

SERVICE INFORMATION: September 3, 2023

13th Sunday after Trinity

Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Jan Ellingson

CALL TO WORSHIP & CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 32

PASTOR: Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,

ALL: Whose sins are covered.

PASTOR: When I kept silent,

ALL: My bones wasted away

PASTOR: For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;

ALL: My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

PASTOR: Then I acknowledged my sin to you

ALL: And did not cover up my iniquity.

PASTOR: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"

ALL: And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

PASTOR: Many are the woes of the wicked,

ALL: But the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him.

PASTOR: Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;

ALL: Sing, all you who are upright in heart!

HYMN #199 "O Sing, All Ye Lands"

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Reader: Dave Fischer

EPISTLE LESSON: Galatians 3:15-22 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 18

For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. 19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. 20 A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one. 21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 10:23-37 Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." 25 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." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 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. 33 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."

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

CONGREGATION: "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 FOR OFFERING

PRAISE SONGS: praise songs chosen by Jan Ellingson

SERMON TITLE:
“LIVING IN DAYS OF REBELLION TO GOD”
“CORRUPTION, SIN AND VIOLENCE”
Text: 2 Chronicles 28:1-16; Pastor Tom Olson;
September 3, 2023

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

Some Old Testament passages are fun to preach on, like Daniel in the Lion’s den. But others are very difficult and I would like to

skip them. Today’s Old Testament Lesson about the life of wicked King Ahaz is one of them. But I don’t feel I should skip it because we need to know how to live, in times of wicked leaders. Also, this message will set us up for next week when we talk about making better choices that lead to blessings. 2 Chronicles 28, “Living in Days of Rebellion to God.”

I. A WICKED KING

2 Chronicles 28:1-25 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. 2 He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshiping the Baals. 3 He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. 4 He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

MYSTERY: I don’t know why Ahaz became such a wicked king. His father, Jotham, was a good king. Notice here that the root of his problem was dabbling in Baal worship. Maybe he was making friends with the wrong people who tempted him to start experimenting in the occult...many people today are doing just that and getting really messed up. Baal was the Canaanite and Phoenician god of weather and fertility. God warned the Israelites not to worship the gods of the Canaanites. This can also include materialism and money. That God is called Mammon. I am afraid that Mammon is the false god that has captured the hearts of too many of us Americans.

Deuteronomy 12:31 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

SACRIFICE: The hallmark of the Canaanite worship was child sacrifice. Demons love to see babies killed. I can't help but think that our love of money, Mammon, has caused America to have the child sacrifice of abortion. It also is resulting in the unwillingness of young couples to have children and raise them. This will eventually result in judgement on a whole generation that will have lots of money but no one to help them in their old age. AHAZ WAS A WICKED KING. He dabbled in idolatry and apparently got demon possessed. He was literally driven to do evil.

II. THE JUDGMENT OF WAR

2 Chronicles 28:5-8 Therefore the LORD his God handed him over to the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hands of the king of Israel, who inflicted heavy casualties on him. 6 In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in Judah-because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. 7 Zicri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the palace, and Elkanah, second to the king. 8 The Israelites took captive from their kinsmen two hundred thousand wives, sons and daughters. They also took a great deal of plunder, which they carried back to Samaria.

WAR: Wicked leaders bring wars upon their nations. Wars are not caused by the people of the nation; they are caused by wicked leaders that are unwilling to work on peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. They often are in collaboration with the military industrial complex and the world banks that make big profits financing both sides of the wars and supplying them with weapons. This is further aggravated by the desire of modern social engineers to reduce population any way they can, even if it be wars and famines. You can see that the root cause is the worship of the god of mammon. It is related to a desire to have more and more power and control. Leaders become obsessed with power.

ROOT: But we must remember that the root cause is spiritual. War in the home, nation or world is really an expression of inner anger, jealousy and selfishness.

James 4:1 "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" War is common in lands where the people reject the Word of God and embrace sin. Wicked King Ahaz brought to the nation THE JUDGEMENT OF WAR.

III. THE PROPHET OF THE LORD

2 Chronicles 28:9-11 But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army when it returned to Samaria. He said to them, "Because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches to heaven. 10 And now you intend to make the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the LORD your God? 11 Now listen to me! Send back your fellow countrymen you have taken as prisoners, for the LORD's fierce anger rests on you." ... So they took them back to their fellow countrymen at Jericho, the City of Palms, and returned to Samaria.

INTERVENTION: In the middle of all this trouble, God steps in and gives the army of Israel a Word from the Lord. God does not manipulate men like puppets, but He does step in with the Word of God at an opportune moment to call us back to our senses. When we are ready to listen, God is ready and waiting to save us.

BAPTISM: Last Sunday I baptized a young man who got saved at a very trying time of his life. He was in the military during COVID and he saw that some of his comrades took the mRNA shot and overnight their health was ruined. He didn't want to take the chance of it happening to him and refused the shot. This

resulted in severe discipline from the military and as he sat in confinement until his discharge. In his confinement, He cried out to the God he had been ignoring. The Lord met him in a miraculous way and the Jesus he knew in his head became the Jesus he knew in his heart. What a joy it was for him to be able to tell that story about God's intervention in his life to his family and neighbors gathered for the baptism. I am so honored that Sharon and Rebekah and I got to hear his amazing testimony of salvation that came to him in his times of trouble.

TIMING: God knows just when to step into history with the offer of salvation. He waits for a moment in our life that we are willing to listen. That is what happened here in Israel. Israel listened to **THE PROPHET OF THE LORD.**

IV. FROM BAD TO WORSE

2 Chronicles 28:16-25 At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. 17 The Edomites had again come and attacked Judah and carried away prisoners...19 The LORD had humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had promoted wickedness in Judah and had been most unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him trouble instead of help. 21 Ahaz took some of the things from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him. 22 In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the LORD. 23 He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me." But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel. 24 Ahaz gathered together the furnishings from the temple of God and took them away. He shut the doors of the LORD's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. 25 In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods and provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers, to anger.

CHOICES: The army of Israel listened to God and did what was right. But wicked King Ahaz got worse and worse. He tried using treasures from the temple to buy favor with neighboring nations, but it didn't help him. Today we call it "foreign aid." He then eventually gutted the temple and built evil altars to false gods in every town. He provoked the Lord. He appears to be possessed by some kind of demonic force that literally hated God.

SURPRISE: But the amazing thing is that his son became a good and godly king. Many times, children will see the anger and hatred of their parents and notice the love, joy and peace of the people of God. They will turn back to the God of their grandparents. I hope that seekers who visit our church experience the love and peace of God in us.

HOPE: This is our hope for America. It is our hope that the younger generation will grow tired of sin, the hopelessness and despair of unbelief and will give the gospel a chance.

CHALLENGE: I am not discouraged about the future. But I am challenged to find authentic ways to reach out to the searching younger generation. We are living in days of much government corruption and sinful leaders. I talked with a former DC security guard and found out the corruption and evil in our nation's capital is much worse and more widespread than I ever imagined. It is having a negative effect on our nation. Perhaps the best way to respond is to repent of any false gods we have put in our lives, and embrace the forgiveness and new life that Jesus bought for us on the cross of Calvary with his holy and innocent sufferings and death. Our nation will be saved, one soul at a time. And then we must cry out to God for good and godly leaders for our land. I have no idea who such people are but if we cry out to God, perhaps He will raise up godly leaders for our land. This is the lesson from the life of wicked King Ahaz. Amen

HYMN #554 "In Times Like These"

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*

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: **Jan Ellingson**