

SERVICE INFORMATION: July 17, 2022
The Sixth Sunday of Lent
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free
Lutheran Church

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Krista Johnson and Praise Team

HYMNS AND LITURGY: Rebekah Olson and Praise Team

READER: Jacob O'Flanagan

THEME: Love for hurting souls

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Psalm 27:7-14*

NORTH: Hear my voice when I call, O LORD;

SOUTH: be merciful to me and answer me.

NORTH: My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"

SOUTH: Your face, LORD, I will seek.

NORTH: Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper.

SOUTH: Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior.

NORTH: Though my father and mother forsake me,

SOUTH: the LORD will receive me.

NORTH: Teach me your way, O LORD;

SOUTH: lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

NORTH: Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,

SOUTH: for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

ALL: I am still confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD;

be strong and take heart

HYMN #238 "Savior, While My Heart Is Tender"

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy*

and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL MUSIC

Reader: Jacob O'Flanagan

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Genesis 18:1-10*

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. 3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way--now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." 7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. 9 "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he said. 10 Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

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

CONGREGATION: "God be praised, for his glad tidings."

Scripture and Special Music: Pillman Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: songs chosen by Krista Johnson...sung by "Praise team...Luke, Krista, Jacob, Hannah, Marretta, etc.)

**SERMON TITLE: "THE GOOD SAMARITAN"
Luke 10:25-37; Pastor Tom Olson; July 17, 2022**

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

STOICISM: My latest personal reading has been about "Stoic Philosophy." It is the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the good Roman rulers. It was the philosophy of a virtuous life that shines above a corrupt and debased society. Stoicism is needed again today. Aurelius lived by four stoic principles: courage, moderation, justice and wisdom. His writings have been in the pockets of great world and military leaders during the most trying of times to give them proven guidance.

JESUS: A lot of the teachings of Jesus are very stoic. He taught the higher principles of the Kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount is a perfect example. In our gospel lessons we have been looking at a number of encounters with people who each had unique issues that needed to be addressed. Jesus could see into the depth of the soul and deal with the root issues. Jesus gave each one a higher principle to live by that fit their unique need.

- To the rich young ruler he said, "Sell everything and give it to the poor and FOLLOW ME."
- To the Gadarene demoniac he said, DO NOT FOLLOW ME but to go back to your home and tell your community what the Lord had done for you.
- To Zacchaeus, a hated social outcast, he went and had a meal with him that changed his life.
- To Mary Magdalene, a shunned prostitute, he cast our demons from her. To Martha the workaholic, he rebuked addressed her compulsive serving.

- To Mary, he blessed her for her love.

COMPASSION: Each person was dealt with at the root issues in their soul. That is the secret of effective counseling. Today we look at another soul that needs to learn the value of compassion for those who are suffering. When a person or a group has deep compassion for those who suffer, it is an indication that they embrace the heart of God for the world. We are going to look at THE GOOD SAMARITAN: Caring for those who are hurting. Let's talk about it.

I. THE DEMAND OF THE LAW

Luke 10:25-37 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

EXPERT: Here we have an interchange between Jesus and an EXPERT IN THE LAW. Today we might call that person a seminary professor or a well-trained theologian. This scholar wants to know from Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. That is the question that is on the mind of many people.

LAW: Romans 3:20 *"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."* Jesus wisely starts with the Law, the area of this man's expertise, and asks, "What is written in the law?" This man does a great job of summarizing the main focus of the law of God when he says "Perfectly love God and love your neighbor." Then Jesus gives him a clear command: "Do this and you will live."

PERFECTION: One of the reasons that we don't see the need for the grace of God is that we have standards that are too low and achievable. Jesus set up the standard for entering heaven: **PERFECTION...** perfect love of God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and perfect love toward

your neighbors. *Matthew 5:43-48 "Love your enemies...48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* Jesus didn't give him something achievable like, try to go to church and be as nice to people as you can. No! He set up the perfect standard for the Holy God who cannot tolerate any sin or evil: Love God perfectly and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself, even love your enemies! This is the demand of God's holiness.

DOABLE: How long do you think you could go in one day loving God with all your being and loving all others perfectly? I am not sure I could make it five minutes. Trying to be perfect is a very important part of realizing we can't be perfect. We need a different way to be made righteous other than self-effort. God's standard is perfection, from birth to death. No sin can be let into His perfect eternal heaven. Can you imagine heaven for eternity if God would let sin in? It would be terrible to have heaven with lying, envy, anger, murder and hatred let it. "Go and love God and your neighbor perfectly and you will live." This is THE DEMAND OF THE LAW.

II. THE DILEMA OF THE HEART

Luke 10:29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

SQUIRMING: At this point you can tell that this expert in the law was starting to squirm. He could not argue with Jesus' answer because Jesus agreed with him. But He was hoping to make the part about loving his neighbor achievable. I am sure that there were many people that he had no interest in loving, so he wanted clarification of who this "neighbor" is in the eyes of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is waking him up to his sin!

JUSTIFICATION: Many of us like to justify ourselves in how we act, how we eat, how we spend our time. We want to please God but we want to do it ON OUR TERMS. There is so much effort today to cut out the parts of the Bible that people don't want to follow. *We have to be very careful to raise ourselves up to the standards of the Word of God, rather than*

lower the Word of God to the standards of our sinful culture.

DIVISION: There are many issues today that are dividing people. God is sorting out people one issue at a time to show them if they are on his team or not. People are trying to decide if they will follow the Bible's high standard of morality or the world's low standard. People are trying to decide if they should follow the Bible's standard "Thou shalt not kill" innocent babies, or the world's standard, "kill your baby if you don't want it, even if someone else does." God is sorting out people with issues.

DATED: Then the justification comes as people say: "The Bible is out of date." "This is a better way." People are now proud to brag about their sin. People are angry at those of us old fashioned people who want to stick with the Bible's standards. It seems that our whole culture, like this religious leader, is trying to justify sin. And what is the end result? Our society is falling into chaos.

QUESTION: My question for all of us today could even cost us our jobs in the future: *"Are you willing to stick with God's standards as our nation quickly deviates from the ten commandments?"* Let's look how Jesus replied to him with a story:

III. THE LAW-ORIENTED LIFE

Luke 10:30-37 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

EXPERTS: The first thing that Jesus pointed out in this story is that the PRIEST and the LEVITE passed by this man who was robbed and beaten up. Remember that these priests and Levites were also experts in the law, just like the one Jesus was telling

this story to. They were undoubtedly in a rush to serve do their duties for God. They were on what they thought was a holy mission and did not want to let this desperate man get in the way of serving God. Doesn't this remind you of Martha from last week? She did not want to let the teaching of Jesus get in the way of serving Jesus.

CONSUMED: How many times do we get so consumed by our agenda that we have no time for an interruption from a child or a someone in need? I remember reading about a famous Christian author and speaker who disappeared for a year. Someone eventually ran into him and asked him why he cancelled all of his important meetings and speeches for a whole year. His reply was simple, "I needed to take the year off so I could help my brother die." He saw comforting his dying brother as more important than speaking to thousands of people.

LOVE: I have to admit that I get so caught up in my to do list some times that I miss out on simple opportunities to help someone who is really hurting and in need of help. Sometimes it is as simple as taking time to listen to them and let them unburden their soul and pray with them. That is what I love about our Saturday prayer meeting by the campfire...there is no agenda...people can share what is on their hearts and we can pray for them. Just because we are experts in the Word of God, like these men, doesn't mean we are always sensitive to do what God wants us to do to help hurting people who come our way. A proud LAW ORIENTED LIFE carries the danger of missing the spirit of the law, while fulfilling the letter of the law...perfection without love. 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that without love, we are nothing.

IV. THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

Luke 10:33-37 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two

silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

ILLUSTRATION: Jesus wants to show this expert in the law what loving God and loving your neighbor really looks like. To the expert in the law, loving God looked like strict keeping of the Sabbath, strict keeping of dietary laws, strict keeping of separation with people who don't practice their religion just like they did. But Jesus shows him and us what loving God and others really looks like. This is an example of a spirit-filled, grace-oriented life, rather than a legalistic approach.

1. SAMARITAN: First, notice that the compassionate man in the story is a SAMARITAN. That is a person who is part Jewish and part Gentile. They had a form of Jewish religion but many deviations from what the Scriptures. They didn't use the temple in Jerusalem and they were mixed up on many practices. The orthodox Jews despised them. Protestants may feel that way about Catholics. Catholics might feel that way about Protestants. Protestants and Catholics both might feel that way about Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. Jesus might have said a "Mormon," ***as he traveled, came where the man was***...maybe even a Hindu or Buddhist.
2. PITY: Notice also that this Samaritan took "PITY" on him. He got emotionally involved. This beaten and robbed man's pain touched him in his soul. He probably thought to himself, "What if I was the one lying there beaten and bleeding?" "How would I want people to treat me?" He cared about those less fortunate than he. *His agenda for the day was not just accomplishing tasks, it included caring for the people he met along life's way.* Having right beliefs is important and being

busy with important activities is valuable but if we miss having compassion on those around us who are suffering, life is cold and hard. Most of us have concern for our family but there are beautiful souls who care about people they don't even know.

3. **MONEY:** The third thing I notice is that he took the time and personal MONEY needed to insure long-term care for this hurting man. He brought him to an inn and paid the inn keeper to tend to him while he went and finished his pressing business. There is an old saying about this, "He put his money where his mouth is." He didn't just talk about loving those in need but he invested time and money into this suffering man. A Lakeville pastor works with building affordable housing. He said a Christian man from California wanted to help and offered to put millions of dollars into rebuilding parts of Minneapolis the rioters burned down. There are wealthy people who use their money to serve the poor.
4. **COMMITMENT:** Finally, notice that this Samaritan promised to come back and follow up with this man. It was not just a quick emotional response; he was there to help him for the long run. I just appreciate people in my life who stick with me for the long-run. Many times physical and emotional wounds take years to heal and a band-aid approach won't work. In fact, it can make things worse because the person has to deal with another abandonment from someone they thought cared. Pastor Andy had to quit preaching at the little country church, but he never quit calling people and caring for them. I think he calls Wayne Hanson daily. That is long-term commitment to a soul. But it pays off for eternity because you have breakthroughs in the long run.

QUESTION: Then Jesus asks the important question in Verse 36--"*Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of*

robbers?" 37 *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."* Jesus had to continually point out to those folks who had this very rigid, strict, religion that they were missing out on the point of it all if they didn't have love, mercy and compassion. He never denigrated them for their orthodox beliefs and high standards, but he did show them when they were missing the point. The point being loving God and loving others.

PERSONAL: How are we doing? Are we living channels of the love of God to a lost and dying world? Love is the key to the door that unlocks evangelism. As we point out the sins of the world as we ought to do, let's not do it unless we have a deep love for those same souls. We will make a great impact if we learn to "Speak the truth in love." The source of that love is the cross of Calvary where Jesus willingly paid the price for the sins of the world. Amen

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

HYMN #311 "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" This hymn was written by an urban church planter challenging us to start churches in the heart of difficult areas in large cities. Before we sing, let me read to you a couple of the verses:

1 Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of Man.

2 In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,
from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.

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

DOXOLOGY WITH THREE-FOLD AMEN

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson