

**February 14, 2021; TRANSFIGURATION/VALENTINE'S DAY SUNDAY;
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
(50% seating capacity for COVID rules)
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church
Singers: "Praise Team"**

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 50:1-6

HYMN #304 "I Love to Tell the Story" 9 am: One Voice Hymnal #147

OPENING PRAYER: *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Extra Super Charged: Mark 9:3 *3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.*

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: 2 Kings 2:1-12 *When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it." 4 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho. 5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "but do not speak of it." 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So the two of them walked on. 7 Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. 10 "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours-otherwise not." 11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.*

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6 *Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old*

covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 4:1 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

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

PRAISE SONGS: Carol and Praise Team

SERMON TITLE: "MY BELOVED SON"

Mark 9:2-9; Pastor Tom Olson; February 14, 2021

DISCIPLES: As we enter the Lenten season and consider again the suffering and death of Christ on the cross, it is merely review of an account we know very well. Nothing surprises us because we know how it turns out on Resurrection morning. It is quite hard to imagine how it was to be Christ's disciples to walk through the passion without knowing how it would end up. Not to say that Jesus didn't try to tell them time and again that he would suffer, die and rise again on the third day but how could they comprehend what He meant at first.

JESUS: Even Jesus, though divine, had set that divinity aside and was also walking into his suffering and death as a true man with all the emotions and thoughts that any of us would have. God worked out an amazing experience on a high spot on a mountain with Jesus, Peter, James and John. There was an experience where the three disciples would see Jesus in brilliant heavenly glory and Jesus would be able to meeting with Moses and Elijah to discuss what was coming to him. In the midst of the glorious event the voice of God boomed out a message never to be forgotten, *"This is my Son whom I love, listen to him."* Let's look together at the words "My Beloved Son" and consider on this Valentine's Day the love of God that brought Jesus from heaven to Bethlehem to Calvary and back to heaven." The song puts it well: *"O the love that drew salvation's plan, Oh the grace that brought it down to man, O the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary."* **JESUS IS GOD'S BELOVED SON.**

I. BECAUSE HE IS DIVINE

Mark 9:2-4 *After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*

ATHANASIAN: How can we describe who Jesus is? The great theologians of the past two thousand years have tried. They use explanations like this one from the Athanasian Creed:

“It is also necessary for eternal salvation that one faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus Christ became man, for this is the right faith, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at once God and man: He is God, begotten before the ages of the substance of the Father, and He is man, born in the world of the substance of his mother, perfect God and perfect man, with reasonable soul and human flesh, equal to the Father with respect to his Godhead and inferior to the Father with respect to his manhood. Although He is God and man, He is not two Christs but one Christ: one, that is to say, not by changing the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God, one, indeed, not by confusion of substance but by unity in one Person.”

That is no doubt a good explanation that men have come up with (and fought about). God didn't give us that explanation though, the church did. God gave us something else that to my simple mind is much more effective than those complicated words. God gave us Mark 9:3&4 and the image it provokes in our hearts: **3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.**

BRIGHT: He became blazing white like LED headlights, like a welding arc, like a lightning bolt and he was talking with Moses who had been physically dead for almost 1,500 years!! The disciples knew Jesus was a man, that was obvious, they suspected he was divine, but here all doubt was erased. He is God in human form.

CHOICE: That is exactly what they needed to know to endure the coming days when Jesus in his humanity would be mocked, beaten, nailed to a cross and die. They needed to know that his suffering was HIS CHOICE. The dean of our seminary in the 1960's and 70's was Amos Dyrud. His favorite hymn was this **“He could have called, ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set him free...but He died alone for you and me.”** ...aren't you glad He didn't call the angels to save him? It is because Jesus is Divine. The Father called Jesus, **“MY BELOVED SON”**...BECAUSE HE IS DIVINE AND...

II. BECAUSE HE IS FULLY HUMAN

Mark 9:5-8 *Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) 7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" 8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*

RABBI: To Peter, Jesus was a Rabbi...that is a teacher. The disciples knew him as a great and powerful teacher. He words created faith. In John 6 people were following Jesus because of is miracle of feeding 5,000 people. Jesus didn't want them following him merely for free food. So Jesus gave a strong sermon that caused many people to quit following him. He asked his disciples if they wanted to leave too. Simon Peter replied in John 6:68 **“...Lord to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.”** His teaching changed their lives.

