

BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

Date: Sunday, July 4, 2021

Church Year Date: 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Call to Worship: Psalm 123:1-3

Hymn #629 (vs 1&4) "The Star-Spangled Banner" 9 AM (OVH) "The Star-Spangled Banner"
OR 9 AM- AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL (OVH)

Pledge of Allegiance *"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America; and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

Children's Sermon:

READER: OSTHUS

Old Testament Lesson: *Ezekiel 2:1-5 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." 2 As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. 3 He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' 5 And whether they listen or fail to listen-for they are a rebellious house-they will know that a prophet has been among them.*

Epistle Lesson: *2 Corinthians 12:1-10 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-God knows. 3 And I know that this man-whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows- 4 was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

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

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

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen

Gloria Patri: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

Announcements

Offering: Pianist plays during offering

Praise and Worship Songs: Hannah Carrizales

**Message: “LESSONS FROM A DETOUR”
Mark 6:1-13; Pastor Tom Olson; July 4, 2021**

DETOUR: I came to the detour on Highview Avenue on my way to church. I decided to make my way to church weaving through the back streets. I drove through back neighborhoods and I saw something I had not noticed in seven years...really noticed...homes and people...many of them. And I began to really wonder, in the depths of my heart, how many of them know Jesus personally...I believe that thousands of them need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. The issue is not the pandemic, the issue is not the national budget, the issue is not racism or any other ism. The root issue is faith. America needs to hear the gospel again. But the question is this, “How do we reach them?” If we make a great effort to reach out to them, what will be the response? Jesus and His disciples are reaching out with the good news of the Kingdom of God and we see here the reception they got. As we reach out, we will see the same thing. Mark 6:1-13:

I. RESPONSE 1: RIDICULE AND UNBELIEF, “PLOWING”

Mark 6:1-3 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! 3 Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son

and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

PRIDE: Some places are not ready for the gospel. If you go there, you will be ridiculed. I am sure you know people in your life that are “gospel hardened.” Their first response is to say, “Who do you think you are to tell me how to live?” And you are not doing that, but that is what they perceive. You are simply “one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.” But these people are into “earning their way to heaven” rather than receiving the gift of forgiveness Jesus offers. That is why they are focused on comparisons.

SIN: Others simply love sin and don't want a new life in Christ. *John 3:19&20 “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”*

PLOWING: However, it was not all bad. Jesus didn't give up on them because most were hard-hearted. He was like a farmer, plowing hard ground. It is tough work but it will eventually lead to some good soil in the future if we are patient and don't give up.

II. RESPONSE 2: SOME BELIEVED, “GLEANING”

Mark 6:4-6 Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

GLEANING: Notice there were some who took an interest in Jesus. *Mark 6:2 “...many who heard him were amazed.”* It seems there always is a “remnant” of those who have a heart for God and want to hear His Word.

COWBOY: A gifted “cowboy church pastor” came out of retirement to plant a church in Mineral Point, Wisconsin where we lived. In his long career as a pastor, he had started several very successful churches in the 1960's and 1970's. In those days he remembered it didn't take any effort at all to gather 100 or more people quickly. He called it, “Harvesting.” But he went on to reflect about the small congregation that he now served who had a hard time growing, and he told me that we were now in a season of GLEANING, just picking up the few souls that were still left that God was calling to Himself. But he was excited and was more interesting in serving a congregation of 30 people than being retired. And now some 15 years later his congregation is thriving with a new facility in a prominent location...not large, but bearing fruit...still gleaning.

VBS: When I started in the ministry, we had no problem getting a full house for a week of Vacation Bible School, in any church. Parents from far and wide dropped their children off gladly. Now we have to go to a large effort to pull together 15 children for one night...and

everyone is so busy, mostly with kid's sports, they just don't want to bother with church any more. We are gleaning.

PERSISTENT: Jesus was not received well in Nazareth, but that didn't stop him from sharing the Word of God and doing what he could for that handful of souls that wanted the truth. Maybe you are in a difficult family or workplace as far as sharing the gospel is concerned. But don't let that stop you from gleaning. I like what someone once said, "I can't do much but I will do what I can." That is all Jesus did and it is all God expects. This leads us to the exciting part...there were other places to visit.

