

SERVICE INFORMATION
May 1, 2022, Third Sunday of Easter
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal

Psalm 30

PASTOR: I will exalt you, O LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

ALL: O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you healed me. 3 O LORD, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.

PASTOR: Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name.

ALL: For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

PASTOR: You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

ALL: that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.

HYMN #566 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 51:8-13 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Amen

CHILDREN'S SERMON: Care for my lambs.

READER:

FIRST LESSON: Acts 9:1-22 *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. 10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. 11 The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." 13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here-has sent me so that you may see again and be*

filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21 All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" 22 Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

SECOND LESSON: *Revelation 5:8-148 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song:*

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"*

14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

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

PRAISE AND WORSHIP SONGS: Chosen by Ruth.

**SERMON TITLE: “PETER’S COMMISSION” (Life of Christ Series)
John 21:1-19; Pastor Tom Olson; May 1, 2022**

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

Jesus had some very unlikely characters he chose to be his 12 disciples. In the world we look for good candidates for a position. In the kingdom of God, we look to God to make sinful people into mighty saints of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. This humorous story demonstrates why Christ chose people like Peter. It is a letter addressed to:

Jesus, Son of Joseph,
Woodcrafters Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 91365

Dear Sir,

Thank you for submitting the names of the twelve men you have chosen for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our series of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant...

It is our opinion, that most of your nominees are lacking in the background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership and would surely stay in the background. The two brothers, James and John, Sons of Zebedee, place personal interests above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James the Son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered high on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contact in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your accountant and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory and will follow.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours,
The Jordan Management Consulting Company
123 Money Changer's Court

When Jesus chose Peter, he got a pretty rough character to work with. Before we look at specifics, we should review the context of the story:

John 21:1-19 summary: the disciples had gone back to fishing. They didn't catch anything. Jesus appeared on shore and told them to cast their net on the other side of the boat and they caught a record amount of 153 fish. Peter knew it was the Lord. Jesus prepared a shore lunch for them and then reinstated and commissioned Peter. He gave Peter three simple tasks to do to demonstrate his love: 1. Feed My Lambs; 2. Care for My Sheep; 3. Follow Jesus

I. LOVE JESUS BY FEEDING HIS LAMBS

John 21:15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

LOVE: Many sermons have focused on the Greek words in this text where twice Jesus asks Peter if he loves him with the pure love of God "AGAPE." Twice Peter answers that he loves Jesus like a friend "PHILEO." The third time Jesus asks Peter do you love me like a friend "phileo" and Peter says that he loves Jesus like a friend "phileo." That would make an interesting Bible study discussion. But today I want to focus on the "commission of Peter" in this text. The first commission is "**Feed my lambs.**"

GOSPEL: Lambs are young sheep. Some are born to a mother that dies. These lambs need to be bottle fed. Young and immature believers need to be fed the milk of God's Word. Maybe that is most of us. I feel that the great need of our day is to be nourished on the Word of God. That initial drink would be the gospel that opens the door to salvation. Paul said in *1 Corinthians 2:2* "**For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.**"

POWER: If we are continually in awe of the fact that Jesus loves sinners and died on the cross to pay for my sin, our spiritual lives will always be vibrant. This gospel is "the power of God for salvation." (Romans 1:16) It is the love story of the ages. The cross is the motivation for spiritual maturity. No threats of eternity in hell fire can compare with the life-changing power of knowing how much Jesus loves us and the price He paid for our salvation.

Most people you meet every day don't know a thing about the salvation of our souls through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. We as a church have the privilege of sharing this good news. FEED CHRIST'S LAMBS.

II. LOVE JESUS BY CARING FOR HIS SHEEP

John 21:16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

HELPLESS: The second part of Peter's commission is to "**Take care of My sheep.**" This time of the year is lambing time. I don't know much about it but I would guess that mother sheep may need help while they are in the late stages before the lambing. They may need special nutrition. They may need help getting up if they fall down...which they call "being cast." The lambs may need drying off or a warm heat lamp if they are born in an icy springtime rain shower.

HURTS: So many people today are in need of care. They are broken by childhood trauma. They are dragged down by the wrong friends. They are destroyed by drugs. Others are hurt by the worldly lure of materialism. The song puts it so well... ***“Everyday they pass me by, I can see it in their eyes, Empty people filled with care, Headed who knows where, On they go through private pain, Living fear to fear, Laughter hides their silent cries, Only Jesus hears.”***

FOCUS: I don't want to focus on building up a church numerically. It is better to focus on the care of souls. Then those who visit will see and feel the love of God and be drawn into the fellowship by love, not by public relations. I appreciate what my pastor friend says when you ask him what his plan is for the ministry, he simply says, ***“Preach the Word and love the people.”*** That is exactly God's plan and it works so well. FEED CHRIST'S LAMBS. CARE FOR CHRIST'S SHEEP.

III. LOVE JESUS BY FOLLOWING HIM

John 21:17-19 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

FEED: This time Jesus says to Peter, “FEED MY SHEEP.” This would include deeper teaching to older ones. I have to say that I really love our OK Bible study and Adult class on Sunday morning. They are highlights of my week where we can study, discuss, ask questions and share insights. It feeds my soul.

ROOT: Notice the key to all of this in the last two words in verse 19, ***“Follow Me!”*** It is only in living in the love of Christ, in fellowship with His heart, that we can truly “feed His lambs, care for His sheep and feed them. These words in that same song, “People need the Lord” put it so well: ***“THROUGH HIS LOVE our hearts can feel, all the grief they bear.”***

KNAPP: On Friday I got a voicemail from Pastor Charles Knapp. In a weak voice he asked me to call him. He and his wife, Joyce, are grieving the death of their precious oldest daughter, Rebekah, in a car accident a number of months ago. Joyce spent some time this winter with another daughter, Rachel, as she gave birth to a fourth child who is now two months old. Just a couple days ago they all found out that Rachel, the wife and mother of four, including an infant, is filled with cancer and has only weeks to live. Let me repeat those lyrics again, ***“Through His love our hearts can feel, all the grief they bear.”*** I need to go to Ashland, Wisconsin and visit the Knapps when they come back to their small rural parsonage because a pastor doesn't have a pastor. But praise God, they have a great family and a loving little woodland congregation that will rally around them in their hour of need.

APPLICATION: Peter's commission statements are some of the final words of Christ on earth and must be first priority in a healthy Christian church: ***preach the word, love the people, feed the lambs, care for the sheep, follow Jesus...*** If we can focus on this, everything else will take care of itself. And as we do this, don't give up on the most hopeless ones. Remember that Peter would have been the last and most hopeless choice for his high position if we judged with human eyes. We have a very big God who changes lives. Amen

Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN #376 “I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus”

HOLY COMMUNION

BENEDICTION: Tune “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: Ruth Antal

READER: Becky Kruse

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