

**BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**

Date: Sunday, May 29, 2022

Church Year Date: Memorial Day/Ascension Sunday

Thank you dear musicians for your dedication to leading us in the worship of our great Savior. Pastor Tom

Prelude: Ruth Antal

Call to Worship: Psalm 47

LEADER: Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.

ALL: How awesome is the LORD Most High,
the great King over all the earth!

LEADER: He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.

ALL: He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.

LEADER: God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

ALL: Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.

LEADER: For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.

ALL: God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.

LEADER: The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,

ALL: for the kings of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted.

Hymn #120 “Golden Harps Are Sounding”

Pledge to Christian Flag:



I pledge allegiance
to the Christian Flag
and to The Savior for
whose Kingdom it stands.

One Savior,
crucified, risen,
and coming again
with life and liberty to all who believe.

Hymn #629 (vss 1&4) “The Star-Spangled Banner”

Pledge to American Flag:



Children's Sermon

Reader: Dave Osthus

First Lesson: Acts 1:1-11 *In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 1:15-23 *For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Reader: "Here ends the reading of God's Word"

Congregation Sings: "God be praised for His glad tidings."

Confession of Faith: ***John 3:16&17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 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.

Praise Song: "My Tribute"
Greeting, Announcements, Prayer
Hymn #633 "O God, beneath Thy Guiding Hand"

Message: "A PLAN TO SAVE AMERICA"
Luke 24:44-53
Pastor Tom Olson May 29, 2021; Memorial Day Message

REALITY: Our nation is on life support. Violence, uncontrolled stealing, marital breakdown, mentally deranged murderers and anarchists abound, schools and churches needing armed guards, the inability of people to intelligently talk about important issues in a civil way... Something must be done to save this great land. Is there anything that the Christian church can offer to help America? I submit that we have the answers and we need to take hold of them to transform our great land. On this Memorial Day weekend when we honor those who "died to make men free" I propose a two-step plan on how to "live to make men free." Here is "A PLAN TO SAVE AMERICA" from Luke 24:44-53: **GET THE POWER YOU NEED & KEEP YOUR FOCUS!**

I. GET THE POWER YOU NEED: GET YOUR POWER FROM GOD

Luke 24:44-53 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

CONQUERING: The history of the world is a history of wars. People fight over land and resources; many wars are simply young people forced to fight and kill so that old men can remain in power. In contrast to war is an example in history of a small group of powerless and weak people who overthrew the largest and most powerful empire on earth without any fighting. That is the story of the Christian church and the Roman empire. In a period of three hundred years the cruel Roman empire, who threw Christians to the lions, became a Christian nation. They were conquered peacefully with the good news of salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. In a one-word summary of how they were conquered, it is fair to say that they were **CONQUERED BY "LOVE."**

- John 3:16 "For God **SO LOVED** the world, He gave His only Son for us..."
- Romans 5:8 "But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

METHODOLOGY: How did the powerless disciples, hiding for fear of the Jewish leaders, become bold proclaimers of the gospel with no fear of death? How did the gospel get from Spain to India in a period of about 30 years with no modern transportation or technology? The answer is here in our text:

1. VSS 44&45: They were **ENLIGHTENED** to the Scriptures about **SALVATION**.
2. VSS 46-48: They were **CALLED** to **PREACH** repentance and the forgiveness of sins to the nations.
3. VS 49: They followed Jesus' instruction to **REMAIN** until they were **FILLED** with the Holy Spirit.

SUMMARY: This is the three-step preparation plan to overcoming the greatest evil forces that stand in the way of what is good and right. Perhaps it could be summarized this way: **GET SAVED; GET CALLED; GET POWER** and then: **GET GOING**.

1. Our new life begins with a real experience of salvation by faith in Christ. It is a real experience. It changes our life.
2. Secondly, we need to have confidence in the Word of God. When we teach the Scriptures about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus it is the means by which God creates faith in others.
3. Finally, we need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. This comes from drawing near to God and then He draws near to us with fresh fillings. When we operate in the power of the Holy Spirit our Christian life moves from FRUITLESS DUTY to FRUITFUL JOY.

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

TURBOCHARGER: I always wondered how a turbocharger worked on a car or tractor to give it extra power so I read about it. This is what I read: *It uses the exhaust gas to drive a turbine. This spins an air compressor that pushes extra air into the cylinders, allowing them to burn more fuel each second. That's why a turbocharged car can produce more power.* More air allows more fuel to burn which produces more power! Isn't this a great illustration of the Holy Spirit?

OXYGEN: The words for the Holy Spirit in Hebrew, Greek and Norwegian imply wind or breath or air. The breathy words RHUACH, PNEUMATOS, and AAND are literally breathed words. You can feel the breath blow out of you when you say them. In John 20:22 Jesus breathed on the disciples and said ***"Receive the Holy Spirit."*** The old hymn says, *"Breathe on me breath of God, fill me with life anew."* To mechanics and car lovers we might say that the Holy Spirit is our turbo charger that ignites more fuel of the Word of God to burn in us with more power.

INVITATION: God is inviting us to:

1. Leave our negative, stressful and fruitless self-effort behind.
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and bear much fruit while living in a state of peace, joy and rest.

We want to save America but **it has to be done in the POWER OF GOD or it will fail.** The second step in our plan to save America is this:

II. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON CHRISTUS VICTOR (The Victorious Christ)

Luke 24:50-52 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

HUMBLED: The disciples knew from their experiences of abandoning Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene, that they were all weak and frightened. Even Peter who spoke with such bravado, was now completely humbled. They stuck close to the risen Savior. They knew that they had nothing to offer God for salvation or service in themselves. They knew they were totally reliant upon His grace.

BLESSED: They walked with Jesus out to the Mount of Olives, very likely to the same spot where He will return and bodily touch down on earth at His second coming. There Jesus blessed them and then ascended into heaven to go and prepare a place for us and to send the Holy Spirit.

ENLIGHTENED: The disciples learned their lesson. They now waited patiently for the promised power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them. As they waited, they worshiped, they had great joy and they stayed in the temple praising God. That is how we get filled afresh with the Holy Spirit:

1. We wait.

2. We worship.
3. We rejoice.
4. We praise God.

SIMPLICITY: God does not make it difficult; we do. We are to WAIT, WORSHIP, REJOICE AND PRAISE THE LORD. Then we are in the perfect position to receive a fresh touch from God and get the power to live victoriously and abundantly and fruitfully.

EXAMPLES: Two of the most powerful preachers I know have nothing in themselves to make them powerful:

1. NICK VUJICIC...he has NO ARMS OR LEGS but has a beautiful wife and an international preaching ministry to thousands of people each year.
2. DAVID RING...he has CEREBRAL PALSY and has a hard time speaking a sentence without stuttering or halting, yet he also has a beautiful wife and an international ministry where he speaks to thousands of people.

FILLED: But one thing that Nick and David have that I need more of is this, they are filled with the Holy Spirit and the power of God. Their bodies are broken but their spirits are strong in the Lord.

SOLUTION: The power to save America is not the power of protest, it is not the power of political pressure, it is not the power of getting people out to vote...as important as all those things may be. The power to overcome evil forces that are hurting our nation is the same power that the first century church had to overcome evil forces in the Roman Empire. It is the power of the Gospel preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, there is power in the blood, *Romans 1:16* ***“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...”***

ALTERNATIVES: As CITIZENS we believe in the power of the ballot box, as SOLDIERS a person believes in the power of the skillful use of weapons, but as CHRISTIANS, we believe in the power of the Love of God, the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can force people with guns and laws, you can convince people with arguments, but to get JOYFUL OBEDIENCE from the heart you need to have the experience of the new birth of Christ in our hearts.

WORD: Our calling is to save America and our method is to preach and teach the Word of God. I once went to Dr. Haugen at our seminary to get advice about a division in my little church some 30 years ago. He said I had two choices. The first was to force the issue and win in the short run but hurt the church in the long run. He said my second choice was to faithfully teach the Word of God over a long period of time and have the Holy Spirit do a lasting work in the hearts and minds of the church members. He said, teaching the Word of God is slower but it gives good, long-lasting results.

CONCLUSION: So, do your duty, vote, speak up, attend school board meetings, get involved but as we are good citizens let's "Save America" by primarily focusing on preaching repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. I got a phone call on Thursday from a grandma who has grandchildren, twin girls eight years old, who live near our church. This grandma was wondering if we have any Vacation Bible School because they don't know anything about the Lord. What a reminder this is that we can save America one child at a time with the gospel. We get our power from the Victorious Christ. Amen

Hymn #630 "America the Beautiful"

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Hymn #628 "God of Our Fathers"

Postlude: Ruth Antal

Reader: Dave Osthus

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