III. RESPONSE 3: GO TO NEW PLACES, "HARVESTING"

Mark 6:6b-13 Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. 8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff-no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them." 12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

INTERNSHIP: It was time to send the disciples out on their own and multiply the effort. They were on a sort of "internship" where they were accountable to a partner and going out to minister in the Name of Jesus with power. Notice that Jesus "***sent them out and gave them authority.***" They were led by the Lord and not mere human ideas. I think that is so key...we need a deep sense that what we are doing is the leading of God. I like what one pastor says, "The Lord anoints who he appoints!"

AGREEMENT: This brings me back to the beginning of the message. I am sure you agree that the great NEED in America is for people to come into new life in Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit. I am sure you will agree that all around us there are THOUSANDS of souls who need the Lord that we simply don't know. I am sure you will agree that SOME will be Hard-hearted but many will respond if we can somehow connect with them effectively. I am sure you will agree that the LORD has to send us out in His way and His time to be effective.

KEY: What is the key? It is found in verse 8 where Jesus says, "***Take nothing for a journey except a staff...***" What I see here is dependence, accessibility and vulnerability. A young seminarian wanted to learn to minister like Jesus so the seminary sent him all the way from the United States to one of the most rural and isolated churches in Scotland. The young pastor asked one of his parishioners "what can I do to be a good pastor?" The woodsman in a kilt replied, "Don't drive your car, just walk." And that is what he did, for fourteen years, he walked from house to house and farm to farm and had a powerful ministry and was well received. His seminary professor, the late Dr. Eugene Peterson, who sent him there commented that when he planted a church in Bel Aire, Maryland, he too went door to door, not to preach or

promote, but to listen and pray and minister...there is a difference. *He said, "The world is filled with people who are desperate to find someone who will simply listen to the concerns of their heart. That opens doors."*

CUMBERLAND: Pastor Kent Begnaud was a welder in Prescott, Wisconsin who felt a call to plant a church in Cumberland, Wisconsin. He walked the streets and talked with and prayed with the lowliest people he found. God blessed his efforts and in a short while he had a thriving congregation. He once said that the more he helps messed up people on the streets, the more solid believers God sent him to help with the work. He walked and God moved! Walking simply allows you to SLOW DOWN enough to say hello and make friends. You can't do that at 60 miles per hour or even 25 miles per hour. Walking, implies vulnerability and accessibility.

TROUBLE: Our nation is in deep trouble. The crime rate in Minneapolis alone is soaring. Some people feel that the leaders of Chicago and Portland and other cities are losing control. The root problem is not a need for more law enforcement. That is a symptom. The root problem is that people have not found "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And the way they find that is through you and me. The way that happens is if we put on our walking shoes, take our walking stick and head out into the open air in the Name of Jesus, expecting God to open up doors for demons to be cast out and people to hear the Good News of Jesus' salvation.

RESULTS: We may get ridiculed like Jesus, we may glean just a few remaining souls or we may be like the disciples and see the Kingdom of God come with power and authority. In any case, God will be glorified and people will have a chance to be saved...and that is what counts.

REPORT: Last Sunday I got a chance to get out and share the gospel with those attending the antique tractor show in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. We came into the old simple church building that was donated to the club and hauled onto the grounds last year. It had a playable piano, a wood burning stove from long ago but no sound system or modern devices. I wondered if anyone would leave their fun and come. By the time we started at 9 AM the place was packed with standing room only. Sharon sat on the floor. We sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and "Jesus Loves Me." I shared the gospel as simply and clearly as I could and invited the people to pray the sinner's prayer and put their faith in Christ. The response was warm and overwhelming. It even led to a farm visit the next day! Only eternity will reveal what happened in the hearts of the 75 people packed into that tiny old country church. There are still opportunities and God is still at work with the gospel. I am convinced that America needs a fresh encounter with Jesus and the cross of Calvary more than anything else! Amen

Hymn #630 "America the Beautiful"

Lord's Prayer & Holy Communion

Praise and Worship

Closing Prayer

Benediction

Closing Song: "God bless America"

*God bless America, land that I love;
Stand beside her and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white foam
God bless America, my home sweet home!
God bless America, my home sweet home!*

Postlude: Rebekah Olson

Old Testament Lesson: *Ezekiel 2:1-5 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." 2 As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. 3 He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' 5 And whether they listen or fail to listen-for they are a rebellious house-they will know that a prophet has been among them.*

Epistle Lesson: *2 Corinthians 12:1-10 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-God knows. 3 And I know that this man-whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows- 4 was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

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

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