

**BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Date: Sunday, January 30, 2022
Church Year Date: Reformation Sunday**

Ruth: Pastor Mark is always welcome to sing a solo when he is around...any Sunday, even at the spur of the moment. He has such a wonderful voice and should use it! Dave Reynolds is singing a solo this Sunday and will accompany himself.

Singers: Osthus
Prelude: Ruth Antal

Call to Worship: *Psalm 46 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah 8 Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." 11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah*

Hymn #212 "Holy God, We Praise Your Name"

Unison Prayer: "O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear your Holy Word. We pray that you will open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and to grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ's sake. Amen

Children's Sermon: Don't be afraid at night. Psalm 23:4 ...*I will fear no evil; For You are with me...*

Reader: Becky Kruse

Old Testament Lesson: *Jeremiah 1:4-10 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." 6 "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."*

Epistle Lesson: *1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13 And now I will show you the most excellent way. 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they*

will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

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

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

CONFESSION OF FAITH: Psalm 23-*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. 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

Dave Reynolds Solo: "There is No Greater Love" (He will accompany himself.)

Praise and Worship Songs (Chosen by Ruth)

Message: LIFE OF CHRIST SERIES: "THE POWER OF JESUS" Luke 4:31-44

DEPRESSION: On Friday morning I got two calls from friends saying they have loved ones who are older men that are suffering from severe depression. They wanted me to go and visit them because they were very concerned. I suspect that this is just the tip of the iceberg of those who are seriously depressed this time of year. It is very natural for February and March to be the time of year when darkness and winter related depression hits people hard. It is something I am well acquainted with from my years living in Alaska. Families have to be extra vigilant this time of year to watch for depression and at times make intervention before it is too late.

NEED: We need power from on high to fight the powerful forces of depression, sin, demons, mental illness, disease and lack of faith. In today's Gospel text we continue to see more demonstrations of the power of Jesus over these sinister forces. I realize that primarily, it is a witness that Jesus is the Messiah. But it is also an encouragement to us that this same Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God, dwells in us by the Holy Spirit. This same Jesus in us has power to deal with every battle we have with the power of darkness. I would never go and visit these depressed men if I didn't have the hope that Christ was with me and is able to touch their lives, if they let him. God gave me a definite Scripture for the depressed man and it was a blessing to share it with him. Let's talk about THE POWER OF JESUS:

I. POWER OVER DEMONS

Luke 4:31-37 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. 32 They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority. 33 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, 34 "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are-the Holy One of God!" 35 "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. 36 All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this

teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" 37 And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

OUTCRY: Jesus went into the synagogue and a demonic spirit inside of a man cried out in a loud voice: "What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." This demon knew who Jesus was. This demon reacted to the presence of Jesus. This demon was terrified of Jesus because he knew they were on different teams. The demon knew that Jesus had the power to destroy him. The demon was not an atheist but the demon didn't have saving faith either. Jesus was his enemy.

EXPLAINED: An emergency room doctor in Superior, Wisconsin had seen a lot in his medical practice. He was a dedicated Christian and understood spiritual realities. He once told me that the reason some people react negatively toward us without any cause is that the demonic spirit inside of them is aggravated by the Holy Spirit inside of us. That explains the unexplainable...it is about the invisible spiritual world. This helped me make sense of why some people reacted negatively to me when I had only been nice to them. It is just like the demon reacting to Jesus in this text.

FASTING: Notice that Jesus commanded the demon to be silent. He never allowed miracles to become a spectacle. He wanted miracles to testify who he was but he wanted people to listen to his teaching and not be attracted to miracles. With a simple command he ordered the demon to come out and that demon did come out without any long-term battle. The disciples didn't have the ability to do that at this point without a battle. At one point, Jesus told them that demonic power only comes out if we have prepared through fasting and prayer. That is why it is so important to be in close fellowship with Christ so that we also have the power and authority of Christ to effectively come against evil. *Acts 1:8 "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you..." Ephesians 5:18 "Be filled with the Spirit..."* Jesus demonstrated POWER OVER DEMONS.

II. POWER OVER ILLNESS

Luke 4:38-41 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. 40 When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

FEVER: We don't get too nervous about a high fever these days because we take Tylenol and that sends it down. If necessary, we go to a doctor for an antibiotic and that usually is the end of the fever. I said to someone the other day that if it were not for antibiotics, most of us over the age of 50 would already be dead. And in my great grandparent's lifetime that was true. Very few lived past 60 or 70 years old.

HIGH: Notice here that it said Peter's mother-in-law had a "HIGH fever." Undoubtedly Peter's wife was very distraught. When Jesus went there it was a desperate situation. Notice that Jesus "bent over her" when he successfully rebuked the fever. It is obvious time and again that Jesus had no fear to touch people who were ill or dead. He had no fear of getting sick or being called ceremonially unclean. It reminds me of photos of Mother Theresa of Calcutta going to the sick and dying and holding them in her arms. When she saw the most repulsive, disease ravaged people, she saw Jesus and embraced them. Can you imagine how much it meant to them to be held tightly and loved before they died? *Matthew 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"*

LEPERS: One of my favorite scenes in Cecil B. DeMille's "Ben Hur" is when Judah goes into the cave of lepers with not one bit of fear, he finds his mother and sister and picks his mother up and carries her home. He did not have any fear of getting ill, only compassion for his dear mother and the will to carry her close to him and bring her home.

FEAR: I am not advocating foolishness with dangerous diseases but I am speaking against the fear that is keeping us from fellowship. I have people in my life who are living in crippling fear of viruses that their lives are all but destroyed. I visited a man recently who cut himself off from all unvaccinated, but perfectly healthy, friends and was imprisoned in his home and in a state of deep depression. I am afraid that many people have gone beyond prudence and have allowed a spirit of fear to take over their lives. They may be free from COVID but they are filled with something worse...the fear of fever has become a FEVER OF FEAR.

Jesus wants to bend over us and heal us from the afflictions of the devil. The first step in overcoming fear is to invite Christ into your life and have the assurance of salvation and be set free from the fear of death. The second step is to stand on the promises of the Word of God. When I recently visited the man with such fear, I shared with him a Bible verse that I believe God gave me for him to stand on. Perhaps it may help some of our listeners today. It is Psalm 121:7&8. It addresses God's watch care over our short run, long run and eternity:

***7 The LORD will keep you from all harm--
he will watch over your life;***

***8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.***

Jesus has POWER OVER ILLNESS.

III. POWER IN THE PULPIT

Luke 4:42-44 At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." 44 And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

PRIORITY: Once again, Jesus shows us his priority and passion. It is preaching the good news and not casting out demons or doing healing miracles. We see this in three very important words here "***I must preach.***" Helping the troubled is important, helping the ill is important but preaching the gospel is primary and essential. The PROBLEMS of this world are all SYMPTOMS of one thing, people do not know and believe the gospel. When people come to faith in Christ, the nation turns in the right direction and blessings flow. When we choose sin, troubles abound. Jesus did not say he was sent to cast out demons and heal the sick. He emphasizes here that he had to preach the good news of the kingdom and then emphasized, "***that is why I was sent.***"

EMPTY: Our area is filled with "up and outers," not "down and outers." They have expensive homes and cars. They have fine food and clothing. But they are starving in their souls. Something is missing. Many are living in wealth and luxury and wondering, "Is this all there is?" Our area needs the good news of the kingdom of God. In just a few years we all lay on our deathbeds and let go of everything we fought so hard to accumulate. In that moment we realize that a home in heaven and a relationship with our Savior is of utmost importance. But how many people die with no one to lead them to Christ?

CHAPLAIN: The chaplain of the Redeemer Nursing Home in South Minneapolis told us that he was a parish pastor and didn't lead many souls to Christ. But when he became chaplain at the nursing home, he has led dozens of souls to Christ because these folks can now clearly see how brief life is and how important it is to get saved by Jesus for all eternity. He just loves his job because of all the people that he has been able to help find peace with God and the forgiveness of their sins. This is our number one priority. It was Jesus' number one priority.

MEETING: As we head into our annual meeting one big question looms in my heart: "How can our little church effectively get the good news of the kingdom of God out to the thousands of families within a mile of our church?" It is only by the grace of God that it can be done and we can once again impact the "miracle

mile.” Our church founding father, Wayne Hanson invites you to join him to pray on Zoom for that to happen. That is why Jesus sent us here. There is power in the blood of Christ to save the lost, heal the sick and set the demon possessed free. Amen

Hymn #544 “Power in the Blood”

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Doxology (AH #390) *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

Postlude: Ruth Antal

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