

**July 13, 2025 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost  
Pastor Tom Olson; Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

**PRELUDE:** Jan Ellingson

**CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 41**

**PASTOR: Blessed is he who has regard for the weak;**

**ALL: The LORD delivers him in times of trouble.**

**PASTOR: The LORD will protect him and preserve his life;**

**ALL: He will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.**

**PASTOR: The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed**

**ALL: And restore him from his bed of illness.**

**HYMN #308 (vss 2&3) "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"**

**SUNG CONFESSION OF SIN:**

**HYMN #425 "Whiter than Snow"**

**CHILDREN'S SERMON:**

**READER: Luke Johnson**

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:** *Leviticus 19:9-18* "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God. 11 "Do not steal." "Do not lie." "Do not deceive one another. 12 "Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. 13 "Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. "Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight. 14 "Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD. 15 "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. 16 "Do not go about spreading slander among your people." "Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. 17 "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. 18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 10:25-37** *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

**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 Krista Johnson**

**SERMON: “OUR AMAZING MESSAGE,” Colossians 1:1-14**  
**Pastor Tom Olson** *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

J. JOHN: If you have never listened to a message by British Evangelist J. John, I encourage you to do so. He tells very interesting stories that make a good point. He is a true evangelist and makes the most of every opportunity to witness, creatively and effectively for Christ. He and his wife had the opportunity to visit the ancient city of Thessalonica from which we get the New Testament books of Thessalonians. It is the second largest city in Greece with about one million in the metropolis and is the only city in Europe that has a Jewish majority. They also have Orthodox Christians. They also have a strong Orthodox and Muslim population. It was once the capital of the great Macedonian Empire.

SMILES: But J. John discovered something sad about the city. He learned how to say hello in the local dialect. As he and his wife walked about this ancient city and smiled at people and said hello. After a time of being there he recorded how many people smiled back and how many said hello. The answer was how many? Zero! No smiles and no greetings. It was like the people were walking but dead.

NEED: Thessalonica needs good news. Much of the world is in a similar state. People need OUR AMAZING MESSAGE. I was ordained 37 years ago and became a pastor in a Christian nation. Somewhere along the line I became a missionary in a pagan and secular culture. My firm conviction is that 2025 is the year of evangelism and outreach. We have the answers that people are looking for. Let's not keep secret the good news of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and a soon returning King of Kings, Jesus Christ. This is what we are going to see in Colossians over the next few weeks. Colossians 1:1-14 “OUR AMAZING MESSAGE.”

## I. A NEW LIFE

**Colossians 1:1-8** *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints- 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.*

EPAPHRAS: A believer named Epaphras went to the city of Colossae, similar to Galatia and Thessalonica. He preached the gospel and a church was born. It was growing in size and in love. They had **(verse 5) a faith and love “that spring up from the hope stored up for you in heaven.”** This is new life in Christ. We can believe the right things on paper, and that is good and important. But a new life in Christ is a real experience that changes your life, not just your mind. When Jesus comes into your life, He gives you a NEW HOPE and a NEW LOVE.

LOVE: A church with a living faith in Jesus Christ has what you see here in verse four, **“the love you have for all the saints.”** You know what he means. When you become a part of the family of God and meet fellow TRUE believers, there is a love that is instantly there.

NEW: You all know **2 Corinthians 10:17** well, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”** Parents, we can teach our children as well as possible, but each one has to personally come to a living faith in the Lord. God has no grandchildren, only children. True believers have a living faith, a new life...it is a personal experience.

CULTURAL: This love was hard to find forty years ago when almost everyone in the small towns we grew up in considered themselves to be believers. We had cultural Christianity but I estimated only about 10% of the cultural Christians had ever experienced the new birth and living faith. This love of the brethren did not burn the same way it did in Colossae. Today, with so few people who profess to know the Lord, it is

different. When I meet people now who are Christians, they often really are the real deal. I tell that to people my age who were forced to go to confirmation but were not converted when they got in front of the church to confirm their faith. It was just a tradition. I tell them that Christianity is more real today. You can sense that the people in church have the Holy Spirit in them.

PASTORS: When I pray on Thursday mornings with pastors from the area it is totally different from the ministerial meetings of thirty years ago. These pastors really know and love the Lord. They really have the Holy Spirit in them. We have a true and deep love and concern for each other. It is like the church in America is shrinking in size but getting more real. And the more real it gets the more love there is between us.

CHILDHOOD: Before the youth revival hit my home church, going to church largely meant a relationship with a building and tradition. But then people like Tim Carlson of Barron, Wisconsin got saved in the Jesus People Movement and went to the park with his guitar in the early 1970's and started praising the Lord and youth gathered and studied the Bible and got saved. It was real, not forced, not tradition. Those youth fellowship meetings didn't even have an adult, just teens who loved Jesus. It was a special season. Our college Campus Bible Study had a real love that we had for each other. That love exists to this day, decades later. There was no building, no tradition, just Jesus and His Word and the Holy Spirit in our midst. It was NEW LIFE, and it was real and beautiful.

PERSECUTION: One thing that accelerates this new life is persecution. When the church is persecuted, the real ones stay, the fake ones leave and the love of the brethren skyrockets up. The Lutheran Church of Ethiopia experienced this 30 plus years ago...persecution purified the church and it was a hard but beautiful time.

OUR AMAZING MESSAGE is new life in Christ. Secondly, it also is accompanied by...

## II. A NEW POWER

*Colossians 1:9-12 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

*10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with ALL POWER according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

FOCUS: We could do a month of sermons on just this passage but I want to point out one phrase today from verse 11, *“that you may be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience and joyfully give thanks...”*

NEED: One of the gifts of our new life is Christ is a NEW POWER. We all need a power greater than our own! This is a power that gives us ENDURANCE, PATIENCE AND THANKFULNESS. Life can be tough, the war with the devil is real, our sinful desires are real, so we need power to endure. Things don't happen fast, so we need patience. And there is nothing more powerful in our arsenal of spiritual weapons than the giving of thanks. If you receive endurance, patience and thankfulness, you can overcome anything the world and the devil throw your way.

HOW: How do we get this power? That is answered in verse 9, THROUGH PRAYER. The Apostle was praying for them to get filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom and understanding and the power to live a life worthy of Christ. Serious prayer with and for each other is not an elective course, it is the core curriculum. I would desire that the altar would be filled with people every Sunday seeking prayer for their needs. There is nothing Satan will fight harder than to keep you away from personal and corporate prayer.

BROOKLYN: Jim Cymbala was the pastor who led the great Brooklyn Tabernacle. He used to tell his people, if you have to choose between coming to the Sunday worship and preaching service and the Wednesday night prayer meeting, choose the prayer meeting. That is the only church I know of that had more people out for prayer than for Sunday morning. And that is a church that experienced the mighty power of God. OUR AMAZING MESSAGE is about A NEW LIFE, A NEW POWER AND...

### III. A NEW ALLEGIANCE

*Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

COMMUNISTS: Have you ever asked yourself why Communists and globalists hate Christianity so much? Why would they hate a group that teaches love, compassion, honesty, morality, good character and so on? Why would they hate hard-working, loyal and good people? They hate Christianity because, by their own admission, they can't control us through fear.

AUTHORITY: When we get saved, we are no longer under their direct authority. We respect it but our allegiance is to another kingdom. Our king is Jesus Christ. Our law, is the Word of God. We are redeemed and forgiven. We are on our way to eternity in heaven. Many and maybe most world leaders are on their way to an eternity in Hell. One day we will reign with Christ. When my doctor pressured me to take the COVID shot, he could not make me afraid of dying. I am ready to go. He could not control me. That is because I don't belong to his world. My citizenship is in heaven.

BALANCE: We have A NEW ALLEGIANCE when we have Jesus in our hearts. Now to be sure, the Word of God tells us to obey our leaders when they ask us to do what is right. But we can't obey if we are asked to do something wrong. I love this passage from:

*Acts 4:13-20 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16 "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. 17 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."*

***18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."***

FUTURE: I can foresee the day when our state government will ask our preschool or church or Christians to support something that is clearly against the Word of God. At that time, we will have to disobey because we answer to a higher power. I dread to think about what it will be like on judgement day when these leaders will answer to God for what they forced people to do.

PLEDGE: We pledge to the American flag, but only in-so-far-as we are ONE NATION UNDER GOD. President Ronald Reagan once said this, and I quote: ***"If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be one nation gone under."*** He was admitting, as president, that he and our nation were under a higher allegiance to God and if we forget that, we are a nation that is going to fail. Our highest allegiance is to Christ.

CONCLUSION: We are at a day in America when many people no longer smile. They don't say hello. I try to smile at and say hello to kids walking to the school bus and some just stare at the ground. They are 16 years old and dead inside. The love of many has grown cold. They are empty. They are hardened. That is why we need to introduce them to a NEW LIFE, NEW POWER AND NEW ALLEGIANCE. People need the Lord! *May the peace of God that passes understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**HYMN #310** "Spread, Oh Spread, Thou Mighty Word"

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Closing Song: Chosen by Jan

Postlude: Jan Ellingson