

BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023
Church Year Date: 20th Sunday after Trinity

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Hymn #542 “Victory in Jesus”

Confession of Sin: *Psalm 51:1-12: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin...10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

Hymn #407 “Jesus Paid it All”

Children’s Message

Reader: Diane Plait

Epistle Lesson: *Ephesians 5:15-21 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Gospel Lesson: *Matt 22:1-14 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'*

5 "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. 13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

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

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: Apostles’ Creed- *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. 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, Offertory Prayer

Praise and Worship Songs: PICKED AND SUNG BY HANNAH

“AN AMAZING INVITATION”

Isaiah 55:1-9; Pastor Tom Olson; October 22, 2023

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

FAVORITES: Isaiah, chapters 53 to 57 are some of my favorite prophetic passages in the Bible. They foretell Jesus’ first coming, his coming and righteous kingdom, and the “Amazing Invitation” to join His family. I encourage you to read them again. This passage in Isaiah 55 starts with one of the most encouraging words in the Bible, “Come.”

INVITATION: What was the best invitation you have ever gotten in the mail? It feels so good to have people invite you to a party, a banquet, a concert, a wedding, a celebration...that word “COME” makes you feel loved and special. Today, Isaiah, as God’s mouthpiece, invites us into the Kingdom of God. The first thing I want you to notice about this AMAZING INVITATION is...

I. EVERYTHING IS PAID FORWARD

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."

OPEN: I am amazed that the invitation to be a part of God’s forever family is open to all people...TO ALL SINNERS! It goes out into all the world. There are no qualifications that have to be met before you are invited to come to God. But there is a quality about those who heed the call, they are “THIRSTY.”

PAID: The eternal food and living water Christ gives us is already paid in full. He gave His life on the cross to atone for our sins. He did it because He loves us.

1 John 2:2 “Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

SONG: The song writer put it this way, “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.”

DONE: Are you staying away from God because You don’t feel like you have done enough good deeds to deserve His favor? Forget that idea, because your sins are already paid in full by the blood of the Lamb!

“Come, buy wine and milk without money!” Everything is paid forward. Also, this AMAZING INVITATION has...

II. EVERYTHING IS EXACTLY WHAT WE LONG FOR

Isaiah 55:2-5 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the RICHEST OF FARE. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an EVERLASTING COVENANT with you, my faithful love promised to David. 4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. 5 Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has ENDOWED you WITH SPLENDOR."

SUBSTITUTES: People try to fill up their soul with activity, possessions and status, but they come up empty. Many very wealthy people have killed themselves when they got everything they wanted and still felt empty inside. They were thirsty but didn’t know where to find the “living water” that Jesus offered.

SAMARITAN: The perfect example of this is the woman at the well. She tried to satisfy herself with several different husbands. But she still was thirsty inside. Others try to earn God’s favor with

some sort of good deeds but that gives them no assurance either. I tried that.

Notice three main gifts that God will give us:

1. Verse 2 “The Richest of Fare”
2. Verse 3 “An Everlasting Covenant”
3. Verse 5 “Endowed with Splendor”

BEST: The food that God is preparing for us, literally, is the very best. No food on earth, none, can compare with the food He will give us in our heavenly home. I suspect the nutrition will be perfect. The taste will be unsurpassed. And no matter how much or how little we eat; we will be satisfied. God’s food is not merely physical, it says here that our soul will be satisfied. That is the testimony of those who get genuinely saved by Jesus. They are finally satisfied.

BORDEN: William Borden was a young man at Yale University who was heir to the great Borden fortune. But he was not happy. Then he met Jesus as his Savior. For the first time in his life he was satisfied. He gave up his right to the family fortune and headed to become a missionary in India. He died on the way in Egypt. He left a note under his death bed pillow with a message that ended with these two words, “No regrets.” He died a young but satisfied soul because he met the Lord. I wonder if the one who got his fortune died satisfied?

PAUL: The Apostle Paul was put to death for his faith. But that didn’t bother him because Jesus had satisfied his soul. Here are some of his final words from **2 Timothy 4:7&8: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”**

ABORTIONIST: I wonder what it is like when a super wealthy abortionist dies after killing thousands of babies in order to get rich? One former abortionist, now a follower of Christ, said he got \$500 every fifteen minutes. It must be a terrifying thing for them to die knowing that they traded their souls to be paid killers. How much better it is to die with the Lord of LIFE in your heart.

EVERLASTING: It is an EVERLASTING COVENANT. The blood of Jesus saves us for all eternity. Our salvation cannot be taken away from us. The only thing that will keep us out of heaven is our own, personal rejection of the offer.

SPLENDOR: Finally, we will be “ENDOWED WITH SPLENDOR.” I was looking over our church web site in order to see what needs updating. I noticed how much younger and better I looked when I came here 8 years ago. I need to change my photo so people recognize me when they visit! But when I finally get to heaven, God will endow me with splendor. I will be the perfect age and in perfect health. We will recognize each other but we will look our best.

RADIANT: We will not only look good; we will be radiant. Some people who have a deep walk with God in this life are already radiant to a degree. Have you ever met a radiant person? I have. They are clean, pure, wholesome, and above all else, their eyes are filled with a Light that I can’t describe. One of the workers I saw yesterday at the home where Caryll Newland lives is radiant. But that is only a little drop of the radiance that God’s children will have in heaven.

PHOTO: Wouldn’t it be fun to have a photograph ahead of time of what we will look like in heaven? It would be even better than those breathtaking before and after weight loss photos you see advertised. We will be shocked at how beautiful everyone is in heaven. But for now, we can at least have a drop of that splendor as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

This offer of free salvation is “RICH, ETERNAL, AND EVERYTHING WE EVER LONGED FOR.” Finally, in this AMAZING INVITATION...

III. EVERYTHING IS OFFERED BUT NOT FORCED

Isaiah 55:6-9 Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

CHOICE: God invites us to be saved and transformed by His grace but He doesn't force us to take his offer. It is put out there but we need to want it. **“Seek the LORD while He may be found.”** Someone put it this way, *“God hides himself for the purpose of being found by those who seek Him.”*

TURN: The first step is to REPENT- as Isaiah says, “let the wicked man...turn to the Lord.” To repent means to turn. We turn away from the devil's plan for our life and turn to the Lord. If we do that, God promises here to “have mercy” and “freely pardon.”

VBS: At our Alaska Mission Convention this week, Loren Tungseth read a few pages from the diary of a young lady Vacation Bible School teacher in remote Alaskan bush villages. She wrote about a boy in an Alaskan village who wanted to receive Jesus as his Savior. Even though he was so young, he was burdened by all the sins he had committed. He joyfully received the good news that God would forgive all His sins. I personally remember that burden that rolled off of my back when I realized that Jesus would forgive all my sins. I could finally sleep at night again with my sins forgiven.

WITNESS: This is the GOOD NEWS that our world desperately needs to hear. How many of the people that you know are unsatisfied, lack peace and have no assurance of forgiveness and salvation? It is time to go to them with that AMAZING INVITATION: “Come to Jesus. He will satisfy your soul. He will give you rest. He invites you to be with Him forever. Your ticket is paid in full and waiting to be claimed.” ***May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen***

Hymn #424 “Come unto Me, Ye Weary”

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Doxology (AH #390) *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

Postlude: Rebekah Olson