

**March 28, 2021; PALM SUNDAY;
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
(50% seating capacity for COVID rules)
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church
Singers: "Others"**

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson Singers: Others

CALL TO WORSHIP: Zechariah 9:9&10

HYMN #95 "All Glory, Laud and Honor" 9 am: One Voice Hymnal #69

OPENING PRAYER: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Daddy is going to take care of everything. John 12:28

EPISTLE LESSON: *Philippians 2:5-11*

*5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7 but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death-
even death on a cross!
9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

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: song chosen by Hannah

SERMON TITLE: "THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD"

John 12:20-36; Pastor Tom Olson; March 28, 2021

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

DOORS: Have you ever had something that seemed bad happen to you and down the line you come to see that it was a very good thing in the long run? That has happened with many people who lose a job only to have new doors open up for them that were much better.

PASSION: That is exactly what we see in Holy Week. We start on the Palm Sunday "high" and things just get worse and worse for Jesus and the disciples. This is what Jesus said would happen. As hard as it is to see "the passion of the Christ," we can look at it from hindsight, God's perspective. We can see the salvation of the world unfolding and know that the agony of the cross is followed by the glory of the resurrection and the joy of the salvation of millions of people for the next two thousand years.

SOVEREIGNTY: The character quality of God that we need to have firmly engrained in our minds to help us make sense of things that are going on is this: "THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD." Or as Cory ten Boom put it so beautifully, no matter what is happening, "God has a plan." Let's look at today's Gospel text with "THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD" in mind.

I. CONFIRMED BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

John 12:20-43 Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." 22 Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. 23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. 27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." 29 The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. 30 Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine.

DIVISIONS: Jesus came into Jerusalem to a very divided crowd. Many people wanted to see Jesus. They had faith in him and they longed to hear his teaching. Others had hopes that Jesus would use this opportunity to unite the city against the Romans and drive them out in order to re-establish the Kingdom of David. But the corrupt politicians and religious leaders, what we call "the swamp" today, were feverishly working on a way to have Jesus put to death and eliminated once and for all.

CROSS: Jesus made it clear, time and again, that he would be betrayed, turned over to the Romans, be crucified and then rise on the third day. He was riding into a trap and he knew it. He knew his physical suffering would be great. He knew that his spiritual suffering to atone for the sins of the world would be extreme. But he did it

for the joy of saving our souls and lavishing His love upon us in heaven for all eternity. **Hebrews 12:2** “...for the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame...” He also then can encourage us in our suffering knowing that it produces character & hope in us and it brings glory to God as we “complete the sufferings of Christ.” When the devil attacks us, he really is attacking Jesus in us. Our sufferings become the suffering of Christ. That is why it is called in **Philippians 3:10**, “the fellowship of His suffering.”

VOICE: As hard as it was for Jesus to face all of this, the Father made it just a bit easier by speaking to them in a loud voice from heaven. Jesus prayed, “**Father, glorify Thy Name.**” The response from on high was amazing, **Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."** When God sovereignly ordains a difficult test in our lives, it is good to have some sort of assurance that what we are going through is accomplishing something of eternal value. We may not get a voice from heaven, but a verse of Scripture will often jump off the page and be our personal Word from God we stand upon. When all is said and done, all that matters is that we believe in the Lord and glorify Him through lives of obedience to His Word.

EVIL: The liberals are taking advantage of this moment in history of political power to push through their ungodly agenda for America. They are creating laws that will be used to punish people and organizations who follow the Word of God and define marriage as a man and woman. Now they are pressuring universities to embrace perversion or lose their ability to participate in athletic competition. Soon they will start giving out fines and prison sentences for those of us who believe that marriage is for a man and a woman only. I could easily end up in jail. One area church is already organizing into small house churches to meet together if the government comes in and takes away their building because they won't follow President Biden's definition of marriage. This is all very real and coming at us from a new angle every day. President Obama promised to fundamentally change America and he is finishing the job through his Joe Biden. It will be a time for all of us to choose to stand on the Word of God or suffer at the hands of evil men. But we can know that standing on the Word of God is always right in the long run.

Luke 9:26 “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

The SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD was CONFIRMED BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD also is manifested...

II. TO DRIVE OUT SATAN AND OPEN UP SALVATION

John 12:31-36 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. 34 The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" 35 Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. 36 Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

PURPOSE: We see here the two-fold purpose of Jesus dying on the cross. First of all, he was about to drive out the prince of this world. Secondly, he would draw all men to himself. I can only imagine how delighted Satan was to be in control of the government and the religious leaders. He had the House of Representatives, the President and the Senate, the supreme court, called the Sanhedrin and the religious rulers all on His side. He was preparing to inspire the corrupt politicians to take over the world and kill Jesus. GOD HAD ANOTHER PLAN...the death of Jesus to crush the power of Satan and save lost souls.

SURPRISE: Can you imagine how at the point of the death of Jesus, Satan and the hoards of evil beings and evil people were rejoicing that now the world belonged to them? Little did they know that Jesus was going to the place of the dead to set the captives free and give gifts to men. Jesus plundered Hades (called Hell in the King James English) and had a grand parade in the universe leading a whole host of godly people in his train and making a mockery of the powers of darkness.

PARADE: There is an image here of a Roman general coming home with his victorious troops and the enemy in chains paraded through the city as a display of the victory in battle. Somewhere along the way Satan must have realized that something had gone wrong and that Jesus was still alive and powerful and on the move. The domain of the dead was being plundered by Christ. The ancient church applied *Psalm 24:7 to Christ's descent into Hell on Holy Saturday: "Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in."*

VICTOR: Keith Green put it this way in his great song called *THE VICTOR: Swallowed into earth's dark womb, Death has triumphed that's what they say, But try to hold Him in the tomb, The Son of life rose on the third day. Look, the gates of hell they're falling, Crumbling from the inside out, He's bursting through the walls with laughter, Listen to the angels shout!*

MARTYRS: The same thing is going to happen some day in world politics. Satan's people will take over world government through the Anti-Christ, and they will kill the Christians and unify the world under satanic power. No one will buy or sell without the mark of the beast. There will be millions of Christian martyrs. Revelation 7 says that the number of martyrs from the "great tribulation" is so big that they can't be counted. One hundred and forty-four thousand Messianic Jews will go through the earth and win millions to Christ.

RETURN: Then at just the right time, Jesus will return to earth with this great army of believers and martyrs and will complete the destruction of Satan and his forces in a final battle. Jesus will just speak his word and his enemies will literally melt away and their souls will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Satan will be abolished and all those who looked to the cross for salvation will rejoice. Satan cannot fight against the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. He is deceived about it. The safest place for us to be in that day is with the Lord. GOD IS SOVEREIGN and will save us and drive out Satan. GOD IS SOVEREIGN... Let's let Keith Green finish off his song and remind us of the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD in everything that is happening in our lives and in the world today:

THE VICTOR

VERSE 2: His plan of battle fooled them all, They led Him off to prison to die, But as he entered Hades Hall, He broke those hellish chains with a cry, Listen to the demons screaming, See him bruise the serpent's head, The prisoners of hell the Savior's redeeming, All the power of death is dead. . Look, the gates of hell they're falling, Crumbling from the inside out, He's bursting through the walls with laughter, Listen to the angels shout!

CHORUS: It is finished, He has done it, Life conquered death, Jesus Christ has won it!

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

DAVE REYNOLDS "The Palms" (9 AM-)

1 O'er all the way green palms and blossoms gay

**Are strewn this day in festive preparation,
Where Jesus comes, to wipe our tears away,
E'en now the throng to welcome Him prepare.**

**2 His word goes forth and people by its might
Once more regain freedom from degradation,
Humanity doth give to each his right,
While those in darkness find restored the light.**

Chorus:

**Join all and sing His name declare,
Let ev'ry voice resound with acclamation,
Hosanna! Praised to the Lord!
Bless Him, who cometh to bring us salvation!**

**3 Sing and rejoice, O blest Jerusalem,
Of all thy sons sing the emancipation,
Thro' boundless love, the Christ of Bethlehem
Brings faith the hope to thee forevermore.**

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 and Three-Fold Amen; 9 am Recorded "Doxology" #32

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson