

BULLETIN TEMPLATE:

Minnesota Valley Church

Date: Sunday, January 28, 2024

Church Year Date: 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

HYMN #542 "Victory in Jesus"

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 111:1-4

PASTOR: I will extol the LORD with all my heart

ALL: In the council of the upright and in the assembly.

PASTOR: Great are the works of the LORD;

ALL: They are pondered by all who delight in them.

PASTOR: Glorious and majestic are his deeds,

ALL: And his righteousness endures forever.

PASTOR: He has caused his wonders to be remembered;

ALL: The LORD is gracious and compassionate.

HYMN "Burdens are Lifted at Calvary" (on PowerPoint)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

Reader: Jacob O'Flanagan

Old Testament Lesson: *Deuteronomy 18:15-22* The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 16 For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." 17 The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks

in the name of other gods, must be put to death." 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

Epistle Lesson: 1 Cor 8:1-13 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God. 4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. 9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11 So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12 When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

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 *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 Receive Offering

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Songs to be chosen by Hannah

SERMON: "FREEDOM FROM DEMONIC POWER" Mark 1:21-28 Pastor Tom Olson; *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen*

UNIQUE: The book of Mark is unique. It does not say anything about the young life of Jesus: No angels speaking to Mary and Joseph, no birth account, no Simeon and Anna, no Magi, no flight to Egypt, no 12-year-old in the temple. It starts with the ministry of John the Baptist.

MARK: Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on him, he is tested in the wilderness by the devil, John is thrown into prison, Jesus assembles his team of disciples and then he goes to the synagogue to preach, he casts out evil demonic spirits and heals the sick. The book of Mark goes on to report more encounters with the devil and demons than any other book of the Bible.

I assembled a list of all these encounters as well as mention of the devil and demons in the New Testament and the list filled almost three columns of references. The sheer magnitude of it caught the attention of our Thursday Bible study group. It is a topic that I cannot ignore any longer.

CURRENT: We are living in a time in history when the richest and most powerful people in the world are worshipping the devil and trying to get all people to join them. The World Economic Forum of the world's elite just met in Switzerland and employed a real witch to be a part of their deliberations. She cast spells. Amazon prime now has a kid's video that retells the story of Lucifer and makes him the hero and God the bad one. They are trying to turn children against God. I personally believe that a high percentage of leaders and people in the media are already demon possessed.

OBSERVE: As you look at the bodies, eyes, behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of many college-aged students today, it is quite clear to me that a good percentage of them are also demon possessed. Churches from Catholic to Pentecostal are waking up and catching up and gearing up for the onslaught of demonic activity that is coming our way like a flood. I wonder if our church will be ready? I can't ignore the gospel lesson today from Mark 1:21-28 under the theme of FREEDOM FROM DEMONIC POWER...

I. THROUGH THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Mark 1:21-22 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

TEAM: In the NIV Bible the first word is THEY. Jesus had his prayer team assembled, his disciples. That is a foundational step...to have a prayer team surrounding you as you go out into the battle. But what did Jesus go out to do. HE WENT OUT TO

TEACH. The first and most important tactic in destroying the works of the devil is to teach the Word of God. What was Jesus' message? Go back to verse 15, REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS. These two things break the hold of the devil on our lives.

FIRST: To REPENT is to turn away from sin and turn toward God. It is to quit following the devil and follow Jesus. It is a "U-turn" in the road of life. The Apostle Paul was out to kill Christians and he repented and preached the gospel and wrote the words, "if I have not love, I am nothing." Zaccheus was cheating people out of their money and he repented and gave back what he stole and much more. Peter was a strong-willed man who had great confidence in his own power and he repented and became a humble man who was led by the Holy Spirit and did no longer fought people with the sword. When we confess and forsake our sins, the grip of sin is broken.

SECOND: To BELIEVE is to trust in God's Word. Politicians want us to trust them, college professors want us to trust them, salesmen want us to trust them, our own flesh wants us to trust our own feelings. But the only solid foundation for this life in eternity is to trust the one who died for us on the cross of Calvary.