SHELTERS: I don't have any idea why Peter wanted to build three shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Perhaps he thought that he could make this event last longer. But they were very afraid and it just blurted out.

But God the Father spoke out loud at that moment and announced that Jesus was His Son and that the appropriate thing to do was to listen to him.

ONLY: Then as suddenly as it happened, the brightness was gone and Moses and Elijah were gone too. And Jesus, the man stood there. Jesus only. Their peak into his divinity was done. Now they would see the humanity of Jesus as they never anticipated, they would see him suffer and die. But this memory of His glory would be there to encourage them in the dark days.

MEMORIES: We all have very special memories of spiritual high points in our life. Some of my friends from college have a Facebook page for campus Bible study where photos are shared of high times at spring break trips to a Bible camp in Kentucky back in the 1970's. Powerful moments where college students got saved and were baptized in the Ohio River. For others it is their days at the old Lutheran Bible Institute or the Free Lutheran Bible School. For some of our church members in my first parish it was the Youth for Christ Rallies and tent meetings in the 1950's. For some of us it is Bible camp at Lake Koronis in Paynesville, MN or at the Association Retreat Center when God was moving mightily in our hearts. These precious memories warm our spirits and help us keep our eyes on Jesus during the more mundane times of life. But all these experiences from the Transfiguration until now have one thing in common...a powerful encounter with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ROGER: Roger Hoikkala and I visited yesterday during the WMF meeting. He told me how God spoke to him through the Daily Bread devotional about the need to share the gospel with his dying cousin. He called him up and asked him if he had peace with God. The man was not sure so Roger shared the gospel in a simple way and invited him to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. The man was not offended, in fact, he invited Roger and Carol to come over this week to talk some more. Another "Jesus Only" transfiguration moment. Jesus is the Son of God and Son of Man and Savior of the world.

FINALLY, JESUS IS GOD'S BELOVED SON...

III. BECAUSE HE IS A WILLING SACRIFICE

Mark 9:9-10 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

LAMB: Jesus told them not to say anything until he rose from the dead. This phrase "rise from the dead" baffled the disciples. But wasn't Jesus initially introduced by John the Baptist as: "THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD?" Time out of mind the disciples has celebrated Passover or had gone to the temple to see the central activity of their worship of God. They witnessed Lambs being sacrificed and their blood shed on the altar to atone for sin. But who could have imagined that this FULLY DIVINE and FULLY HUMAN, Jesus Christ would also have to shed His innocent blood for the sins of the world. And that is what he was preparing to do.

ENCOURAGED: Undoubtedly Moses, who wrote the books of the Bible that introduced blood sacrifice and Elijah who saw his blood sacrifice of animals on Mt. Carmel be consumed by the fire of God from heaven, had now come to the Son of God and encourage him that what was going to take place was indeed the will of God. That out of this event would come the salvation of the World and the joy of millions of lost human beings getting the chance to be forgiven and adopted into the eternal family of God. He would have a family in heaven forever and you and I would be able to be there with him and enjoy that blessedness of the Celestial City for all eternity.

LENT: This week we start with Ash Wednesday and once again review important scenes from “The Passion of the Christ.” Our lost world desperately needs to meet Jesus, whom to know is eternal life. Won’t you pray about bringing someone to these simple little services where we review “THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD” coming through the Word and Testimony of our congregation members.

2021: For many years our church’s big wooden cross has stood on top of this hill as a beacon of hope for lost sinners. We pray that 2021 will be a great year of harvest of lost souls at this lighthouse on the hill. It will be, if we point people to Jesus, “crucified, risen and coming again with life and liberty for all who believe.” The cross is God’s valentine sent to the whole world. Amen

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

HYMN #519 “For God So Loved the World” (9 AM-No hymn)

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

CLOSING SONG: (Chosen by Carol)
9 am Recorded “Doxology” #32

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: 2 Kings 2:1-12 *When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it."*

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READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

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