

**MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH**

**May 15, 2022**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

**PRELUDE:** Carol Gustafson; Singers: Osthus

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** *Psalm 148*

*NORTH: Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above.*

*SOUTH: Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.*

*NORTH: Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.*

*SOUTH: Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.*

*NORTH: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.*

*SOUTH: He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away.*

*NORTH: Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,*

*SOUTH: lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,*

*NORTH: you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,*

*SOUTH: wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,*

*NORTH: kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,*

*SOUTH: young men and maidens, old men and children.*

*NORTH: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.*

*SOUTH: He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart.*

*ALL SHOUT: Praise the LORD!*

**HYMN #136 “Praise Ye the Father”**

**PASTOR:** *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

**CONGREGATION:** *We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen*

**PRAYER**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**READER:**

**FIRST LESSON:** *Acts 11:1-18 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."*

4 Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again. 11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.' 15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

**SECOND LESSON:** Revelation 21:1-7 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

**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**

**PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2** praise songs chosen by CAROL

**SERMON: "A LITTLE WHILE" John 16:12-22**

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

**PATIENCE:** Would you call yourself a patient or an impatient person? I think I am quite patient but I am not sure about it.

MARRIAGE: I also waited over 30 years to find a wife. I was tempted along the way to get into relationships that were not what they should be.

TRACTOR: I saved money and kept looking for a steam engine for 47 years and finally got one at age 58 after first raising my family. I am glad I was patient and got a good one.

AWARENESS: But I really don't know if I am patient in other's eyes or in God's eyes. I don't dare ask. I am kind of like the business owner we heard speak at an IBLP Advanced Seminar when we were preparing for marriage. He was challenged to ask his employees this question: ***Do I have any blind spots or faults that need to be pointed out?*** Have you ever asked someone that question about yourself? He thought it would take a few minutes with each employee. It took over 45 minutes with each one. After hours and hours, he ended his day exhausted and had a long list of faults in his life he was not aware of. For many of us that area is patience because God sees time totally differently than we do.

ANTICIPATION: Jesus said he would be back in "a little while." He said we would have grief during the waiting time, but when we are reunited with him our "hearts will be filled with joy." Well almost 2,000 years have gone by and Jesus is not back yet. God obviously views "a little while" differently than we do. Let's talk about it.

## **I. HOW DO WE COPE? The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit**

***John 16:12-15 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.***

DEATH: God has given us a helper to cope with this time between the first and second coming of Jesus. That helper is the Holy Spirit. Jesus was preparing them for his departure. I am old enough and realistic enough to know that I have got to get serious about preparing my family for my departure, my death.

WARNING: I need to file paper work to put people in charge of things if Sharon and I should happen to both die. And that is realistic. When we were driving home from Wisconsin on Wednesday, we went right through a terrible thunder storm with our phones beeping a tornado warning for our location. We faced strong wind gusts with torrential rain and hail. One gust caught me off guard and we could easily have gone out of control, rolled the vehicle and been killed. I quickly slowed down to 25 miles per hour and turned off into a farm and parked between buildings to get out of the wind. I am reminded that we could be gone in a wink of an eye, even today. Who would help our children deal with things if we should be gone suddenly?

SCRIPTURE: Jesus left us his "power of attorney," the Holy Spirit. That same Holy Spirit breathed God's Word into Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, Jude and James to give us the Holy Scriptures. This is objective truth that the Holy Spirit uses to guide us while Christ is gone. ***2 Timothy 3:16&17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*** I can't count how many times Dr. Monseth quoted those verses to us when we were in seminary.

FOUNDATION: That is why the preaching and teaching of God's inerrant and authoritative Word is the center and heart of our ministry. The opinions of society are fickle. A couple months ago people were unable to define what a woman is. Now the same people are protesting for women's rights. Society is confused but the Word of God is a solid foundation. We need objective truth about morality and we have that in the time-tested Word of God. HOW DO WE COPE? THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT helps us cope while Jesus is gone back into heaven for "a little while."

## II. HOW LONG? We Don't Understand

*John 16:16-18 "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." 17 Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" 18 They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? WE DON'T UNDERSTAND what he is saying."*

EXAMPLES: What do you think Jesus is talking about here when he said, "after a little while you will see me?" Did he mean they would see him after they died? Or did he mean that they would see him when He returns in the clouds? I would say that the answer to that question is "yes." We know that Moses and Elijah were very much alive and well and talking with Jesus about things happening on earth at the TRANSFIGURATION of Christ. It is clear that we are very conscious and aware and communicating in a body, after death, even while our earthly body lies in the grave like Moses' dead body.

