

SERVICE INFORMATION: DECEMBER 8, 2024
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SUNDAY SERVICE & SERMON
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Hannah Carrizales filling in for Krista and Praise Team

HYMNS AND LITURGY: Rebekah Olson

READER: Luke Johnson

THEME: The Righteous King: We prepare for Him through repentance of sin.

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 66

PASTOR: Shout with joy to God,

ALL: All the earth!

PASTOR: Sing the glory of his name;

ALL: Make his praise glorious!

PASTOR: Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!

ALL: So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

PASTOR: All the earth bows down to you;

ALL: They sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name."

PASTOR: Come and see what God has done,

ALL: How awesome his works in man's behalf!

HYMN #328 "On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry"

CONFESSION OF SIN: *Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to*

Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER

**CHILDREN COME FOR THE ADVENT CANDLE
READING**

READER: Luke Johnson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Malachi 3:1-7 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. 5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty. 6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Philippians 1:2-11 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the*

day of Christ Jesus. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-to the glory and praise of God.

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 now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

BRAZIL VIDEO FROM THE ABEL FAMILY

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

PRAISE SONGS: songs chosen by Hannah...sung by "Praise team (Hannah filling in for Krista due to illness)

SERMON TITLE: "THE RIGHTEOUS KING"

Matthew 11:2-11; Pastor Tom Olson; December 11, 2022
Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

GREEKS: If you study Greek mythology, you find out that the Greek gods were immoral. They liked to play tricks, they liked to get intoxicated and have glutenous feasts, they liked to have sexual escapades with pretty women. There is a reason that wild college fraternities and sororities pattern themselves after the Greeks. Our carnal flesh can enjoy the thought to being a "god" who gets to indulge in lustful pleasure at will.

QUESTION: But I would ask you, would you really want to go to eternity in heaven with "gods" who lie, cheat, fight, seduce, rape and commit all the sins that ruin lives?

FUN: People don't want to follow Jesus because they don't want to give up wild living. They feel that a righteous life is a boring life. But age proves them wrong. As we get older, we regret the sins of our youth.

HEAVEN: I want to go to a heaven ruled by someone who is **RIGHTEOUS**. We are tired of sinning and long to be pure to the core of our being. We long to be in a place of no hurt, no fear and no regrets.

PREPARATION: Today, on the second Sunday of Advent, our second Sunday of repentance and preparation for Christ, we look at the message of **THE RIGHTEOUS KING** through his greatest of all prophets, John the Baptist. Matthew 11 beginning at verse 2:

I. THE CALL TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Luke 3:2-6 ...during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the

desert. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. 6 And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"

PREPARED: Are you prepared? Boy scouts like to be ready and prepared in times of need. John the Baptist is calling us to get prepared to meet Jesus the Messiah. He calls us to make our crooked paths straight. Back when our son was in Boy Scouts they had to promise to be morally "straight." John calls us to make our rough paths smooth.

EVERYONE: Then John makes an interesting statement in verse six: ***"all mankind will see God's salvation."*** This Lord we are preparing to meet will bring salvation for not only Israel but for the whole world.

John 3:16 "For God so loved THE WORLD that he gave His one and only Son..."

BLINDED: Our sin blinds us. We can't see Jesus until we repent. I remember one elderly woman telling me that she had gone to church her whole life but did not see what Jesus had done until the day that she saw herself as a sinner who needed salvation. She put it this way in her words, ***"When sin became sinful to me, then for the first time Jesus became precious."***

FRUIT: That woman, now passed away, had a great grand-daughter sing a solo at the Free Lutheran Bible College Christmas concerts this year. Jesus made a generational difference in that family.

SELF: The Holy Spirit wants for us to look honestly at ourselves and see the sin that is separating us from God and hurting our relationships with others.

- For one girl I knew, it was LYING, she lied so much that she didn't even know she was lying. She could never have a lasting relationship with others.
- For another person I know it is JEALOUSY.
- A number of people I know struggle with impatience, unforgiveness and BITTERNESS.
- One woman I know is constantly GOSSIPING. Her gossiping tore a whole church to pieces.
- I worked once with a man who was decent to your face SLANDERED you behind your back.
- I remember a man who was DECEPTIVE. It put a poison seed into one of his sons who ended up in jail.
- I remember a pastor with a sharp cutting TONGUE. He brought serious division to his church. He died young too.

ME: Some of these things describe me to one degree or another. What is it in your life that is grieving the Holy Spirit? What is it in our lives that is hurting our family and friendships? The children at the children's sermon last Sunday honestly confessed that they have trouble obeying their parents. I am glad they were honest about it. That is the first step to healing.

REPENT: If we want to see revival in our lives and if we want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the first step is to repent of our sins and come to Christ for forgiveness. I love the words in John 6:37: ***All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*** God uses John the Baptist to call us to honest repentance of our sins. He will not turn us away if we come in sincere sorrow for sin.

TEMPLE: On Friday evening we sang these words at the Free Lutheran Bible College Christmas concert: ***"Fling wide the portals of your heart, Make it a temple set apart, From earthly use for heav'n's employ, Adorned with prayer and love and joy."***

TIRED: I believe we are living in a generation that is tired of sinning and desires holy, Spirit-filled living. They have tried everything and it doesn't satisfy. Jim Cary is quoted as saying ***"He wishes everybody could have a chance to get everything they have ever wanted so they could find out that it is not what they were looking for."*** God is calling us to leave the filth of this world and return to righteous living.

II. THE WARNING TO THE UNRIGHTEOUS

Luke 3:7-9 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

RESPONSE: The common people responded with deep conviction of sin to John the Baptist. But the religious, business and political leaders hardened their hearts and refused to repent. Money, power and pride gripped their hearts.

SWAMP: The political slogan, "drain the swamp," is a sign that it is no different today. Many of our leaders in religion, business and politics are corrupt. Main line church leaders seem to be focused on promoting sexual perversion. Big corporations have pretty much purchased our politicians. I listened to a researcher describe the conflicts of interest between policy makers and the corporations they regulate and there was no way for truth to prevail.

STAND: God warns the leaders to repent. Only a few did, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. John's prophecy came true. The ax fell in 70 AD. Jerusalem was completely destroyed. They

did not repent and judgement came. Do you suppose that might happen to our nation? We as citizens need to get serious about being like John the Baptist and call our leaders to turn away from corruption. Even if we are targeted by them. Representative Thomas Massie from Kentucky said that nothing will change unless people stand up to corruption.

Finally, THE RIGHTEOUS KING reveals to us...

III. THE HEART OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Luke 3:10-14 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. 11 John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same." 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" 13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. 14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-be content with your pay."

REVIVAL: Even though the leaders of the nation of Israel were hard-hearted and refused to repent...many people did. They repented of sin and were baptized in the Jordan river. Citizens repented, soldiers repented, tax collectors repented. Here is what John told them:

1. Help people who are in grinding poverty to get the basic clothes and food they need to survive.
2. Be honest in your business affairs. Don't cheat anyone.
3. If you have power, like a soldier with weapons, don't abuse that power to get money, don't take bribes or falsely accuse people but instead be content with your pay.

CITIZENSHIP: In other words, God is calling us to be honest citizens. We are being called to live exemplary lives as a testimony. I know a man who is an outspoken Christian but has run a crooked business and cheated people out of money. This

does great damage to the cause of Christ. He causes unbelievers to scoff at the faith. Instead, unbelievers should say about us, “You can trust him because He is a true Christian.”

RESPONSE: If God is speaking to you today about something in your life that is not right, deal with it now. Don't delay. I would gladly give up my coffee and snack to pray with you at the altar or in my office. The Holy Spirit is calling us today to a righteous life because we serve THE RIGHTEOUS KING. We represent Him to a watching world. *“Though millions have come, there's still room for one, yes there's room at the cross for you.”*

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

HYMN #9 (vss 1,2,3,7,8) “Make Wide the Door, Unbar the Gate”

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*

DOXOLOGY with Three-fold Amen

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson