. We are the ones who bring God's very words to earth.

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

PRIEST: I have a friend who I grew up with that is a catholic priest. He takes his calling very seriously. He serves a large parish and has many duties. Every morning he gets up and knows that he is a priest and needs to faithfully spend his day doing weddings, funerals, confession, study, prayers, administration, local and diocese meetings, personal spiritual disciplines and so on. It is the focus of his life. Should we, as Christ's representatives on earth be any different.

*2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

CALLED: Every day we should be in awe of the fact that we are God's priest to our family, our neighborhood, our place of employment and the world. We are the ones that God has chosen to bring his Word to the world. Angels long to do it but we are the ones who have the high honor.

FARMER: A man was once asked what his calling was. He replied, "I am a witness for Christ and I finance it by being a farmer." He saw himself first and foremost as a priest of God and secondly as a person with a career.

HONOR: Israel was meant to be a "kingdom of priests" to be God's light to the world. The church today is meant to be a kingdom of priests to bring God's light to the world. *In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said "Ye, are the light of the world, not, thou art, the light of the world."* In Greek it is plural, not singular...a "kingdom of priests." What an honor!

RIOTERS: We have a generation of young people today who are drawn to violent overthrow of our nation. They are burning buildings, destroying businesses, tearing down statues of historic figures who as very imperfect human beings accomplished amazing things. These young people don't have a clue who Jesus is and what He has done for them. They are filled with anger and rage because they have no peace inside of their hearts. They will kill many decent and innocent people in revenge for one unjust death. Just think of what those same young people could accomplish if they met Jesus, if they became God's TREASURED POSSESSION and a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS. Imagine what Minneapolis could look like if "gangs" of young people would put down their clubs and fire bombs and stop terrorizing people and instead would march the streets with songs of praise to God, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and helping people in need.

GROCER: In our Bible study by Pastor Roger Thompson called "Do the Next Right Thing," he closed the chapter about "Brotherly Kindness" with a true story of a grocery store manager from North Minneapolis area that had a widow come to his store. He helped her with her shopping. After she could no longer drive, he picked her up after the store closed and let her come and have the dignity of doing her own shopping and

brought her home and helped put her groceries away. When he moved to the Apple Valley area his secretly went up north once a week to fulfill his mission of helping this widow shop until she died. Only one other person knew about it.

CAUSE: What causes a person to be so kind? He knew he was God's treasured possession and he was a priest of God! Let's keep these very important facts in the forefront of our minds and let them determine how we live our lives. It is said that "hurting people, hurt people." I would like to add something to that, "Treasured people, treasure people." Beloved, you are God's "pearl of great price, you are God's buried treasure." Jesus gave everything He had so that He could have you in God's family, and make you a priest of God and take you home to heaven forever when you die. What is the proof? The proof is the CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB.

I once was an outcast stranger on earth,  
A sinner by choice, an alien by birth,  
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,  
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.

Refrain:  
I'm a child of the King,  
A child of the King:  
With Jesus my Savior,  
I'm a child of the King.

Amen

RECORDED HYMN #249 (Great Moments CD): Track 7 "He is Mine and I am His" (Mark Trammell Quartet) Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0k75bHOJN0>

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**

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson