

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; August 31, 2025
12th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Osthus.Reynolds

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 131

SINGSPIRATION FROM THE HYMNAL (No PowerPoint Lyrics):

Hymn #366 “Father, We Thank Thee for the Night”

Hymn #369 “Jesus Loves Me”

Hymn #365 “Oh, Be Careful”

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

READER: Bob Hawksford

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Proverbs 25:2-10 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. 3 As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable. 4 Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith; 5 remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness. 6 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; 7 it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here, than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes 8 do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame? 9 If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence, 10 or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation.*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 14:1-14 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. 2 There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. 3 Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" 4 But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away.*

5 Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" 6 And

they had nothing to say. 7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." 12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

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 RUTH (on PowerPoint)

SERMON: “GOOD ADVICE” Hebrews 13:1-17 Pastor Tom Olson, August 31, 2025

LESSON: One of the important lessons that we learn in life is how good it is to follow the Lord and bad it is to follow the devil. God’s path is the happiest path with no regrets and deep joy. Satan’s path is short-term pleasure and long-term pain.

ADVICE: The last chapters of the New Testament epistles are filled with “Good Advice” for a good life. Today’s Epistle Lesson is packed with treasures. Let’s look at GOOD ADVICE, from Hebrews 13...I don’t have the time to go over every point but I will highlight a few things that jumped off the page at me...

I. HOSPITALITY AND CONTENTMENT

Hebrews 13:1-6 Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. 4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

EVANGELIST: Lutheran Brethren Pastor Ron Wik offered to haul the Ford tractor I inherited from my dad. His truck developed a brake problem so he and his wife had to stay the night. We read, as was our custom, morning devotions from “Altar Steps” written some sixty plus years ago by Fargo area pastor and evangelist R. P. Haakenson. Pastor Wik smiled and said, “I remember R. P. Haakenson because he stayed in my childhood farm home near Osseo, Wisconsin. My parents would offer to house the traveling

preachers who came through our area to preach at revival services.”

CHILDREN: Some people have the gift of hospitality and the ones who are highly impacted by this are the children of the hosts who get the meet and hear the stories of missionaries, teachers and evangelists who come through their doors.

ANGELS: Verse two even suggests that some of the strangers we entertain may be angels in human form. A number of Old Testament characters entertained angels:

- Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:1-3
- Lot in Genesis 19:1&2
- Gideon in Judges 6:11-24
- Manoah in Judges 13:6-20

POOR: Today, our gospel lesson in Luke 14:13-14 says this: *...when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

MONEY: Another point that stands out in Hebrews 13 is verse 5 where we are told to live free from the love of money and be content with what we have because God will never leave or forsake us. Lack of contentment and the pursuit of more and more money can become a deceptive sickness that causes us to MISS OUT ON THE LIFE we are now living in trade for THE POTENTIAL OF the more luxurious life we may live in the future.

TIME: Time is money and to get more money we have to trade our time. This is a decision that I have had to make recently, do I want to wait until I am seventy and get \$1,000 more per month social security than I will get by starting now? But to do that I need to trade five years of time. My mother was good at age 65 but by the time she was 70 she was having small strokes and she could no longer do very much...and I have her genetics.

CONTENTMENT: This passage tells us that it is important to be content. Contentment is a great gift of God that makes even a simple life a very happy one. On Friday I tasted Filet Mignon. It is hard to be content with hamburger after that experience! It has taken a lifetime to learn to be as content as I am. I know it is a lesson I will have to learn time and again as I get older and my strength fades. It is hard to be content with losing our ability to drive or see or hear well. But we can by God's grace be content and happy with less. The secret is to focus on what is to come in heaven.

SECONDLY...GOOD ADVICE in...

II. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD

Hebrews 13:7-16 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. 10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess his name.

APPLES: As we were picking up ground-fall apples from our tree this week, we were reminiscing about how much Sharon's dad, Alfred Hauser, loved it when we brought him a bag of those imperfect, bruised apples. He would sit, very contented, in his

chair with an old piece of newspaper in his lap, with a paring knife in hand, carving away the bad spots and eating the very good tasting good parts.

FARMER: Knowing Alfred was a real experience of what is spoken here about considering the lives of our spiritual leaders who taught us the faith. When we think of him, we think of a man who was on the one hand, a very busy farmer who milked 60 cows and farmed 270 acres. He worked so hard to build up his modern farm from almost nothing. But that is not what we remember so much.

TESTIMONY: We remember a man who had a glorious conversion to Christ in middle age, a man who wanted to be in church every time the doors opened, a man with a worn-out Bible, a man who was deeply concerned about the eternal souls of his family, friends and neighbors. His relationship with the Lord was his highest priority.

PERSPECTIVE: I remember him sitting in his chair at about age 90, looking out the window over the big, beautiful farm he had once owned and saying to me, "This no longer means anything to me." All that mattered to him was knowing the Lord better and deeper and preparing to depart this life and enter the presence of God through the blood of Christ.

MISCELLANEOUS: Hebrews closes with some miscellaneous advice. In verse 8: remember that Jesus doesn't change. Verse 9: don't be carried away by strange teachings about ceremonial foods. Verse 12: Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders and died outside the holy city. We too are encouraged to focus on the ENDURING CITY THAT IS TO COME. Verse 15, it is obtained THROUGH JESUS and it is shared by LIPS OF PRAISE.

Our RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD is the reservoir from which an abundant life flows...Finally...GOOD ADVICE...

III. GENEROSITY AND SERVICE

Hebrews 13:16&17 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

HAPPY: Verse 16 urges us to be generous. The happiest people I have met are generous with their resources and respectful of those in authority. My original ministry mentor, Oscar Brown from Alesund, Norway was totally generous. Every month he would get his little social security check, buy basic groceries and then give away the rest to people in dire need in Cordova, Alaska where we ministered together at Faith Lutheran Mission. He was one of the happiest men I have ever met. His great joy in life was baking homemade bread and feeding the homeless people in Cordova. Oscar was one of the kindest men I have ever met. I saw him give away his boots to a homeless man who needed some because Oscar had faith that God would give him another pair. The next day someone donated a box of clothes to the church and in it was a pair of boots the perfect size for Oscar.

RESPECT: Verse 17 tells us to respect authorities. My parents and grandparents instilled in us a great respect for authorities and for the flag. I am glad now for their wonderful influence on me.

REBELLION: In our church in Ohio, there were a few rebellious people who eventually left the church. Once they left, there was a wonderful peace and spiritual vitality that came over the entire ministry. The Bible tells us in 1 Samuel 15:23 that ***“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”*** When we disobey the commandments of God, we are actually practicing witchcraft and worshipping the devil.

OBEDIENCE: People in authority are watching out for us and will give account of their actions to God. These verses tell us that when we obey them, their job become a joy. Children who obey their parents fill their hearts with joy. Employees who obey their bosses make their tasks a joy and give a powerful testimony for Christ.

CONCLUSION: Can't you see now how God's ways that the Bible teaches are GOOD ADVICE? If you are older, you know by experience that unbelief and disobedience lead to much unhappiness. The whole trouble in the middle east, to this day, can be traced back to Abraham and Sarah who disobeyed by having Abraham become the father of Ishmael by Hagar the Egyptian servant girl. Our disobedience can cause generations of pain. OUR CHOICES MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

DUGDALE: There is a famous ACCOUNT OF TWO MEN FROM THE EARLY 1700's from a study done in 1877 by Richard Dugdale, Max Jukes and Jonathan Edwards.

MAX JUKES was an ungodly man with an ungodly wife. His offspring included: numerous felons, murderers, immoral people, prostitutes, drunkards and drug addicts; I won't quote the numbers because they can't be known for certain, but it was many hundreds of trouble-makers.

JONATHAN EDWARDS was a godly man, pastor, and revival leader. His offspring had QUOTE: "practically no lawbreakers." Others included:

- more than 100 lawyers, 30 judges,
- 13 college presidents, and hundred and more professors,
- sixty physicians,
- 100 clergymen, missionaries, and theological professors
- 80 elected to public office, including 3 mayors, 3 governors, several members of congress, 3 senators, and 1 vice president (Aaron Burr)

- 60 have attained prominence in authorship or editorial life, with 135 books of merit
- 75 army or navy officers
- And many more distinguished citizens public servants since 1877.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave? Start with inviting Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior and then heed the GOOD ADVICE in Hebrews 13 and you will be well on your way to making a positive difference for your life and for generations to come until Jesus returns. *May the peace of God that passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #381 “How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts”

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 who 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

HYMN # 251 Verse 1 (On PowerPoint) “God Be with You ‘Till We Meet Again”

POSTLUDE: Ruth Antal