Isaiah 49:23&26 ...those who hope in me will not be disappointed...I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

POWER: The teaching of Jesus was powerful. People recognized that he had authority. There was something different about Him. His teaching not only affected those who listened but it started to stir up the evil spirits that inhabited some of the souls in his audience. Those demons could not tolerate the teaching of the Word of God. It happens in church now too. When God's Word is taught thoroughly and accurately and with authority, the evil spirits that afflict us start to get agitated. The teaching of the Word of God starts to break their grip in our bodies, minds, wills, emotions, homes and communities. Hebrews 4:12 ***"The word of God is***

sharper than a double-edged sword!" It cuts the demonic chords that bind us. FREEDOM FROM DEMONIC POWER comes through THE TEACHING OF JESUS...

II. THROUGH TO PERSON OF JESUS

Mark 1:23-26 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are-the Holy One of God!" 25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

MANIFESTING: There was a man in the crowd that had an evil spirit in him that could no longer remain silent. That spirit knew who Jesus was, it knew he came from Nazareth, it knew that His assignment was to destroy them and it knew that he was "the Holy One of God." That evil spirit knew that someone with greater authority was there who could give him a command and he had to obey.

BATTLE: We started our Thursday Bible study on this topic with a Bible verse that not only reminds us that we are in a spiritual battle but that this spiritual world has a hierarchy. *Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* This spiritual world includes rulers, authorities and powers. The powers of this world have corresponding powers in the spirit world. We see this in the book of Daniel where the arch-angel Michael was detained from coming to Daniel because of an evil spiritual power in the spiritual realm called "the prince of Persia" that held him back.

TODAY: The leaders and governments of this world have spiritual powers in the heavenly places that influence them. People say that our president is a puppet and someone else is calling the shots. Well ultimately, our leaders are either getting their direction from God or

from the devil. That is very obvious if you take time to observe and analyze what is going on.

ULTIMATE: But the point here is that there is one who is the ultimate ruler and authority over all powers. The evil spirit identified Him as “the Holy One of God.” He has a powerful name that drives demonic people crazy. That name is Jesus!” It is through the person of Jesus that we receive FREEDOM FROM DEMONIC POWER...and finally it is...

III. THROUGH THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Mark 1:27-28 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching-and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

The big thing we need to grasp from these verses is that our ability to be set free from demonic power is through the authority that Jesus has. We need to be set free from demonic power, we need to help other people get set free from evil spirits, our nation needs to be delivered from the dark cloud of Satanic power that is engulfing our schools, universities, media outlets, medical profession and even our churches. The only way is through THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS.

This brings us right back to Matthew 28 and the great commission. ***Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

Jesus gave his disciples the authority to make disciples, to baptize, to teach and He promised to be with us. This great commission is also in Mark 16 with more details about what this will look like:

Mark 16:15-20 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Notice the first sign that will accompany the ones who believe, verse 17: “***in my Name they will cast out demons...***” Can you imagine a hospital where they diagnose cancer and gangrene but don’t cut it out and heal it? They only diagnose. I don’t want to be a part of a church that merely diagnoses sin and evil spirits. I want to be a part of a church that helps people get set free. ***John 8:34&36 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

CHURCH: I believe that our congregation needs a prayer team that will pray with people who are struggling with dark and evil powers in their body, soul, mind and even home. I had one man in Ohio who helped me with this in homes and lives where there were demonic manifestations. One is better than none but a team of several would be even more powerful. I am praying for the right people to join me.

PERSONAL: Do you know someone who needs to be set free from demonic struggles? Perhaps yourself! First, immerse yourself in the teaching of God’s Word. Completely repent of and forsake sin and believe in Jesus. Secondly, acknowledge that Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and through him there is deliverance and

finally submit to His authority in your life. Be baptized into Christ, you and your household. Then command all evil in your body, home and life to flee from you by His authority. Keep filling yourself with the Word of God. Come regularly to the Lord's table. And keep giving continual thanks and praise to God for who He is and what He does. Then you will be set free from demonic power and will be filled with joy. Amen

May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

Hymn #478 "Search Me, O God"

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

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