

HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY 2020
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church;
Pastor Tom Olson; June 7, 2020

OPENING HYMN: "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

1 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: *Matthew 28:19 ...go and make disciples...* A little girl in Ohio started to talk to the friends she was playing with about Jesus. Her friends, about 8 years old, didn't know anything about Jesus dying on the cross for their sins. So this girl sat her playmates on the ground and explained to them about God sending His son to earth to be our Savior. I will never forget hearing about this. It reminds me that anyone who believes in Jesus, no matter how young, can tell others about Jesus so they also may become His children. That is the main thing Jesus wants his disciples to do...to tell others about him and what he taught. It is such a joy to lead people to Jesus, just like someone led us to Jesus. Let's pray...

GOSPEL READING: *Matt 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

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

DUET: Dave and Deb Fugleberg

MESSAGE: THE WORLD'S ONLY HOPE! 6/7/20 Pastor Tom Olson

JAPAN: I told you last week about General Douglas MacArthur telling the people of the Philippine Islands, "I shall return." After the war was over General MacArthur pleaded with pastors to come to Japan to introduce the people to the Lord. They had worshipped their emperor as a god but the war gave them nothing to believe in. My dear friend, Rev. Einar Unseth took his wife and six boys to Japan and told many people about Jesus their Savior. Now he is in heaven with Japanese people who he introduced to Christ. Jesus was what they needed.

CONTEXT: We are living in a time when people of the world are empty in their hearts. They too need to know about Jesus. What we are going through in America today is exactly what it was like at the time that Jesus lived on earth. At the time of Jesus, the Jews had no rights. They were arrested, beaten, put in prison and killed if a Roman soldier or leader wanted that. Angry mobs revolted at the injustice and the Romans just killed them all. The Roman Caesar was extremely evil. The government and religious leaders were corrupt. There was deep racial tension between the Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, Romans and many others. The average person felt hopeless. They didn't know what to do. Sound familiar?

JESUS: Did Jesus tell them to stop racism? No! Did he tell them to protest? No! Did he tell them to overthrow the government? No! He told them to do the only thing that could cure all of these problems from the inside out. *Mark 16:15 puts it so simply, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."* This is THE WORLD'S ONLY HOPE. Nothing else can solve our problems. I told you last week that the Lord has burned into my heart the summary of all the issues that are before us in our land. He gave me four words. "PEOPLE NEED THE LORD." Jesus is our only hope. Let's talk about it.

I. THE AUTHORITY THAT CHRIST HAS FOR US

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

DYNAMITE: The first thing we need to see in this great commission is the authority of Christ. We can never tread down the power of evil until we realize how great Christ is. A stick of dynamite looks like nothing more than an old paper towel tube. It won't do anything powerful if you don't know how explosive it is and how to use it. You can hit dynamite with a hammer and it won't explode. You can burn it in a fire and it won't explode. But if you know how to put in an explosive cap to detonate the charge, then you can use dynamite to break rocks and move mountains.

FOCUS: I am afraid some of us have A TENDENCY TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE POWER OF EVIL THAN THE INFINITE POWER OF GOD. We know more about the Corona virus than we do about healing power. We know more about rioters than we do about the myriads of heavenly armies. We know more about the evil influence of billionaire George Soros than we do about the omnipotent God of creation who owns all things.

OMNIPOTENT: Jesus tells his weak and helpless disciples that He has been given ALL authority over ALL things for ALL time. Jesus was heading to heaven to be seated “at the right hand of God the Father.” The right hand is the position of power and authority. WE SERVE A GOD THAT CAN DO ANYTHING BUT FAIL. If we are doing His will in His way at His prompting, we cannot fail. Period. We operate from a position of victory in the past tense. The resurrection from the dead made that perfectly clear. The name of Jesus makes the demons tremble. Martin Luther said that “one little word shall make Satan fall...what is that word? It is his Name, Jesus.

REALITY: The power of evil in this world appears to be winning. Don't let it fool you. Jesus is ultimately in control and is setting up everything for his glorious return. I am listening for the trumpet call of God every day. Jesus is Lord. We can't do anything until this becomes the foundation of our every thought and action. Fear must be replaced by faith. Without faith we can do nothing. By faith we can do anything God calls us to do. Psalm 18 is amazing. David is praising God for delivering him from the murderous King Saul. Let me read you a few verses: *Psalm 18:29-33 With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. 30 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. 31 For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? 32 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. 33 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights.* THIS IS THE AUTHORITY CHRIST HAS FOR US.

II. THE OPPORTUNITY CHRIST GIVES US

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

PLAN: What does Christ give us the authority to do? He summarizes it in two activities. He calls us to BAPTIZE and to TEACH. Baptism is the summarizing word for sharing the gospel with people until they respond to Christ and are baptized. It is the first step...preaching the good news of the cross and empty tomb. Then the second activity we are called to do to transform lives and society is to teach the Word of Christ. Nothing is needed more in Minneapolis today than people who are telling lost souls the good news of the gospel and following that by instruction in the Word of God. We are asked by Jesus to join in this great work of saving the lost world. In just a few years, the Spirit-filled disciples shared the gospel from Spain to India...and they did it without airplanes and computers. Very few things are more exciting than leading a lost soul to Christ and then teaching them the Word of God...seeing the power of God change their lives. The Word of God is the only thing that can save our city and nation and world. Jesus saves!

IMPACT: If you want to make a real difference in our crisis in Minnesota do this, TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS AND TEACH THEM THE WORD OF GOD. This gospel teaching eventually overcame the terrible Roman government. Rome became the hub of sending the gospel into all the world for a long time.

TELL: Tell someone about what Jesus has done for you. We overcome the world by God's Word and our testimony of what Christ has done for us.

III. THE PROMISE CHRIST MAKES TO US

Matthew 28:20 ... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

PRESENCE: Jesus gives his disciples an amazing promise. He said that He will always be with them and with us...even to the end of the age, which may be soon. He is with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. King David knew that the power of God was in the presence of the Holy Spirit. That is why in Psalm 51 he repented of his sin with Bathsheeba and begged the Lord to ***"take not the Holy Spirit from him but to restore the joy of God's salvation and renew him with a right Spirit."*** Jesus is with us. Whether we feel him or not...He is with us because He promised He would be. And He is supplying all of our needs to do what He wants us to do.

God cannot lie. This is His promise. It is not dependent upon feelings. Sometimes we listen to beautiful spiritual music and feel close to God. But God is not with us more at that point than He was before we listen to the music. We must not judge the presence of God by feelings. That is why some of our Pentecostal friends are on such a roller coaster spiritually. They are looking for a feeling. Feelings are fine but facts are much more important. Jesus said He will be with us and that is a fact and we need to stand on in no matter how much our emotions try to control us.

WHEN WE STAND ON THE WORD OF GOD, WE ARE STABLE AND FRUITFUL, WHEN WE STAND ON FEELINGS, WE ARE UNSTABLE AND UNFRUITFUL.

A person who needs to feel loved is going to often be very unhappy. A person who needs to feel the presence of God is going to have a wavering faith. A person who needs to feel like they have a great marriage, like what they see on TV, is not going to be happy with marriage. If feeling good is important, then you won't be happy having children. If you want to be stable and happy you have to build your life on the fact that Jesus is with you, no matter how you feel, and that is what is important.

We can let politicians help our culture in their way, we can let civic organizations help our culture in their way. We can even join them. But we must remember that the only real and powerful solution to our problems is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching and preaching of God's Word. God's Word turned the bloody, terrorizing Vikings into the modern Norwegians that are some of the most peaceful and non-threatening people on earth. The Gospel transformed ancient Ireland and Germany. The Gospel has turned vicious cannibals into singing saints. The gospel turned the frightened spiritistic Inupiaq Alaskans into joyful and radiant followers of Christ.

Rev. Alex Karlson, from the Swedish covenant church, was on his way through Alaska to bring the gospel to Siberia. He stopped in an Alaskan village called Unalakleet and saw how desperately the people needed to know Christ. He felt called to serve there and spent his entire life sharing the Word of God leading to an amazing transformation of that area. There is a sign in Unalakleet that says something like this: **When Rev. Karlson came to Unalakleet there were no Christians. When he died, there were no unbelievers."** No Christians are more joyful in the Lord than the believers of Unalakleet Covenant Church. It was the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God that transformed that community and it is the only hope for the world today. Go and tell the good news to someone this week...Jesus saves! 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