

Minnesota Valley Church

Date: Sunday, July 16, 2023

Church Year Date: 6th Sunday after Trinity

PSALM SUNDAY! This service is a “Psalm Service.” Most everything is coming from the book of Psalms.

Singers: Osthus

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: *Psalm 19*

PASTOR: The heavens declare the glory of God;

ALL: The skies proclaim the work of His hands.

PASTOR: Day after day they pour forth speech;

ALL: Night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

PASTOR: Their voice goes out into all the earth,

ALL: Their words to the ends of the world.

Hymn #183 (vss 1,2&5) “All Creatures of Our God and King”

Confession of Sin: *(Psalm 25:11-20) For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. He will spend his days in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish. Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. See how my enemies have increased and how fiercely they hate me! Guard my life and rescue me; let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.*

Children’s Sermon:

Reader: Diane Plait

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *PSALM 19:4b-14 In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun, 5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. 6 It rises*

at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. 13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

READER: “Here ends the reading of God’s Word.”

SING: “God be praised, for His glad tidings.”

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *PSALM 23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. Amen*

Gloria Patri: *Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 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 Concerns

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: CHOSEN BY CAROL

HAVING COFFEE WITH GOD: GOD SPEAKS TO US,
Psalm 19, 7/16/23 Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

ARIZONA: Last summer an old High School buddy of mine came to visit Sharon and me. I had not seen her in almost 40 years. She caught us up on her interesting, but difficult, life story. I sensed that she was seeking spiritual answers. In April, out of the blue, she sent me a note saying that Sharon and I could use her fifth wheel camper, located at a remote campground site in Arizona free of charge. She knows I am a pastor and included a short video clip of the desert landscape in her backyard with birds singing on a beautiful, warm April day with the caption, “Here are God and I having coffee together.”

AWARE: I am intrigued by the fact that many people who seldom go to church or even claim to be saved, are keenly aware of the presence of God in their lives. This is often true of farmers, hunters and fishermen and anyone who spends time out in nature, away from man-made cities and electronic video diversions. God speaks to people, from His creation as a step in drawing them to Jesus, the cross and eternal life in heaven.

CONTINUAL: God is continually speaking to millions of people in many ways. Today we look at some ways that GOD SPEAKS TO US from Psalm 19.

I. GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS CREATION

WORLDWIDE: God has a communication system designed to speak to the whole world so that the Bible says that “men are without excuse” because God is speaking to all people.

Romans 1:18-20 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

MEGAPHONE: Psalm 19:1-6 describes this megaphone of God to the world IN CREATION:

IT SPEAKS DAY AND NIGHT: Psalm 19:1&2

***The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.***

IT SPEAKS TO EVERY LANGUAGE GROUP: Psalm 19:3&4a

***3 There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
4 Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.***

IT REACHES EVERY POINT ON EARTH: Psalm 19:4b-6

***In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.***

DECK: I have tried to spend more time out on our deck lately by myself “having coffee with God.” I bring no books, no electronics, no distractions and listen to God’s testimony in the birds, the wind in the trees, the sun and clouds, the radiant flowers blooming...it is a very good addition to my spiritual disciplines and INSPIRES HEARTFELT PRAYER. Summer is a good time for all of us to spend some time with God, listening, in His creation. It would be fun to have a discussion of how you do that in your life. GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS CREATION.

II. GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS WRITTEN WORD

QUMRAN: Up until 1948, the oldest Bible fragment we could see was written in about 800 AD. Then one day a shepherd boy in Israel threw a rock into a cave in a high cliff above the dead sea and heard a cracking sound. He crawled in and found a pot full of ancient scrolls. He wanted to make some money, so he brought them into Jerusalem to sell them. The buyer recognized them for what they were and there was an **ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPLOSION**. They went to those caves in Qumran and dug up pots of preserved scrolls from 200 BC now called “The Dead Sea Scrolls.” After years of chemical treatments, they were softened and opened and contained every book of the Old Testament except the book of Esther. Much to the amazement of skeptical scholars, the 1,000-year older Old Testament was almost perfectly identical to the one from 800 AD. We get two lessons from this:

1. **THE ACCURACY OF THE WORD OF GOD:** Those who copied the scriptures in antiquity made sure they didn’t add or subtract a word as if their lives depended upon it.
2. **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD:** This group of Jews at Qumran felt that the Word of God was so important that when they were being attacked, they found a way to bury the whole Bible in scrolls in clay pots which preserved them for two thousand years. They knew that this was God’s inspired Word and the difference it had made in their lives.

Psalm 19:7-11 goes on to tell us about God speaking to us through the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures:

- 1) **THE WORD OF GOD REVIVES US** *Psalm 19:7a The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.*

- 2) **THE WORD OF GOD GIVES US WISDOM:** *7b The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.*

- 3) **THE WORD OF GOD CHEERS US UP:** *8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*

- 4) **THE WORD OF GOD PASSES THE TEST OF TIME:** *9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.*

- 5) **THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR PRIZE POSSESSION:** *10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

IGNORANCE: In the United States we have more excellent translations of the Bible than in any other place or language of the world, but we are a dying nation because of our ignorance of the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures changed our ancestors from cruel, barbarians to beautiful, gentle and kind souls. This Word of God is attacked, but even more often, neglected, to the detriment of true faith and vibrant spiritual life resulting in love, joy and peace.

WAITING: God is waiting for us in the pages of Scripture. One Bible teacher recently said, “If you want to hear from God, read His Word.” The Word of God creates faith and transforms our lives. It is a priceless treasure. I am so glad that you are here today to gather around the Word of God in our congregation because **GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD.**

III. GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS SON

Psalm 19:12-14 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. 13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation

of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

The end of this Psalm points to Jesus. The Psalmist is troubled by the sin and errors in his life and needs some hope of forgiveness. He looks ahead to our Savior, the Lamb of God that all the sacrifices on the Old Testament altar pointed to. He calls God his ROCK and his REDEEMER.

ROCK: JESUS IS THE ROCK WHERE WE GET THE WATER OF LIFE

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

REDEEMER: JESUS IS THE REDEEMER WHO PAYS THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS

Ephesians 1:7-9 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

MISSING: We can sit out in nature all day and know the presence of God is real, but one thing that we WON'T FIND IN NATURE is the FORGIVENESS of sins. As I sit on my deck, I notice that the beautiful trees have dead branches. Something is wrong. The neighbor's dog tears out of the house after squirrels trying to catch and kill them. Something is wrong.

OFFER: That is where THE GOSPEL speaks to us. Jesus' arms are wide open, offering a solution to brokenness. It is the forgiveness of sins through his innocent blood, suffering and death on the cross. It is in Jesus that we find true liberty and the assurance of everlasting life. This is God's great offer to His world...restoration and adoption. Someday Jesus will come back and make all things new. He is calling you to receive His forgiveness and eternal life even today!

SUMMARY: GOD IS SPEAKING TO US...this gives us motivation...

- Motivation to consider the night sky and the out of doors.
- Motivation to find a quiet place and read his Word
- Motivation to meditate on the gospel and get the assurance of salvation through Jesus our Redeemer.

God invites us to "learn His language" and listen to Him. He has much more to tell each one of us if we can hear Him.

EAR CLEANING EXERCISE: Way back in the late 1970's, when I was a music student at the university, I attended a music seminar with a noted musicologist. He had us walk around the Fine Arts Center, listen and come in to report what we heard. We all were amazed what we didn't hear that the other participants had heard. This is a reminder to me that the problem is not that God isn't speaking, the challenge is LEARNING TO LISTEN.

Summer, in the out of doors, is an excellent time to take a Bible out into nature and experience the voice of God in creation and in the Word and through His Son. The invitation to join my seeking friend to "have coffee with God" is open to all. God is indeed speaking to anyone who is listening. When I got that video from Arizona last April, I wanted to send back something of value that might encourage my old friend's pursuit of God and I sent the words to our next hymn:

Hymn # 459 "Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"

1
Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

2
O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

3
O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

4
O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

5
O give Thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from Thee
To weary ones in needful hour.

6
O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

7
O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where,
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share!

Lord's Prayer & Benediction

Closing Song: Chosen by Carol

Postlude: Carol Gustafson