

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; October 8, 2023
18th Sunday after Trinity; Singers: “youth” praise team

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 34:3-7

P: Glorify the LORD with me;

C: Let us exalt his name together.

P: I sought the LORD, and he answered me;

C: He delivered me from all my fears.

P: Those who look to him are radiant;

C: Their faces are never covered with shame.

P: This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;

C: He saved him out of all his troubles.

HYMN #293 “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken”

PASTOR ONLY: *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

PASTOR & CONGREGATION: *We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen*

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Steve Karban

EPISTLE LESSON: *Deuteronomy 10:12-21 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? 14 To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today. 16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. 18 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. 19 And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. 20 Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. 21 He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 22:32-46 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. 34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, 44 "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ' 45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" 46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

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

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

CONFESSION OF FAITH: 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: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by LUKE

SERMON: “ROADMAP FOR A GOOD LIFE” Psalm 34:8-22,
Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

FRIENDSHIP: This week in OK Bible study we continued our look at the topic of friendship. We have looked at friendship in Proverbs, a biblical overview, friendship with God and this week “friendship with yourself.” As we went over verses, we saw how precious we all are to God. ...being fearfully and wonderfully made, created in the image of God, the object of countless thoughts by our Heavenly Father who loves us dearly and the great redemption of our souls that Jesus secured on the cross.

LOVED: We are so deeply loved and God desires for us to have an “abundant life.” The Bible shows us how to have that Good Life that allows us to die in peace and be satisfied. Psalm 34, our Psalm for this Sunday, gives us an excellent “ROADMAP FOR A GOOD LIFE.” Let’s talk about it.

I. THE PATH OF PROVISION

Psalm 34:8-22 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. 9 Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. 10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

CLARIFICATION: With these proverbial type thoughts, we remember that they are general principles that work but that God has the right in His sovereignty to choose difficult paths for us at times that result in greater good.

ETERNAL: But note here that “*those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.*” Some of those good things are guaranteed such as a home in heaven, the forgiveness of all our sins, a new body at the resurrection, a mansion prepared for us and an abundant inheritance that is eternal, can’t be stolen or won’t deteriorate.

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

We also get **SPIRITUAL BENEFITS** as we seek the Lord.

A. One is peace of mind and freedom from debilitating fears.

Psalm 34:4 “I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

B. Another is a radiant face that comes from deliverance from shame.

Psalm 34:5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

FORGIVEN: David had done many things he was ashamed of but God forgave his sins and restored him and removed that load of guilt from his conscience. The Bible says in several places that *God casts our sins into the depths of the sea and remembers them no more.*

C. God provides deliverance from problems we encounter and provides angelic protection in our lives:

Psalm 34:6 & 7 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

SUMMARY: Seeking God in the Word and prayer is a path to physical and spiritual provision in our lives. So, remember that the first place to go on THE ROADMAP TO A GOOD LIFE, is to the place of provision for those who SEEK THE LORD.

II. THE PATH OF PEACE

Psalm 34:11-16 Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, 13 keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. 14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; 16 the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

REPENTANCE: The second place to go on THE ROADMAP TO A GOOD LIFE is THE PATH OF PEACE. This path is entered through repentance of sin. The largest destructive force in the lives of us all is not the devil, it is our own sin. It is the “law of the harvest: we reap what we sow.” Most of the bad outcomes in my life have been a result of my choices that were not in accordance with the Word of God.

TONGUE: Note here that the first choice is to TAME THE TONGUE: “...*keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.*” Have you noticed how many political leaders have gotten fines and time in jail for speaking lies to the authorities. I know of pastors that have had to leave their church and start over in a new spot because of words that have slipped off of their tongues. I am a talker and time and again my family members have had to warn me not to “say too much.”

SIN: The second choice to find PEACE is to *turn from evil and do good*. Opportunities to sin abound, it is so easy to do what it wrong, to lie, to cheat, to be jealous, to be morally impure, to neglect seeking God and to neglect doing what is right. Sin takes away the blessing of God and you don’t have peace of heart and mind when you are sinning. For peace to flow we need “TO DO GOOD.” Good things give us peace. CARING for others, SHARING the gospel, READING the Word of God, TRUSTING the shed blood of Jesus for forgiveness are the foundation of peace. You can come to Christ today and get peace with God.

UNITED STATES: The Bible reminds us that God’s face is against those who choose to do what is evil. The United States and Israel cannot expect the help of God anymore because of rampant sin and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have kicked God out of our nation. I am afraid that peace is going to leave us and war is coming and that we will lose.

SIMPLE: Many people are unnecessarily paying a lot of money for professional counseling in order to find peace. The answer for them is too simple: turn away from sin and do what is right. The Psalmist calls it “*the fear of the Lord*” in verse 11. That is THE PATH OF PEACE.

III. THE PATH OF PROTECTION

Psalm 34:17-22 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. 18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. 19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; 20 he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. 21 Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned. 22 The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

EXODUS: There is also a PATH OF PROTECTION in the good life that God has for us. No life is trouble free, but as long as God has something for us to do, there is a way out of our troubles. That is what the book of Exodus literally means: “the way out or exit road” from trouble, symbolized by Pharaoh and Egypt for us today. The children of Israel cried out to God and He sent Moses to deliver them through the Red Sea. Crying out to God is the first step to being delivered from trouble. Daddy, help me! It is the cry of a child, a child of God. Will modern Israel cry out to God or continue being the most atheist nation on earth that rejects the Word of God vehemently?

CRUSHED: Also note here that HUMILITY is key. God saves those who are brokenhearted and crushed in spirit. When we see our sin for what it is and it breaks our heart, then Jesus, the cross, the holy blood, become precious. One of God’s biggest sanctification tasks is to deal with our pride. A person can even have pride in their knowledge of the Bible that gets in the way of the Bible speaking to their hearts. Two of the most vindictive, sour-faced, negative men I have ever met sat at home and studied the Bible for hours and got more and more proud of their Bible knowledge. But God draws near to the broken hearted and pours himself into their lives.

RIGHTEOUS: Psalm 34:19&20 could point to Jesus when it talks about a “righteous man” who does not get one bone broken. That is what happened on Calvary.

John 19:31-37 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 THESE THINGS HAPPENED SO THAT THE SCRIPTURE WOULD BE FULFILLED: “NOT ONE OF HIS BONES WILL BE BROKEN.”

PARDONED: That is why the Psalmist goes on to say that *“the Lord redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him.”*

COVERED: My friends, it is the righteousness of Christ that covers our sins and protects us from condemnation. In the hour of death, there is nothing more important than to have the righteousness of Christ credited to our account with God to pay the price our sin demands. It is the righteousness of Christ that puts us on the right hand of God on judgement day, with the sheep.

SONG: Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling. Naked come to Thee for dress, Helpless, look to Thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly. Wash me Savior, or I die.”

CONCLUSION: There is a good life, an abundant life, for each one of us. Our paths are not the same but they are all good when we are trusting the Savior. Psalm 34 instructs us in many of the

ways of God into that good life...a life of PROVISION, PEACE AND PROTECTION. *“Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they who take refuge in Him.” Now may the peace of God, that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #469 “All the Way My Savior Leads Me”

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: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

DOXOLOGY AND THREE-FOLD AMEN

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson