

May 7, 2023, 5th Sunday of Easter

Pastor Tom Olson, Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal (Fugleberg Sing)

HYMN #304 “I Love to Tell the Story”

CONFESSION OF SIN: 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:

READER: Justo Pillman

EPISTL LESSON: James 1:16-21 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. 19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 16:5-15 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" 6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. 12 "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.

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 SONGS: CHOSEN BY RUTH

SERMON: THE FRUIT OF THE CROSS, Isaiah 12:1-6,
Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

STAINED GLASS WINDOW: I once saw an amazing stained-glass window called the tree of life. It is fruit-filled vine growing out of the cross of Jesus. The tragedy of his death became the triumph over Satan and the source of our new fruitful life in Christ. You can't lose if you walk with the Lord. Romans 8:28 makes that clear...EVERYTHING works out for good for the children of God.

This week I have been living in Isaiah 11, 12 and 13. Isaiah twelve is our Old Testament lesson. It is a great song of victory that is sandwiched between Isaiah 11 which is the promise of the Messiah and his victorious reign and Chapter 12, the destruction of evil Babylon. The context is the tragedy of sin and the promise salvation. This causes Isaiah to write this great song of triumph in the midst of impending doom, which I am calling "The Fruit of the Cross." God's salvation, THE FRUIT OF THE CROSS, gives us...

I. FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Isaiah 12:1 In that day you will say: "I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.

Let's be honest right now. God is not a happy old grandpa in the sky who overlooks our sin. God loves us but He is holy and He is angry with envy, gossip, murder, lying, cheating, stealing, slander, immorality, greed, arrogance, lack of love, selfishness and all the rest of the deeds of the flesh. He especially hates witchcraft, occult, idol worship and anything that replaces Him with something evil and false. He is a jealous God. He is worthy of our worship. He is good, kind, loving, merciful and holy. His heaven is an awesome place.

Before I got saved, I was rightly terrified of God. I knew I would die and go to hell and I didn't know how to get to heaven. I could not sleep. I knew He was angry over my sin but I didn't know how to find forgiveness. I didn't understand the cross and what Jesus did there for me. People tried to tell me all was well because I was baptized and belonged to the church and was a pretty good guy but

that did not give me any peace. I needed to understand what Jesus did for me on the cross.

Someone did tell me the glorious news is that God has had mercy and has given His only Son to die for us that we might believe in Him and become the children of God. Salvation is a gift. Listen to this great explanation from Romans 5. This chapter helped me so much:

Romans 5:8-10 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

We were sinful, enemies of God, under His wrath for sin; but love found a way and Christ still chose to die for us and reconcile us to himself. I like the way the song puts it: "Once an enemy, now seated at the table. Jesus thank you."

When people are dying they often say how they look forward to seeing loved ones again. But my first stop in heaven is to see Jesus and say, "Thank you for going to the cross for me."

I used to be gripped with the fear of judgment and hell. But because of THE FRUIT OF THE CROSS, I have FREEDOM FROM FEAR and I know I am a loved child of God. God's anger is turned away and now I am comforted. How about you? Do you have this blessed assurance? Another FRUIT OF THE CROSS is...

II. A SONG IN OUR HEARTS

Isaiah 12:2-3 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

The great part of getting saved is the gift of joy. Isaiah says that “God is my salvation. God is my strength. God is my song. I am drawing water from the well of salvation with JOY.”

Jesus said he was going to heaven to send us the Holy Spirit. Love is the primary fruit of the Spirit. PEACE is the third fruit of the Spirit. But the second fruit of the Spirit is JOY. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to give us joy. Crabby Christianity is an oxymoron. Crabby is the opposite of the Christian faith. JOY is a definition of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The presence of a Spirit-filled believer in a room should be joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength. If we don't have joy, we get weak. Joy is the result of drinking from the well of salvation. The message of the death and resurrection of Jesus brings us joy. Taking Holy Communion brings us joy. Seeing a person baptized into Christ brings us joy.

I saw a video of a baptism in the ocean in what I assume was California. The demon possessed sexually queer crowd came to heckle the baptism. They blew air horns, that squirted confetti on the pastor and the soul being baptized, they shouted, they mocked, they did everything they could to ruin the baptism. But that pastor and that man went into the water, he confessed Jesus as his Savior and got baptized in the midst of the hideous protesters. And the thing that struck me is that the pastor and the new Christian were bathed in the joy of forgiveness and new life in Christ. They were drinking of the water of salvation with JOY. They had a banquet from God in the presence of their enemies. Psalm 23:5.

The world today is filled with bitter and angry people, but true believers have A SONG IN THEIR HEART. This is the FRUIT OF THE CROSS. Finally, the cross gives us...

III. A MESSAGE TO TELL OTHERS

Isaiah 12:4-6 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what

he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. 6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

What does the devil do? He enslaves, he ruins lives, he breaks up families, he loves to kill babies, he brings despair, he makes false promises...in John 8:44 Jesus said that *“lying is his native language and He is the father of lies.”* I can see where our politicians get their inspiration!

What does Jesus do? He forgives, He adopts, He restores, He unites, He heals, He fills us with joy. We want to tell the world the good news. We get a new song in our hearts.

Evangelism should never be something we feel we have to do. It should never be a burden or obligation. If we are not so excited about what the Lord has done for us that we can't help but tell others, we should not tell others. We first of all need to have God **“restore onto us the joy of our salvation”** as David said in Psalm 5:12 and he goes on to say in *Psalm 51:13 “Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.”*

Spreading the Gospel is the natural result of being filled with the joy of salvation. Gloria Gaither puts it this way:

*“You ask me why my heart keeps singing
Why I can sing when things go wrong
But since I've found the source of music
I just can't help it. God gave the song...
For even hills resound with music
They just can't help it. God gave the song.”*

Don't try to share the gospel if you don't have the song of joy in your heart. First, go get that joy of salvation back and you won't even have to share the gospel. People will want to know where you get your joy and they will ask if you have the joy of the Lord in your life.

Do you have a message to tell others? Is the song of salvation pouring out of your heart? Mel Linn passed away recently. He had the song. He would literally break out singing anywhere the Spirit moved him. Come to the Lord's Table and eat and drink of the salvation of God and have your joy of knowing Jesus in this personal way renewed. Then sing the song. It is the FRUITFUL VINE GROWING OUT OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST: FREEDOM FROM FEAR, A SONG IN OUR HEARTS, and A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD. Amen

HYMN #568 "Day by Day"

HOLY COMMUNION

CHORAL 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