

**April 11, 2021; SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER;
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
(COVID rules)**

**Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church
Singers: "Others"**

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson; Singers: Others

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 148

HYMN #106 "Easter Morrow Stills Our Sorrow" 9 am: One Voice Hymnal #120 "He is Lord"

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: The breath of God. Genesis 2:7; John 20:22

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 4:32-35 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.*

SECOND LESSON: *1 John 1:2-2:2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

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: songs chosen by HANNAH...sung by "Praise team...Luke, Krista, Jacob, Hannah, Marretta, etc.)

SERMON TITLE: "THE HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR"

John 20:19-31; Pastor Tom Olson; April 11, 2021

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

OZ: Do you remember when Dorothy and her friends got to the "Emerald City" in the land of OZ that there was a horse that kept changing color. They called it "the horse of a different color." It is actually an American expression that means "a very different thing." The resurrection of Jesus from the dead ushered in a whole new perspective on the world and on God. The emphasis changed from obeying the law to believing the good news of the gospel. The law could only restrain people but not change them. But the gospel transforms lives. We see things very differently after the Resurrection... "A HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR" that was...

I. EMPOWERED WITH FORGIVENESS

John 20:19-31 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

OBSERVATION #1: This is one of my favorite paragraphs in the whole Bible. It may leave us with more questions than answers. But if we just stand back and get the drift of what is happening here it is quite moving. Notice that the disciples were FEARFUL and they were meeting behind LOCKED doors. The empty tomb and the testimony of those who had seen Jesus really had made no impact on them. Their unbelief was very strong!

OBSERVATION #2: Jesus "came" and "stood among them." I don't know if he walked through the locked door or just appeared. But it is obvious that the resurrection body is not subject to the same laws of nature that our bodies are. More about this in a minute.

OBSERVATION #3: The FIRST THING JESUS SPOKE to them was this: "PEACE BE WITH YOU." He didn't scold them! It also reminds us that the person who is crushed under the burden of fear that is caused by unbelief needs PEACE. Our current culture is ripe with FEAR AND UNBELIEF and one thing we can demonstrate and offer and pray for people to have it is PEACE of heart, soul, and mind. When we approach people with the gospel do people feel we are coming at them with a condemning scowl and scolding or do we come to them with an aura or attitude of peace. When I remember to start my sermon with the words, "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ" I feel a certain calm settle over the whole room. What a great goal it is to have the peace of God: *Colossians 3:15 "Let the peace of God rule in our hearts."* Where does this peace come from? It comes from the presence of Christ in our hearts and the knowledge that Jesus is on the throne and has everything under control...even when it doesn't look like it.

OBSERVATION #4: Jesus commissions his disciples to go out and carry on His ministry. Then he breathes on them the Holy Spirit. That reminds us of God making man from the dust of the earth and **Genesis 2:7** "*breathing into him the breath of life.*" It is one thing to have physical life but quite another thing to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

OBSERVATION #4: The ministry of Jesus is to deal with the forgiveness of sins. We certainly are to do other things such as helping people in need but the primary thing that we have to offer that no other organization or even religion, for that matter, has is THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. It is the heart of the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." If we don't forgive the sins of others, we are not forgiven either. If we cling to sin, we are unforgiven, but if we repent of it and ask the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing, God will do just that...He will forgive us. God can forgive sin because of the CROSS where His innocent Son died in our place. I will never forget the late Pastor Conrad Jergenson from Trinity Lutheran of Minnehaha Falls said, "The desperate need of people all over the world is to know their sins are forgiven."

The consistent message of the disciples in the book of Acts was the forgiveness of sins through the innocent blood of Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary:

- Acts 2:38- "repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins..."
- Acts 3:19- "repent...that your sins might be wiped out..."
- Acts 4:10- "...it is by the Name of Jesus Christ this man is healed..."
- Acts 4: 12- "...there is no other Name by which we must be saved..."
- Acts 10:43- "Everyone who believe in Him receives the forgiveness of sins through His Name..."
- Acts 13:36&39- "God raised Him...through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed..."

The resurrection gospel was a horse of a different color because it was EMPOWERED BY FORGIVENESS.

II. HINDERED BY UNBELIEF

John 20:24-25 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

When I read this, I ask myself if we would react any differently? Probably not. Especially without the Holy Spirit inside of us. The other disciples were unchanged until they met Jesus personally.

Notice that Thomas had two characteristics in his speech at this point.

- 1) He was UNHAPPY.
- 2) He was DEMANDING.

Now doesn't that describe a lot of people today: unhappy and demanding. Rioters are unhappy and demanding. Politicians are unhappy and demanding. My wife taught school in Africa for 11 years and I look in her photo albums and the children and teens have big smiles and were so appreciative. Many of the youth I see today don't smile, they demand much and are not thankful. One friend of mine offered his suburban to his teen age daughter and she didn't want it, then he offered the nice sporty 4 door Ford Fusion in excellent shape and she was unhappy...and he said to me, "What kind of a child have I raised?" She is demanding and unhappy. Older people get crabby and demanding too.

The unbelieving religious leaders were unhappy and demanding too:

- Acts 4:21- “they threatened them...”
- Acts 5:40- “they ordered them not to speak in the Name of Jesus”

The resurrection gospel was a horse of a different color because it is HINDERED BY UNBELIEF, and finally it is...

III. RELEASED BY FAITH

John 20:26-31 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Jesus asked Thomas to put his finger into the hole in His hands and into the hole in his side. How could Jesus have a hole in His side? I personally don't believe that our resurrected bodies have blood in them. But we will eat, and the food will be perfectly absorbed and not need to be eliminated. I believe we will be clothed with the glory of God, supernatural clothing...the kind of clothing Adam and Eve had in the garden of Eden.

All Jesus asked Thomas is this in the end of *verse 27, “Stop doubting and believe.”* That Word of God creates faith. As we share the Gospel, it is the Gospel that creates faith. The whole book of Acts is about the disciples telling the GOOD NEWS. And what was the result of people coming to faith in Jesus? JOY Faith in Jesus results in Joy and that is THE HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR.

GOAL: My prayer goal for this season in the life of our church is one soul saved per week through witnessing. Wouldn't it be energizing? Imagine one soul getting up every Sunday saying I received Jesus this week...I now believe. I have joy and peace in my heart! ONE A WEEK...will you join me in prayer?

HYMN #101 “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resound”

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

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 4:32-35 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.*

SECOND LESSON: *1 John 1:2-2:2 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

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

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