

**MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; October 27, 2024**  
**Reformation Sunday; Singers: Carrizales. Kruse**

**PRELUDE:** Rebekah Olson

**CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 46**

**PASTOR:** God is our refuge and strength,  
**ALL:** An ever-present help in trouble.  
**PASTOR:** Therefore we will not fear,  
**ALL:** Though the mountains fall into the heart of the sea  
**PASTOR:** Nations are in uproar,  
**ALL:** Kingdoms fall.  
**PASTOR:** The LORD makes wars cease  
**ALL:** To the ends of the earth;  
**PASTOR:** "Be still, and know that I am God;  
**ALL:** I will be exalted among the nations.  
**PASTOR:** The LORD Almighty is with us;  
**ALL:** The God of Jacob is our fortress.

**NIVHYMN #143 "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation"**

**PRAYER**

**HYMN #141 "A Mighty Fortress"**

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:**

**READER: Dave Fischer**

**FIRST LESSON:** *Revelation 14:6-12 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth-to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." 8 A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." 9 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, 10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath.*

*He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." 12 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *Romans 3:19-29 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished- 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. 27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

**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: “HANGING ON TO LIBERTY” Matthew 9:12 & John 8:31-36, Pastor Tom Olson** *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

**ARRESTED:** A man was recently arrested in England for praying a silent prayer in his head outside of an abortion facility in England. He was fined \$12,000 for his silent prayer in his head which no one except God heard. No one else on that sidewalk was arrested or fined for thinking thoughts, just the man who the police guessed was praying in his mind. This is unbelievable.

**FREEDOM:** America is one of the last nations on earth to have a significant amount of liberty: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom to peacefully assemble, the right to bear arms, the right to own property and so on. Many of these freedoms are coming under attack by power-hungry leaders who don't want the people getting in the way of their quest for more and more power. This is an age-old struggle between those in power and the common people.

**PRE-REFORMATION:** It is also true in the church. During the time of the Reformation there was one church that controlled religion in Europe. No one had the right to question what that church taught. Martin Luther was a priest and scholar in that church and began to read the Bible and find out that the church was deviating from the teaching of the Apostles. He wanted to have a reasonable discussion about 95 issues. He listed his concerns and nailed the list to the church door, which was the community bulletin board. That list of deviations from Scripture is called “The 95 Theses” and it ignited the hearts and minds of

people wanting to know and believe the Word of God. But the church did not want that discussion. Many people gave their lives bringing the Bible to the people to read and study. A priest named Jon Hus was burned at the stake in Bohemia for teaching the truth.

**AMERICA:** We need to hang on to the liberty we have in America to speak, pray, teach and to believe the Word of God. I talked to a jail minister yesterday who was kicked out of the jail for teaching the men the Bible's teaching on morality. God's Word is not popular with our sinful society. We can learn lessons about HANGING ON TO LIBERTY from our two gospel texts today, Matthew 11:12 and John 8:31-36. First of all, we look at...

## I. THE ADVANCE OF LIBERTY

*Matthew 11:12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*

**RELIGION:** The world of religion is often controlled by power-hungry people who don't make it difficult for seeking souls to pursue God. One contemporary Catholic bishop is boldly claiming that Catholic leadership has been infiltrated by power-hungry phonies. They focus on earthly things. The true goal should be for people to come into a living relationship with God.

**ROBBERS:** Twice in Jesus ministry, he threw out the money changers and merchants from the temple. These men made it difficult and expensive to offer sacrifices to God. Jesus called them thieves.

**LAWS:** The religious leaders heaped up hundreds of man-made rules and regulations that people had to obey. They made the simple “ten commandments” complicated and forced people to rely upon them for instruction about how to obey God.

FULFILLED: Jesus came to fulfill the law and abolish the sacrificial system. Those who made money off of it, sought to kill the very one who they claimed to be waiting for.

JOHN: John the Baptist and thousands of hungry souls gathered in the wilderness to repent of sin, be baptized and wait for the Messiah, Jesus to teach them. They brought faith back to it's real and sincere simplicity. They bypassed the religious professionals. John paid for it with his life.

REFORMERS: Luther and the reformers did the same thing. They opposed the idea that the Basilica in Rome was to be financed by selling the forgiveness of sins for money. They recovered the book of Romans and the truth that salvation is a gift of God. **Romans 5:1** *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* But Luther and the reformers had to lay their lives on the line to do it. The corrupt establishment did not let go of money and power without a fight.

POLITICS: We see it today in our politics. Too many of our political leaders in America are corrupt. They are purchased and owned by big money. Brave souls are laying their lives on the line to expose and remove this vile corruption from our land. Those in power, as always, will not go down without a fight. They want to disarm us. They want to take our money. They want to take away our freedom of speech. They will spy on us, fine us and put us in prison. They will kill try to kill those who expose them. Who killed Epstein? It has not changed. Forceful reformers are still leading THE ADVANCE OF LIBERTY.

## II. THE ENEMY OF LIBERTY

**John 8:31-33** *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never*

*been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"*

BLIND: The religious leaders of Jesus day and Luther's day and our day did not realize that they were blind to truth, greedy for money and power and under the control of the devil.

EXPOSED: Jesus tells us here the way to find freedom: ***"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."***

- King David did not get set free until he faced up to the truth of his adultery.
- Mary Magdalene did not get set free until she faced up to the truth that she was possessed by demons.
- Zacchaeus did not get set free until he was shown the truth of his stealing money through his fraudulent tax collecting practices.
- The church of Luther's day did not come alive until it faced up to the truth of the unbiblical practices it was involved in.
- We don't get set free until we see the truth of our own sin and need of forgiveness.
- Our political leaders will not get set free until they have their corruption exposed.

HIDDEN: The ADVANCE OF LIBERTY is forceful men and women. The ENEMY OF LIBERTY is lies and hidden corruption. Finally...

## III. THE PLACE OF LIBERTY

**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.*

STRUGGLE: Martin Luther, like all of us, struggled with sin. I have no idea what his sins were, perhaps pride, a hot temper,

lustful desires...perhaps attitudes. He tried every imaginable thing he could do to get set free from sin. He became a monk. He did all the rituals the church demanded. He even locked himself into a cell and beat himself with chains until he was bloody to make himself pure. But nothing worked. He still sinned and felt condemned for it.

ROMANS: It was through the study of Scripture, namely the book of Romans, that Luther finally found peace with God. He found it in the Bible. These verses set Luther free: ***Romans 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*** The righteous will live BY FAITH. This was the answer.

REBORN: When Luther realized that Jesus paid our sin debt in full by His death on the cross and that we are saved through faith in Christ, he instantly was a changed man. His chains fell off. He said, "I felt as if I was born again." This rediscovered truth of justification by faith alone spread like wildfire. The established church sought to kill Luther because they were getting rich off of selling the forgiveness of sins for money. But they could not stop the torch of liberty. **FORCEFUL MEN HAD FORCED THEIR WAY BACK INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD!**

ALTON: Pastor Brian Davidson is on our Alaska Mission Board and was at our annual meeting this past Tuesday. His brother, Alton, is dying of cancer. Alton has lived a rough life of sinful behavior and scorning the God Pastor Brian serves. Another brother, Bruce, asked Alton, "Where are you going when you die." Alton said, "I am going to hell." Bruce said, "You don't have to go there, you can accept Jesus as your Savior and receive the forgiveness of your sins." Do you want to do that? Alton quit fighting and said, "Yes, I do." According to the Free Lutheran pastor, the other Pastor Tom Olson, near the North Dakota VA Hospital who recently visited Alton, the pastor said, "Alton is a

converted man, a changed man. Jesus has truly saved him." Alton found liberty; Jesus set him free.

APPEAL: Dear friends. Do you want to be set free from sin today? Come to the Savior on the cross. His innocent life paid for all your sins. Let that assurance of forgiveness motivate you to live a life of joy in the Lord.

COME: Let me quote our next song, my favorite hymn ever composed: "*Come in poverty and meanness, come defiled without, within. From infection and uncleanness. From the leprosy of sin. Wash your robes and make them white. Ye shall walk with God in light.*"

The PLACE OF LIBERTY is the cross. The enemies of liberty are strong. **HANG ON TO LIBERTY. Amen**

#### **HYMN #419 "Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain"**

**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. Amen. A-men. A---men.*

**POSTLUDE:** Rebekah Olson