

**NOVEMBER 22, 2020; PENTECOST 24; SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON**

**(50% seating capacity)**

**Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

**PRELUDE:** Rebekah Olson (Other Singers)

**HYMN #144 "Come, Ye Thankful, Come" 9 am:**

**RESPONSIVE READING: PSALM 67**

**PASTOR:** May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face shine upon us,

**CONGREGATION:** that your ways may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.

**PASTOR:** May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you.

**CONGREGATION:** May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples justly  
and guide the nations of the earth.

**PASTOR:** May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you.

**CONGREGATION:** Then the land will yield its harvest,  
and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us,  
and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

**PRAYER**

**CHILDREN'S SERMON:** How to be happy...Matthew 25

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *1 Timothy 2:1-4 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Luke 17:11-19 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him-and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*

**PASTOR:** Here ends the reading of God's Word.

**CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!**

**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

**GLORIA PATRI:** *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING**

**HYMN #149 “Thanks to God for My Redeemer”**

**SERMON TITLE: “THANKSLIVING”  
Deuteronomy 8:1-10; Pastor Tom Olson; November 22, 2020**

*Dear Friends, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

**EXAMPLES** In my life, I have been honored to know several people that have a real mature Christian life. Their words are filled with fresh messages from the Lord. Their deeds are kind and gracious. They love to serve others and are sensitive to the needs of those around them. But most of all, they are **THANKFUL**. True and honest appreciation to God and others naturally fall from their lips. While others are complaining about what they don't have, these people are extremely grateful for what they do have. They have lives of “**THANKSLIVING**.” After you are with them you have more hope, stronger faith, greater love for those around them. They know just how to build you up and point you in the wholesome way. I really want to become more and more thankful. It is the way the Word of God encourages us to live time and again. So, it must be important. Here in Deuteronomy 8 we have an orderly path to **THANKSLIVING**. These are the instructions Moses is giving to the children of Israel as they prepare to enter the promised land.

### **I. FOLLOW**

***Deuteronomy 8:1 Be careful to FOLLOW every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers.***

**FIRST:** Moses tells us here that the first step to enter the promised land is the follow the commands of the Lord. We are living in a time in history like Judges 24:25 “In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.” People have really messed up lives as a result.

**BEST:** “God’s way is the right way; God’s way is the best way.” We will never regret living a moral life, but we regret being immoral. We will never regret telling the truth, but we regret telling a lie. We will never regret having a strong faith in the Lord, but we regret the times we doubted God and did things our own way. I regret ever sin I have ever committed.

***2 Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.***

FINISH: Pastor Elden Nelson was elected to be AFLC President in his early 70's. He is recovering from a serious case of the Corona Virus. He is up in his 80's. He told me that his goal was to "finish well." I agree with him. I can't change the past, but I do want to follow the Lord and finish out this last chapter of my life well and with as few regrets as possible. To enter the promised land, we need to FOLLOW the Lord's commands.

## **II. REMEMBER**

*Deuteronomy 8:2-4 REMEMBER how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years.*

REMEMBERING is an important part of life. We have birthdays to remember how special each person is. We have Holy Communion to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. We have Christmas to remember the birth of our Savior. We have history books to remember what has happened in the past. God wanted his people to take time to remember the last 40 years, the manna He fed them, the way he guided them, and the provisions He provided them with. The church we served in Cloquet had an anniversary under the theme "Moving Forward by Looking Back." During that time the congregation tried to recover some of the good spiritual practices that God had used so powerfully in the past. What things do you remember about God's goodness in your life?

CHECKLIST: When you fly an airplane, you go through a checklist so that you don't forget anything about using the plane correctly. Flying is so serious and potentially dangerous that we knew that this was a very important discipline to keep. We need to take the time to help our children "remember" what the Word of God teaches. If we don't do that, our nation is going to become a nation of unbelievers. It is remembering God's deeds in the past that helps us to trust Him for the future. Remembering really helps me be thankful for God's goodness in my life from birth until today, especially for letting me grow up in a good home. All I need to do to make good decisions is remember my mother and dad would recommend, and I instantly know what to do. REMEMBERING IS IMPORTANT to stay in the path to the promised land.

## **III. KNOW**

*Deuteronomy 8:5 KNOW then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

LOVE: One important lesson that we have to learn in life is this: DISCIPLINE is a sign of God's love. When our parents disciplined us, they loved us enough to try to correct our bad behavior. However, at the time we didn't understand. My parents spanked us a few times, but they never raised their voices at us. My dad was kind of stern, but I think that for the most part it served us well. My parents provided us with a good home, good food, good books to read, clean clothes and a good example in many ways. I don't regret the discipline they gave us. Not just the spankings but the piano lessons, the swimming lessons, the chores we had to do around home, pulling weeds in the garden, having jobs in the summer and all year long to help us save money for college. They were from the disciplined WW II generation and that passed on to us kids.

PERSPECTIVE: Discipline is necessary to have the skills that get us through life well. God has also disciplined me through college, through cancer, through seminary, through marriage, through challenging ministry assignments with complicated people to work with. In hind sight, some of the most unpleasant things

have done me the most good. We are God's children and we can expect him to discipline us and to have us live a disciplined life.

COVID: I think this whole COVID 19 is a discipline from the Lord to stop our slide into sin and ingratitude. God is calling us back to Himself through it. I hope we learn our lessons! KNOW that discipline is good.

#### **IV. OBSERVE**

***Deuteronomy 8:6-9 OBSERVE the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; 8 a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; 9 a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.***

PLANS: God desires to give his people a good and rewarding life. He was leading his children into a good and pleasant land. Since the Jews returned to Israel after World War 2, we have seen the land of Israel turn from being a waste land into a rich and pleasant land. The climate is desirable. The desert is blooming. Flowers in our flower shops come from Israel. Can you imagine how lovely the fields of flowers are? (Here are some slides.) In much of Israel the summer temperatures are 70 to 90 degrees and winter 50 to 70 degrees...rather ideal! You can plan a picnic any day in the summer because it doesn't rain from June through August. Many fertile valleys produce amazing crops, vineyards and orchards filled with fruit. It is a good and desirable land and a picture of God's desire to give His children a good and pleasant place to live.

Jesus tells us the gracious reasons he came to earth:

- ***SEEK US: Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."***
- ***REDEEM US: Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***
- ***BLESS US: John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.***

DESIRE: God's desire for us is a full and rewarding life. He loves us. His intentions are good but his ways are not always easy to understand. But the more we get to know the Lord, the more we find out how good He is in all circumstances. Everything we experience is pushing us toward a fulfilling life. Our ultimate home with Him in heaven is the completion of this promise. We need to OBSERVE God's good plans in order to enter the promised land.

#### **V. PRAISE**

***Deuteronomy 8:10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, PRAISE the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.***

POWER: The POWER OF PRAISE cannot be underemphasized. God deserves our praise but God does not need our praise. God is complete and satisfied in and of Himself. But He has created us to find blessing in his praises. I loved my younger days of singing in choirs and directing them. I sang for decades and directed for many years in several churches and for two years at our Bible college. When we were praising the Lord in song, I always felt fulfilled and happy. I personally believe that praising the Lord drives away Satan and evil power and clears the room for the Holy Spirit to literally "inhabit" our praises. Some people have had amazing experiences with God when they get "lost in wonder, love and praise." I cannot even begin to imagine what the

worship in heaven will be like. I am convinced that we will all agree that it is the best music we have ever heard and I know we will all be wonderful singers.

LOSS: I lost my ability to sing well when I had cancer radiation. Sometimes I put on a music CD and just mouth the words and pretend that the voice is mine. But one day it won't be pretend...I will again be able to praise the Lord with beauty.

SPEAK: But we don't need to sing. We all can SPEAK the praises of the Lord. Spoken praise and thanksgiving literally lifts us out of the low level of human conversation and takes us to a place of supernatural faith and love and power. It is the secret of walking above the circumstances and seeing life from the eternal perspective. Satan can't touch us when we are praising the Lord. I believe that praise and thanksgiving are the most powerful spiritual weapons we have.

PRAYER: I am trying to learn how to pray in that way...like instead of saying "please God heal me of this sickness" I would say "I praise you God that you are the healer of all disease and I thank you that you are healing me of my illness." Or instead of saying, "please help me get the money I need" saying "I praise you God that you own all things and that your resources are unlimited, thank you that you are providing me all my needs as you have promised." It is a transforming way to pray. THE POWER OF PRAISE "catapults" us into the promised land.

1. FOLLOW GOD'S COMMANDMENTS
2. REMEMBER HIS PAST FAITHFULNESS
3. KNOW THE VALUE OF DISCIPLINE
4. OBSERVE THE PROMISED LAND AHEAD
5. PRAISE GOD FOR HIS WONDERFUL PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

OUTCOME: This is the key to THANKSLIVING and walking in the joy of the Lord no matter what the outcome. It is the abundant life that overcomes all troubles of this life. Saturate your life with these powerful practices. We can't even begin to imagine what the Lord has in store for His children for the next million years. HAPPY THANKSGIVING. Amen

*Now may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**PRAISE SONG: HANNAH CARRIZALES 9 AM:**

**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

**HYMN #150 "Let All Things Now Living; 9 am Vagle Brothers "Doxology" #19**

**POSTLUDE:** Rebekah Olson