

FEBRUARY 28, 2021; ST. TIMOTHY THE PASTOR; SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON

(COVID 50% seating capacity)

Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson (Other Singers)

CALL TO WORSHIP:

HYMN #369 AH "Jesus, Loves Me" 9 am: #207 OVH

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S SERMON: Leaving on a trip, early in the morning...Romans 5:1 Faith brings peace.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Genesis 17:1-7; When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." ...15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Rom 5:1-11 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

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 AND WORSHIP SONGS: Hannah Carrizales

**SERMON TITLE: "THE NECESSITY OF SEEING THE BIG PICTURE"
Mark 8:27-38; Pastor Tom Olson, February 28, 2021**

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

REALITY: Today we have Jesus bringing the disciples to a reality check. He wants them to see the big picture. They were consumed with the little picture. What was that? National politics. They were sick of Roman rule. They despised the evil king Herod and corrupt religious leaders. All they could think of was how to get new leaders that would "make Israel great again!" They wanted Jesus to be that new leader. But while they were consumed with making life better for THEMSELVES, Jesus was working on a plan to save the WHOLE WORLD and reconcile all people back to the Heavenly Father. Instead of overthrowing the government, Jesus was going to let the government kill him. He would do something that the disciples could not comprehend, by dying on the cross as the Lamb of God, rising in three days as the Lord of the church and return some day as the political Messiah to live and reign among his people forever and ever.

PERSPECTIVE: We all need to step back once in a while and look at the big picture of what God is doing so that we don't miss it by focusing on the little picture of what man is doing. Let's see what we can learn from this encounter. **THE NECESSITY OF SEEING THE BIG PICTURE.**

I. OBSERVE: IDENTIFYING WHERE THE PUBLIC IS AT

Mark 8:27-28 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" 28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

QUESTION: The first thing Jesus does to reveal the big picture to his disciples is to get a conversation started with a question. "Who do people say that I am?" This is a great way to get people thinking without feeling threatened. Asking the right question opens up an issue. Just the other day, Dave Fischer and I were talking about our drive-up service and he was telling me what a number of people felt about Saturday evening vs. Sunday morning. It was a great way to talk about it without either one of us giving a firm opinion ourselves. I later asked him what he thought and by that time, the discussion had brought both of us to the same conclusion. We will have it on Sunday morning at 9 AM for the summer and then move it to Saturday evening for the fall bonfires again.

WRONG: Back to Jesus, people were speculating that Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life, or Elijah, or another Old Testament prophet that had returned. But NO ONE they knew had it right. There was certainly a lot of speculating going on though. That is typical and the same goes today. There are lots of opinions about who Jesus is and most of them are wrong. Some say he was a great TEACHER, others say he led a POLITICAL rebellion, yet others say that Jesus was a RE-INCARNATION of a famous master of the past.

People have created their own imagination of who Jesus is. So to see the big picture OBSERVE, WHERE THE PUBLIC IS AT.

II. EXPRESS: STATE WHAT YOU THINK

Mark 8:29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

PERSONAL: Jesus gets personal. He asks them personally who they think he is. No one gets a chance to answer except Peter who jumps in and says "You are the Christ." "You are the Messiah!" WAS HE RIGHT? Yes and no. His answer was technically correct except we will find out that he and Jesus had two different definitions of the word Christ.

PURPOSE: In our Alpha Women's Center Mobile Clinic constitution, we have a statement of faith and purpose. Our statement is clearly Christian, putting the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ at the heart of our mission to mothers in a crisis pregnancy center. Our director noted that many pro-life ministries have removed reference to Jesus, the Bible and the gospel in their mission statement. They do this to not scare people away by worrying about religious conversation. But we agreed that we will stay distinctly Christian and have the DUAL GOAL of helping women in crisis pregnancies with practical help but also sharing with them the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and praying with them. In fact, they are appointing me to a new position of Chaplain to the board.

PROTECTIONS: We also have found out that as a religious organization we have some protections and freedoms from being forced to hire unbelievers or those living in open sin. Those who have removed Jesus and the Bible from their mission statements no longer have these protections since they are now considered a secular group.

Matthew 10:32 "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven."

POWER: The power is in the Name of Jesus Christ. THE POWER IS IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST! But Peter had something more to discover about THE BIG PICTURE...OBSERVE, EXPRESS...

III. LEARN: DISCOVERING GOD'S PLAN

Mark 8:30-31 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. 31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

CRAZY: Jesus now reveals to his disciples the part of God's plan that made no sense to them. Their definition of CHRIST OR MESSIAH was not complete. They were partly right. The day will come that Jesus will sit on the throne of David and rule the nations. But that is yet to come. They didn't realize that when John called Jesus "THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD" he was literally the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He must suffer, He must die and shed His innocent blood for sinners. That sure doesn't sound like much of a political leader that they were looking for. They didn't understand all of this until after the Resurrection.

PLAN: God's plan was not a secret. Way back in the Garden of Eden God told us what he planned to do. Speaking to Satan, God says in *Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* Now they find out

how this will take place...it happens on the CROSS. What is the big picture? It is getting clear: OBSERVE, EXPRESS, LEARN...

IV. ADMIT: FIND OUT WHAT YOU REALLY BELIEVE

Mark 8:32&33 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

REBUKE: Jesus had to rebuke Peter sharply. He was putting a stumbling block in front of Jesus. Peter wanted Jesus to be the King but BYPASS the cross. It is so important that we keep the cross front and center. PEOPLE TODAY WANT TO BUILD THE CHURCH BUT BYPASS THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS. They take the cross down and don't talk about it. This is a big mistake because the message of the cross of Christ is the key to the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

I Corinthians 1:18 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

I Corinthians 2:2 "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

CROSS: The cross is precious to those who are truly saved. It is a mere decoration or even an offence to the lost. The world is desperately looking for forgiveness and the only place to find it is at the cross. The CROSS is at the CENTER of God's big picture. OBSERVE, EXPRESS, LEARN, ADMIT...

V. CHOOSE: FACING UP TO REALITY

Mark 8:34-38 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

PERSONALIZE: Where do you stand with Jesus and the cross today? Is it foolishness to you? Or is it the place where you unload your sins and receive the assurance that you are loved, forgiven and promised eternal life in heaven? Nothing transforms a messed-up life like the knowledge that the love of God for us was poured out at the cross. THE CROSS is where we find new life, filled with the Holy Spirit, in Christ Jesus. The best day of my life was that day when Jesus came into my heart and life and gave me the blessed assurance that my sin was nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

INVITE: The world desperately needs to hear this message of the gospel and we have the privilege of being called to share it. We are going to have both drive up and indoor services Easter Sunday this year. What a wonderful time to invite someone to hear the good news of forgiveness of sins and everlasting life in heaven.

People think we need the right political leader. THAT IS THE SMALL PICTURE. What we REALLY NEED is for people to meet Jesus personally at the cross. THAT IS THE BIG PICTURE. AMEN

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

HYMN #180 “My God! How Wonderful Thou Art” (ALL VERSES!) 9 AM: No song here.

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 10:30 & 9 am “Doxology” OVH #32

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson