

September 15, 2024 17th Sunday after Pentecost
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 116

PASTOR: I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;

ALL: He heard my cry for mercy.

PASTOR: Because he turned his ear to me,

ALL: I will call on him as long as I live.

PASTOR: The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me;

ALL: I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.

PASTOR: Then I called on the name of the LORD:

ALL: "O LORD, save me!"

HYMN #174 "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (Hopefully both piano and organ.)

CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 51:8-13 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Amen

CHILDREN'S SERMON:

READER: Jacob O'Flanagan

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 50:4-10

The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary.

*He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.
5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears,
and I have not been rebellious;
I have not drawn back.
6 I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.
7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
8 He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
9 It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
Who is he that will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up.
10 Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the word of his servant?
Let him who walks in the dark,
who has no light,
trust in the name of the LORD
and rely on his God.*

EPISTLE LESSON: James 3:1-10 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small

rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

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: 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

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Chosen by Hannah Carrizales

SERMON: DISCIPLES, DEMONS AND DELIVERANCE, Mark 9:14-29 Pastor Tom Olson *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

INCONVENIENT: Time and again the Scriptures remind us of a difficult truth that we need to face up to, even if we don't want to. Evil is real. Demons are real. There are likely millions of them. They are intimately involved in our lives and world. We are in a state of spiritual warfare with demons. The church is ignorant about them. And that is to our own peril.

HEADLINES: Any quick reading of the news headlines will confirm the work of demons in the world. Martin Luther put it this way: *"And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us. We will not fear for God has willed his truth to triumph through us."* Let's look together today at this important topic: "Disciples, Demons and Deliverance" from Mark 9.

I. THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT EXPEL THE DEMON

Mark 9:14-18 *When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. 16 "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked. 17 A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."*

PAST: In most primitive cultures of the world, people understand the reality and power of evil spirits. Notice that there was no questioning in the crowd about whether or not this child has a demon afflicting him. Even the most educated people there knew it was a demon that was causing this terrible condition.

TODAY: You don't have to go too far to find that out even here in our area. There are a number of churches within a few miles from ours that have ministries to deliver people from demonic influence in their lives.

CLOQUET: When I was pastor in Cloquet, there was a stable, mature, Baptist woman who helped many people get set free from demons. She was under the oversight of her Baptist pastor, Rev. Doug Green at Grace Baptist Church. This woman wrote me an encouraging note just this week when she found out I was preaching on this topic. She must be almost 90 years old and still is dedicated to helping people get set free from these evil spirits.

FEAR: But I have to admit that I identify with the disciples of Jesus. I am hesitant to even go into this area for fear that I also would be inept at dealing with these powerful forces. I am very mindful of the story in Acts 19 of the seven sons of Sceva who were almost killed by a demon possessed man with supernatural strength.

UNABLE: The crowd here had gathered to witness this manifestation. The disciples could not make any progress in helping this poor child get set free from the evil spirit.

NUMEROUS: I believe that these many references to deliverance from demonic spirits in the New Testament is for the purpose of our instruction. It is to make us aware of their presence and to show us that the ministry of Jesus in the world today involves helping people get set free from evil spirits.

BRAZIL: Our missionaries in Brazil were very aware of this for decades but the American church does not want to hear about it. That is why they seldom talk about deliverance.

TEAM: I hope we can get a team of mature believers that would seriously prepare themselves to minister to those who are under the

bondage of demonic power. This was one of the primary duties of the disciples when Jesus sent them out two by two. **Luke 9:1** *"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons..."*

But at this point, THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT EXPEL THE DEMON.

II. JESUS PREPARES FOR THE DELIVERANCE

Mark 9:19-24 *"O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." 20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. 22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." 23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

TRAGIC: Being under the power of demons is a terrible thing. Don't you think that some of these people doing these mass murders are under demonic influence? I think it must be demonic. When I look at their mug shots I see it in their eyes. In the case of this boy, it caused convulsions and made him unable to hear and speak. The father of the child was at his wits end and Jesus was his last hope.

ENTRANCE: The disciples could not help him. We have no idea how this demon got into the boy but we do know that it had been since childhood, the father didn't say since birth though. There are several excellent books and teachings readily available about how demons get into people. There are many paths such as satanic rituals and various sinful practices in an individual or family.

