

**May 9, 2021; SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER; MOTHER'S DAY
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson; Singers: Praise Team led by Luke Johnson

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 98

HYMN #513 "Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners" 9 am: One Voice Hymnal #47 "Our Great Savior" (Jesus What a Friend for Sinners)

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:

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 10:34-48 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached- 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

39 "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen-by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, 47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

SECOND LESSON: *1 John 5:1-8 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

6 This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

READER: 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 LUKE...sung by "Praise team...Luke, Krista, Jacob, Hannah, Marretta, etc.)

**SERMON TITLE: "SOAKED IN LOVE"
John 15:9-17; Pastor Tom Olson; May 9, 2021**

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

SAND: Our mother's love has made a deep impression on all of us. Our children used to play in a big pile of sand on our hobby farm when we lived there in the late 1990's. That pile of sand has sat untouched for over twenty years. It was covered with weeds until Sharon asked me to clean it up and dig it up and soften up the sand. Then she wants me to get a new rope for the old tree swing. Why? Because we are having a family gathering in July and she wants the place ready for the children to have a good time. That is why we love our mothers so much. Am I looking forward to the family reunion? Yes. Do hope everyone has a good time? Sure. But I am not doing anything about it on my own...I probably wouldn't do anything until a day or two before they come but mom is planning, sleeping, eating, playing months in advance so that things are extra nice for everyone. It is just the way moms are and we think about their practical love with warmest feelings on Mother's Day.

Our message today is the gospel lesson from John 15:9-17, "Soaked in Love." It is the love of Jesus so beautiful lived out by our mothers:

I. THE LOVE OF COMMITMENT

John 15:9-13 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

AGAPE: The love of God that came to us through the Lord Jesus Christ is the kind of love we are talking about. It is a deep love that is deeper than feelings. It is the love that chose to come to earth even though God knew he

would be rejected. It is the love that lived a holy and sinless life even though he knew he would be condemned and put to death. It is the kind of love that embraces the very ones who were torturing him. It is the kind of love that say, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Jesus’ mother, Mary, truly had to bear a lot of heartache in her assignment to be the mother of the “lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” The Bible says that “Mary pondered these things in her heart.”

PARENT: Our mothers have also had to bear a lot over their lifetimes. They put their life on the line to conceive and carry a child. Many of them have the emotionally agonizing experiences of miscarriages, sometimes many times before they can carry a child to term. Then they have the exhaustion of day and night feeding and changing the baby. They have the extreme frustrations of toddlers. Toilet training, shaping strong wills, fighting and selfishness, the demands of education, feeding, home making, cleaning up messes, agony of sickness and accidents, defiant years of teen age life...and of course many happy but exhausting experiences, meals, birthday parties, spiritual and intellectual studies, dating, etc. Sometimes I look back and say to myself, “How did we ever make it through it all?”

LURE: And many parents have watched the world lure their children into sinful lifestyles that break your heart to the core. One pastor with a rebellious and immoral daughter said that every day he and his wife got up with a broken heart, wanting to cry but they found strength from God to carry on one day at a time. Fortunately, the daughter eventually came home and today is a dynamic Christian woman married to a godly doctor and serving the Lord.

COMMANDS: Notice here that this is a love that delights in the commands of the Lord. **Verse 10 “If you obey my commands you will remain in my love.”** One of the amazing things about coming to know the love of God in Christ Jesus is that God’s commands that were once burdensome to us because a delight and a source of happiness in life. Freedom to sin (which results in death) becomes freedom from sin (which leads to abundant life). The wonderful thing about hanging in there as a parent is that your children who once challenged your limits you put on them, they grow up...they have their own children...they see why you guided and protected them and gave them boundaries. And eventually your children become your best friends.

NELLIE: It has been beautiful to see Nellies last days and the deep bond of friendship that is being sealed between her and her daughter who is caring for her in her living room right in the midst of their family. They will be parting from each other as best friends...in spite of the very bumpy years. They have learned to appreciate each other’s commands and choices and values. We want to please the other person out of choice and not fear of punishment. It is not a relationship of convenience...it is one of commitment, through thick and thin...and a lot of thin...but it lasts because it is a love that comes from God. IT IS THE LOVE OF COMMITMENT.

II. THE LOVE OF FRIENDSHIP

John 15:14-17 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

CALLED: I love this statement we read here in verse 15, ***“I no longer call you servants...instead I have called you friends.”*** Jesus then goes on to explain that because they are friends that he makes known to them ***“the master’s business” and “everything I learned from my Father.”*** This same idea is embedded in the titles God gives us such as ***1Corinthians 3:9 “We are God’s fellow workers” and 2 Corinthians 5:20 “We are***

ambassadors for Christ...”. God has chosen us to be on his team and inner circle in the plan to bring the good news of the gospel to the world. Jesus said in *John 20:21* “*As the Father has sent me, so send I you.*” Then in all the epistles we get detailed knowledge of the mysteries of God, salvation, life in the spirit and eternal life. We are well equipped to join Him in His work. This is part of being a friend of God. This gives life deep meaning.

NAMES: There are all sorts of names that we could give ourselves that define us but we would do well turn off all the names we had before we met Jesus and daily look into the mirror and repeat these name:

- I AM A FRIEND OF GOD
- I AM REDEEMED
- I AM FORGIVEN
- I AM BOUGHT WITH A PRICE
- I AM A CHILD OF GOD
- I AM AN AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST
- I AM A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
- I AM A LIGHT FOR THE WORLD
- I AM THE AROMA OF CHRIST
- I AM THE SALT OF THE EARTH

HONORED: These are some of the new names we are given as believers in Christ. They surely ought to humble us to think that as sinners who have repeatedly failed God that he bestows on us such names, titles and honors. And he does, because He loves us and lives in us.

FOCUS: The Jesus finishes this passage with a summary of everything he stands for and wants us to obey. John 15:17 *This is my command: Love each other.* As God’s precious children, we certainly want to please him in every possible way but lest we “miss the forest because of the trees” we must never forget that the flavor, the aroma, the general focus of all of Christ’s directions for us is this, “Love each other.” I am afraid that at times we get so stuck on one thing that we miss out on the main thing, “Love each other.” There is one impression, above all, that people should get from our congregation and it is this: “I really felt loved when I was there.” And we all know what that means: people are noticed, listened to, cared for, taught, guided...LOVED.” And we all know how to spell love, don’t we: T-I-M-E.

CONCLUSION: I am convinced that this is the root of the rebellion and rioting we see today among young people....THEY DON’T FEEL LOVED. I am so thankful that I had a mother and father who loved and cared for me. This allowed me to grow up to be a happy and content adult. So you mothers who continue to work long overtime hours for no pay, including grandmothers as well...don’t be discouraged. You are an important part of making this world a much better place. Many of us know a bit about the love of God for us because we have felt it time and again through the selfless love of our Mothers. HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY. Amen

HYMN #531 “Jesus Loves Even Me”

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