JAMES: It would only be a short time before James would become the first martyr to die. Soon meant soon. He saw Jesus appear in heaven even as he was being stoned to death. *Acts 7:55-56 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."* Stephen had both the filling of the Holy Spirit and a visual sight of Jesus to help him as they stoned him to death. I am sure other martyrs today get similar help from the Lord.

PROPHECY: Many of us believe that all things are fulfilled for the return of Christ and that the trumpet could sound at any moment, summoning the living and the dead to be meet the Lord in the air.

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

COON VALLEY: Even today we still don't understand these words, "in a little while," perfectly but we do know that death or the return of Christ will fulfill them for each one of God's children. The real question is this, a question that Pastor Evenson asked our congregation I grew up in so many times, when I was an unsaved teen: "If Jesus returned today, would you be ready?" That question made me shake in my boots. Some people in Coon Valley are still shaking in their boots, fifty years later, when they remember that question because they still are not ready. They still are unconverted church members with no testimony of salvation!

INVITATION: Dear friend, I invite you to receive Christ and his forgiveness today and be ready. Should you put it off to enjoy sinning a little longer? PLEASE, NO! It could be today, don't delay. Jesus is coming back in...A LITTLE WHILE...HOW DO WE COPE? HOW LONG? And the final point:

### III. THE EXAMPLE OF CHILDBIRTH! Unbearable Grief Becomes Eternal Joy

*John 16:19-22 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? 20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.*

CHILDBIRTH: Jesus uses the example of childbirth to help his disciples understand. A woman has increasingly intense pain as she gets close to giving birth. When the baby is being born it is almost unbearable. Then as soon as the baby is out of her and in her arms her ***"she forgets her anguish because of her joy that a child is born into this world."*** This is how it is as we approach death and as we approach the return of Christ. There is increasing anguish in our body as we get older. My aches and pains have already started at age sixty-one and will get worse. Some of you have been telling me about the pain you face at times. The world is experiencing anguish as we get closer to the return of Christ.

- *Matthew 24:6-9 "there will be wars and rumors of wars...famines and earthquakes...persecution and death."*
- *Matthew 24:21&22 "For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now-and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."*

PROMISE: Here is something to hang on to, the last sentence of today's Gospel lesson. *John 16:22 ... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.*

HIPPY: ***"I will see you again...no one will take away your joy."*** When I was a "hippie Christian" back in the 1970's we had a song, we sang, that I loved so much: *"I can't wait to see Jesus...tell me, how its gonna be, read it from the Bible again. I can't wait to see Jesus, 'cuz Jesus is coming again, OH YAH (spoken groovy style)...Jesus is coming again, BECAUSE, Jesus is coming again."* (Everyone would be excited and give big love fest hippy hugs!)

UNEXPECTED: Jesus could come unexpectedly. Speaking of unexpectedly, I remember when our oldest son, Josiah, was born. He was FIVE WEEKS EARLY and just barely nine months after marriage! I was preparing to go to the ARC for pastor's mid-winter conference. Pastor Craig Johnson was staying with us that night at the Cumberland parsonage. Sharon tapped me on the shoulder and said, "My water broke, it is time." I was taken off guard, but SHARON WAS READY. We grabbed her packed suitcase, left Pastor Craig Johnson in shock and whisked away to the hospital. In a short time, we held in our arms a perfect baby boy, a boy that the doctor tried to convince us to abort because he would possibly have birth defects. We went from pain to joy at a moment we did not expect. Whether it is a heart attack or the return of Christ, that is how it will be for us...sorrow to joy...a joy that will never be taken away. And Jesus said it will be just "A LITTLE WHILE."

LET'S PRAY: Thank you Jesus for this blessed hope of your return. We pray that those who are not ready might invite you into their hearts by saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner. Jesus thank you for going to the

cross to pay for my sin. Thank you for the forgiveness of sins and eternity in heaven you offer to me freely. I believe in you.” ...*Now may the peace of God, that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**HYMN #550 “When We See Christ”**

**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**

**POSTLUDE:** Carol Gustafson

**READER: Joel Carrizales**

**FIRST LESSON:** *Acts 11:1-18 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."*

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

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