FAITH: But notice here that the key point that Jesus is making to us in verse 23 is the IMPORTANCE OF FAITH in getting set free from demonic power. He said, ***“Everything is possible for him who believes.”***

DISCIPLESHIP: I have a pastor friend who has helped many people deal with dark evil powers in their life and he emphasizes that the most important part of getting free from demonic power and staying free is to get to know the word of God. Yesterday I listened to a testimony of a young mom who was delivered from 47 demons and she also said, *“I had to renew my mind through the reading of the Word of God.”* As a person digs into the Word of God the grip of evil powers in their life loosens. The Bible is the ***“Hammer of God.”*** ***Jeremiah 23:29 “The truth sets you free.”*** ***John 8:32***

POWER: This principle applies to any destructive force in our life, not just demons. The power is in building faith by getting to know God’s Word. ***2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*** JESUS PREPARED THEM FOR THE deliverance...finally...

III. THE DEMON IS EXPELLED BY GOD’S POWER

Mark 9:25-29 *When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”****26*** *The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.”* ***27*** *But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. 28* *After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”* ***29*** *He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.”*

SPECTACLE: There are some important things to notice in these verses. The first thing was that JESUS DID NOT WANT THIS TO BE A SHOW OR SPECTACLE. When the crowds started to come over there, He took action quickly. So many gifted people have been ruined when their powerful prayers for healing became a show for people to come and see. They are tempted to set up actors to do fake healings or deliverances in order to entertain the crowds and pull in large financial offerings. People who once were powerful in prayer have been known to turn to fakery when their prayer power faded. Jesus did not want to make this into a show.

AUTHORITY: The second thing to note is the power and authority Jesus had to expel the demon with a word. He did not have to argue and wrestle with the spirit for minutes or even hours. Just one word and that demon obeyed Jesus and came out with a shriek and violent convulsion. The boy looked dead after the ordeal but I believe that he was actually in a state of blissful rest for the first time in years. All that had to be done was take him by the hand and he stood up and was a new person.

FREE: Jesus gives us a key teaching in John 8, beginning at verse 34: ***John 8:34ff. Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin...36 ...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

QUESTION: Jesus explains to the disciples what they need to do to get the power necessary to expel demons. The disciples asked Jesus this question privately: ***“Why couldn’t we drive it out?”*** Whole books have been written about that topic but Jesus gives such a simple answer. Sometimes we miss out on the answer because it is too simple.

ANSWER: Jesus said in verse 29, ***“This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.”*** Some ancient manuscripts leave out the word fasting, but that is not an issue...deep prayer involves fasting and fasting involves prayer. In the book of Esther, fasting is

mentioned and prayer is implied. In this passage prayer is mentioned and fasting is implied. The two go together.

STRUGGLE: This is where I am struggling. I don't mind praying, but I don't want to fast. Even medical professionals will tell us that when we fast for 24 hours or more, our body releases stem cells that repair damaged tissues inside of us. My body and the powers of darkness fight fasting in my life, more than prayer. But Jesus is crystal clear, spiritual power is tied in with fasting and prayer, serious fasting and serious prayer.

CORPORATE: That is why I promote prayer before the service and campfire prayer meetings. Before the national election we will meet for prayer in a few weeks. This summer we had twelve prayer meetings in our church to pray for our nation and spiritual revival. But the attendance was almost none. We all believe in the importance of prayer, but we all struggle to do it. The devil knows that if he can keep us from praying and fasting that he can keep us spiritually weak. The answer to the disciples' question is so simple that we just don't want to believe it. Serious prayer and fasting turns us into victorious Christians!

APPLICATION: What darkness are you facing in your life? Jesus has the solution for us. Prayer and fasting resulting in faith in the power of His Name. I have seen what can happen when Christians decide to go deep with the Lord. They get powerful.

CATECHISM: I will close with some excellent words from Luther's small catechism concerning the phrase in the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come." Luther says this about that petition: "The kingdom of God comes indeed of itself, without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us." The petitions of the Lord's Prayer end with these three words, "Deliver us from evil!" May it be so that we all will be delivered from the demonic powers that are at war with the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Let's pray: ***"Dear Father in heaven. Our nation is in great need of a visitation of your kingdom power. Many people are bound by anger, bitterness, chemical addictions, depression and even literal demonic influence. Help us, your people, to take fasting and prayer seriously so that we can have the relationship with you that is needed to have authority over the power of evil and help people get set free by your strong Name. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen"*** *May the peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #542 "Victory in Jesus"

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