

SERVICE INFORMATION

Minnesota Valley Church

October 3, 2021

19th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE: Ray Holmberg (Osthus singers)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 128

*Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways.
2 You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours.
3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your sons will be like olive shoots
around your table.*

*4 Thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.
5 May the LORD bless you from Zion
all the days of your life;
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,
6 and may you live to see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel.*

HYMN #186 (vss 1,2&5) "Jesus, Priceless Treasure"

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy on me. O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Children Play Bells!

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Genesis 2:18-25 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." 19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

23 The man said,

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."*

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

EPISTLE LESSON: *Hebrews 2:1-13 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. 2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by*

the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. 5 It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. 6 But there is a place where someone has testified:

*"What is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?
7 You made him a little lower than the angels;
you crowned him with glory and honor
8 and put everything under his feet."*

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. 12 He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation, I will sing your praises." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

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

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

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *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 AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

HYMN #262 "How Firm a Foundation"

**SERMON TITLE: "FOCUS ON THE FAMILY"
October 3, 2021; Pastor Tom Olson; Ephesians 6:10-20**

MARRIAGE: I think we all can agree that the state of the family in America is in crisis. Today our culture has abandoned the traditional and Biblical definition of marriage and there is now a lot of confusion about what is right and moral.

GENDER: We also have lost our ability to define what gender is and we no longer know what a man or woman is. It is unbelievable that official documents today don't even use the terms "mother" or "father" but call the mother a "birthing parent" or other terms I am not comfortable using in public. The concept of being transgender is an exploding fad among young people today and is being fanned into flames by goofy educators

and politicians. Teachers are losing their jobs for merely calling a boy “he” and a girl “she.” Some children even want to even be called the pronoun “they.” One preschool family wanted their child to be called “your majesty.”

CULTURE: Hosea 8:7 seems to be a verse for our time, “They have planted the wind and will harvest the whirlwind...” In our Gospel lesson for this Sunday, we are called to “FOCUS ON THE FAMILY” and see what God’s Word says about this topic.

I. THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Mark 10:1-9 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. 2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied. 4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." 5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 7'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

CERTIFICATE: The rabbinical writings at the time of Jesus reveal that it was very easy to get a divorce. Moses permitted men to divorce their wives if they gave them a “certificate of divorce.” You find this in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and all that a woman had to do to become a victim of divorce was to become “displeasing” to her husband. The certificate of divorce would be a testimony that she was not immoral or unfaithful, just displeasing. She would then be free to re-marry. But if they didn’t give her the certificate everyone would assume that she had been immoral and unfaithful to her husband. This is what was rampant at the time of Jesus. The religious leaders would find a younger, more attractive wife and would divorce their first wife without a certificate. Then she would become “an adulteress” in the eyes of the people and anyone who married her would be looked at as “committing adultery.” Since she would be thus labeled, unfairly, her only hope of supporting herself would be to go into prostitution because no man would want to marry her in most cases. This was an evil and terrible way to treat their wives and Jesus confronts them head on.

DEFINITION: Notice also here that Jesus gives the definition of gender and marriage. He said there are two genders, male and female. *Mark 10:6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'* The definition of marriage is also given here. It is for a man to leave father and mother and become one flesh with your wife and not let anyone come between that relationship. We must be careful that we don’t allow other things to separate us from our spouses. This could include career, activities, hobbies, children, grandchildren, church, community service, television, internet, reading, friends, unrealistic expectations, anger, arguments, power struggles, the words we say or even actives with our spouse that don’t build the relationship!

EDIFY: We are studying Ephesians in mid-week Bible study and this verse really jumps out to me. *Ephesians 4:29 "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is HELPFUL FOR BUILDING OTHERS UP according to their needs, that it may BENEFIT those who listen."* Notice those words “*building others up.*” But we can’t just stop there. We do a lot of well-intended things to build others up that don’t build them up, things that would build us up, but not them. Therefore, it goes on to say “*according to THEIR needs.*”

DIFFERENT: I talked with a pastor at the district pastors’ meeting last week and I told him how energized I get spending time with my fellow pastors, getting good ideas from them and praying together. This pastor told me how exhausted the same activities make him and that he is energized by being all alone, by himself and quiet.

When he needs energy, he stops going to meetings and when I need energy I go. Each person has DIFFERENT NEEDS and quite often opposites attract in marriage so we don't know how to build up our spouse too well and our well-intended efforts can even drive us apart. To FOCUS ON THE FAMILY is to define marriage correctly.

II. THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

Mark 10:10-12 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

EXCUSES: As I mentioned earlier, the religious leaders were treating their wives very badly. They were divorcing them just because they dropped a plate and cracked it or burnt the toast. Those two examples are from the Rabbinical writings of Jesus' day as grounds for divorce. If you listen to the Rabbi on "Fiddler on the Roof" carefully, he is saying exactly the same thing about how easy it is to get rid of your unwanted wife to the Jewish men in Russia. Then they would not give a certificate of divorce and the woman was assumed to be committing adultery and the man who was willing to take her in was also accused of the same. When the real problem is that most divorced women were labeled and forced into prostitution. This is what Jesus is dealing with here. He is pointing out their showy outward holiness and evil inward treachery.

FOUNDATION: To get the whole teaching on divorce for Christians one has to study what the Apostle Paul says in the Epistles. The root issue in the divorce discussion is a high view of the sanctity of marriage and serious attempts to keep marriages going through the hard spots. But sometimes it doesn't work. One or the other won't reconcile. There is no peace. Or perhaps someone just wants a different partner, even from sinful lustful emotions alone. Divorce is not an unforgivable sin. This is a difficult topic and a solid biblical study is must be done to come to the correct applications which we are not going to have time to do today.

APPLICATION: Two things I see here is this: 1) A frivolous divorce should never be done. 2) If there has been a frivolous divorce, healing will not come until you bring it to the cross of Christ for forgiveness and healing. Claim your forgiveness and seek to make your current marriage succeed, no matter how it started. Don't do or say anything to make your ex-spouse look sinful or evil. If you were primarily in the wrong, claim ***Psalm 130:3&4 "If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore, you are feared."***

PERSONAL: A friend of mine sent me a note this week that he and his wife (also my friend) got a divorce after thirty years of marriage. He told me he had been unhappy and lonely for many years. They both will continue to be my friends and I will do my best to love them both. We have to claim Romans 8:28 and keep loving them. To FOCUS ON THE FAMILY is to fight to save marriages, heal those hurt by divorce and finally...

III. THE VALUE OF CHILDREN

Mark 10:13-13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

FRUIT: Marriage is a sacred union between a man and women. God intended it to be for a lifetime. But what is the reason for all this fuss about marriage? Why don't we just trade spouses like we do cars? It is the fruit of

marriage, CHILDREN. God's original command was this, ***"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth!"*** God loves children. Children are a gift to be cherished by all. Abraham in the Old Testament was broken hearted because he didn't have a child. His son of his old age was called Isaac which means "laughter." That boy brought great joy to Abraham and Sarah. Psalm 127 puts it this way: verses 3-5 ***"Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. 4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them."***

INDIGNANT: When the disciples tried to chase away the children from Jesus, He became **INDIGNANT**. I looked up that word and it means: **angry, annoyed, disgruntled, aggravated and resentful**. It is a strong word. Jesus wanted to bless the children. Jesus wanted the children to be near him.

We could summarize it this way:

- THE FAMILY IS IMPORTANT TO GOD.
- MAKING MARRIAGE LAST IS IMPORTANT TO GOD.
- CHILDREN ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD.

CHOOSE: The breakdown of the family leads to the breakdown of society. If you are a single girl, choose your husband wisely. A boy, choose your wife wisely. Become a mature believer and choose a godly spouse. Don't let things come between you. **COMMUNICATE**. There will be many challenges. Overcome them if at all possible. Have children if you can and treasure them; train them well.

URCHINS: As a church we should value ministry to children and especially try to reach out to children who have no instruction in their homes. Sunday school was started in 1781 in England by Robert Raikes who taught slum children who worked all week in dangerous factories. He taught them on Sunday to read and write as well as sharing the gospel. It was the **ONLY** education they got. Before that there was no education for children. Diane, from our church, told me about the lost children in her neighborhood who are growing up in unstable homes and becoming wild. This should be a concern to us all. These children are important to God and have much potential. We can start to reach out to them by prayer and whatever means God reveals to us.

GANGS: David Wilkerson was a rural pastor from Pennsylvania who moved to New York City in the 1960's to reach out to the hardened youth and gang members. He spent his whole life making an impact in New York. Some of those wild and dangerous youth became powerful men and women of God under his church and Teen Challenge ministries.

We still need to **FOCUS ON THE FAMILY** and rebuild the family unit which is the building block of our culture. The family is the cradle of the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and coming again. The family is the basic unit of the kingdom of God. Let's fight for it! Amen

HYMN #560 "Children of the Heavenly Father"

HOLY COMMUNION (Dave Fischer prep and help)

DOXOLOGY: (To the tune of Edelweiss) *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

POSTLUDE: Ray Holmberg

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