

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; September 22, 2024
14th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Carrizales. Kruse

PRELUDE: Rebekah/Carrizales.Kruse

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 54

PASTOR: Save me, O God, by your name;

ALL: Vindicate me by your might.

PASTOR: Hear my prayer, O God;

ALL: Listen to the words of my mouth.

PASTOR: Surely God is my help;

ALL: The Lord is the one who sustains me.

PASTOR: For he has delivered me from all my troubles,

ALL: And my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.

HYMN #215 “Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me”

PRAYER

HYMN #

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Becky Kruse

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Jeremiah 11:18-20 Because the LORD revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. 19 I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree and its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more." 20 But, O LORD Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.*

EPISTLE LESSON: *James 3:13-4:10 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16 For where you have envy and selfish*

ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. 4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

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 HANNAH

SERMON: “TRUE GREATNESS” Mark 9:30-37 Pastor Tom

Olson How does God define greatness? How do we define greatness? When we go to a funeral, what is it that makes some people stand out as great? What is it that brings out large numbers of mourners? When push comes to shove, WHAT IS TRUE GREATNESS? Let’s look at Mark 9 and see what Jesus says.

I. THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Mark 9:30-37 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

MODEL: Jesus is our model of servanthood. He left heaven’s glory. He left the intimate presence of the Father and Holy Spirit, was made man, conceived in a virgin by the Holy Spirit, born in a stable and humbled himself onto death, the death on the cross. He is the King of Kings, all things belong to Him, and yet in this life owned nothing. He had no title or position that any person on earth wanted.

DUMBFUNDED: His disciples did not understand what he was saying about dying and rising on the third day. Notice also they didn’t dare ask him about it. Where they scared of Him? Absolutely not. They were scared TO ASK! They were scared that what they had hoped about Jesus might not be true. I believe they were scared to find out that He was not going to overthrow the Romans and give all of them important positions. I believe they were scared to find out that His kingdom is not OF this world.

WRONG: Jesus was making it clear to them that the popular notion about who the Messiah is and what He would come to do

was off base...or at least off timing. They wanted to Make Israel Great Again and He came to die as the Lamb of God that would shed innocent divine blood to wash away the sins of the world and qualify us for heaven.

FOCUS: This MESSAGE OF THE CROSS is to be the focus of the church. *1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

Here is TRUE GREATNESS: JESUS IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT.

II. THE ARROGANT APOSTLES

Mark 9:33-34 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

REALITY: The disciples really show their true colors at this point. They totally ignore what Jesus said about being betrayed, dying and rising after three days. They still are entertaining grandiose ideas that Jesus was going to use supernatural power to drive out the Romans and set up a new government with them getting key positions.

DC: Right now, in Washington D.C. the same thing is happening. Republicans who would gladly stab Trump in the back are flattering Him in hopes of a good appointment. Democrats who privately fought to keep Harris off the ticket are now publicly praising her in hopes of getting on her good side and getting a high paying position if she wins. That is the way it works in this world.

DANIEL: We certainly saw that dynamic in our study of Daniel. We also saw all the arguing and scheming behind the scenes in Daniel behind the back of King Nebuchadnezzar. Some people are always striving for money and power.

ARGUING: The disciples were also doing their arguing about who was the greatest BEHIND THE BACK of Jesus. Jesus had the ability to see their hearts and expose their conversations. Jesus came right out and asked them what they were arguing about. Notice it says, *“They kept quiet...”* They did not want to admit that they were arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus knew. They didn’t have to tell Him.

OMNISCIENT: God knows our mind. He knows our attitudes. He knows if we are being selfish or proud. There is no point in hiding because he knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts even before we speak the words.

HUMILITY: That is why the Apostle Peter tells us to do the opposite of what the disciples were doing. He tells us that our job is not to exalt ourselves but humble ourselves. *1 Peter 5:6*
“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

QUESTION: Ask yourself an honest question: Am I fighting to be great or am I seeking to be a humble servant? Am I living for pleasure or is it my pleasure to serve? Humility is the path of joy. And if God wants to elevate you to a higher position, Peter says that God will lift us up in due time.

BETTER: The world is filled with striving for greatness, but we can demonstrate a better path, the path of humility. THE DISCIPLES WERE ARROGANT.

III. THE CHOSEN CHILD

Mark 9:35-37 *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." 36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and*

whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

SESSION: Jesus sat down and talked to His disciples about their attitude. He explained to them what His kingdom was like. He told them that in His kingdom, *“the servant is greatest of all.”*

CHILD: Jesus then took a little child in His arms and said to them, *“if you welcome one of these little children, you welcome me.”* We are going to go deeper into this next week and look at the battle in our culture for the hearts and minds and the very lives of our little children.

EIELSON: Elling Eielson was the first ordained Norwegian pastor in America. He walked from one Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota pioneer homestead to the next in the mid 1800’s with discipleship materials, conducting church services. He was known to be a stern revivalistic preacher. Some might say he was harsh. But the children loved Him. Written reports tell how he would get down on his haunches at the level of the children and talk to them. Children love it when you get down on there eye level. He took Jesus’ word seriously about welcoming the little children.

PRIORITY: If there is one ministry task that we should take more seriously than any other in the church, it is the ministry to teach the children the Word of God. We have three generations of Americans that do not have a clue about anything that is written in the Bible. I would guess that most teen-agers and even those all the way up to 40 or 50 years old today know almost nothing about what is in God’s Word. They can’t even curse with the Name of Jesus because they don’t even know it.

ERICKSON: Arv and Sue Erickson had a passion for children’s ministry. We are working hard to keep a Sunday school going in our church. But I am also very aware of the fact that one of the best ways to teach children is to take them one by one on outings

and into our lives and teach them what we know about God as they are by our side.

TIME: That is why I say that love is spelled T-I-M-E. Yesterday morning Elijah and I spent a few hours together having breakfast and fishing at the Lake Marion fishing dock. It was part of his birthday present from me and I enjoyed it immensely. But I felt sad when I realized that there are hundreds of little 8-year-old boys and girls that have no one to take them fishing or teach them other important life skills. God wants us to prioritize time with children. That is Jesus' definition of TRUE GREATNESS.

GANDER: In closing, I want to mention Mrs. Gander. Mrs. Gander was financially poor for her whole life as a housewife and grandma, but had many visitors to her nursing home room. The man down the hallway was a wealthy and successful business man and he never had any visitors in his room. What was the difference? What made grandma Gander great in the eyes of so many people? She spent her entire life loving, serving and teaching little children.

KRISTEN: That is what stuck out to me at the funeral here on Friday about Kristen Peterson. She married a man who had two boys of his own. The one son, now a grown man, perhaps in his 40's, said that she was so devoted to them that she actually became their mother.

MOM: They called her mom because she embraced those two boys and loved them in the way a real mom would love them. To that family, it was service to others that made Kris Peterson great, more than her piano and singing and guitar talent, more than her accounting skills, more than her other accomplishments. Her love for her husband's children was what they remembered so fondly.

WITCRAFT: The famous Boy Scout leader, Forrest Witcraft's quote, should be memorized by all. He stated:

*“One hundred years from now
It won't matter
What kind of car I drove
What kind of house I lived in
How much money I had in the bank
Nor what my cloths looked like
BUT
The world may be a little better
Because, I was important
In the life of a child.”*

APPLICATION: Jesus held up a child and said that His definition of greatness is measured by how we treat children. Turn off the TV, put down the phone, set aside the newspaper and play a game with a child or read a book to a child. That would be a big step in the right direction on the road to greatness! Jesus gave His life for us. We can respond by giving TIME to a child. Amen

HYMN #473 “Lead Me to Calvary”

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

DOXOLOGY: *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