

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

October 21, 2020

Message from Pastor Fran Green

"For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you." 1 Thessalonians 1:5 NLT

We again talked about our identity in our worship service (9:30) yesterday focusing on two questions, *Who am I?* and *Why am I here?* Our study has been primarily following the epistle readings out of the lectionary, which have moved to the book of *1 Thessalonians*.

NT Wright, one of my favorite New Testament scholars whom I quote often, offers the following on the reading for yesterday (*1 Thessalonians 1:1-10*):

Some in Thessalonica, as in most places he went, found that something happened to them when they listened to his message. A strange power gripped them – the power that, Paul would tell them, was the Holy Spirit at work.

They would suddenly understand what he was saying. It would grasp their hearts and minds. Paul and his companions, explaining the gospel to them, would become excited as they saw the message take hold, make sense, and begin its work of transforming hearts and lives.

The power of the Gospel message was and is evident whenever and wherever it is shared. Paul tells the Thessalonians and he is telling the same to us, that they are somebody, they are part of the family of God. Further, they are to be somebody to someone else. Please see the enclosed message from yesterday for more. Also, the entire worship service is available on our website, mthopelutheran.org/sermons.

In our adult connecting hour (10:30), we continued our CLASS 401, *Discovering My Life Mission*. This exciting and challenging study will lead us as we discover our mission in the world. We talked about Jesus' mission, *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* Luke 19:10

We know this mission of Jesus, but it is good for us to think deeply about Jesus' words. And then we are to join that mission, which is ours as well. *"This message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me."* Luke 24:47

We are excited to learn and grow in our witness to a hurting and broken world that desperately needs Jesus. Due to copyright issues, we cannot put these out on our YouTube page. Please let us know if you would like to participate and are not attending on Sundays so that we may provide copies of the sessions.

I continue to present our challenge prayer during this study that I would encourage all of us to be praying- **OFTEN**-is that the Lord will bring people into our lives who need to hear the HOPE that we have in the Lord Jesus. May we all pray for opportunities to share our faith in Jesus!

We continue to offer private communion on **Wednesdays and now Thursday mornings** as well. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive Holy Communion, Wednesday, October 21 or 22 between 10:00-1:00. If either day does not work, please let Kim know what does and I will work you in.

Thank you for your patience and support during these challenging times and thank you to all of you who are worshiping with us each week in-person and online.

Thank you also for all of your prayers, please keep them coming. God is faithful!
We are Mount Hope, *Where Guests become Friends, Friends become Family!*
Pastor Fran Green

Sunday's Message

October 18, 2020

I was sitting in Panera early Monday morning waiting to meet someone and the song playing inside grabbed my attention. Now, it wasn't that it was a great song, I guess it could be for some, but what drew me in was the words:

I don't want to die or fade away

I just wanna be someone, I just wanna be someone

I just wanna be somebody to someone, oh I wanna be somebody to someone...

Now, I'm guessing that the song is a plea for a romantic relationship; I don't know, but it is interesting to think about the apparent emptiness the writer of the song is expressing. I DESPERATELY NEED SOMEONE, I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY TO SOMEONE.

Just as we talked last week, we continue today answering these two questions; Who am I? and Why am I here? It is certainly no secret, but people, ALL PEOPLE, are relational beings. We need others in our life. Songs like this and thousands of others, highlight this truth of the human spirit.

The reality is, there is only one relationship that will satisfy the craving and desire of the heart. Of course, we need other people, but ultimately, we will never be content/satisfied until we have a relationship with Jesus. Further, we are meaning-craving machines. We need PURPOSE as well.

The epistle readings move into the book of 1 Thessalonians for the next few weeks and we will see how the message of Jesus impacts many of the people in Thessalonica. Let's look a little closer at 1 Thessalonians 1:1. This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. "We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace." Much like he does in other letters, Paul reminds the people WHO THEY ARE. You are the people of God, that should give you strength and peace in your life. We know it was normal practice for Paul to begin his preaching in the local Jewish synagogue or place of prayer, but most of the people in Thessalonica who came to believe his message were non-Jews. The message would have presented itself with some pretty big barriers for these pagans.

First, the Message of Jesus is pretty incredible. This man, Jesus, died and was brought back to life. It doesn't make sense Paul. Further, this was a Jewish message. Most people who heard Paul telling this incredible story as he traveled place to place must have thought he was out of his mind. It doesn't make any sense. And yet, many in Thessalonica came to believe the message.

VS 5-6 "For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord."

I love NT scholar, NT Wright's explanation of this passage:

Some in Thessalonica, as in most places he went, found that something happened to them when they listened to his message. A strange power gripped them – the power that, Paul would tell them, was the Holy Spirit at work. They would suddenly understand what he was saying. It would grasp their hearts and minds. Paul and his companions, explaining the gospel to them, would become excited as they saw the message take hold, make sense, and begin its work of transforming hearts and lives.

You are somebody! Paul is saying to them. You are part of the family, beloved by God – God has chosen you. That is quite an identity, wouldn't you say? You too are somebody! You too are part of the family, beloved by God – God has chosen you. That is who you are.

But, it doesn't stop there. You are somebody to someone as well. Your purpose is included in your identity. Why are you here? 1 Thessalonians 1:3 "As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ." Skipping down to verse 7:7-9 "As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia. And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God." This family of believers is known for their faith, hope, and the love they share. NT Wright continues:

The Thessalonian Christians had only been believers for a short time; we don't know how long, but it can't have been more than a year or so at the outside. But already people for hundreds of miles around were talking about this unheard-of thing: quite ordinary people had done something extraordinary, in response to an unexpected message. The only explanation was that the living God had been at work through the gospel message about Jesus.

You too, are somebody. You are somebody to someone. It is so amazing that we do not have to convince people of the Lord God's power. The Holy Spirit does the work. We simply love people where they are, we serve. We share the hope that we have; the hope that is grounded in our faith in the Lord Jesus.

In thinking about our Gospel reading for today, Matthew 22:15-22, Jesus is asked about money and giving to Caesar. Jesus first asks them, "Whose image is on the coin?" They answer "Caesars". Jesus responds with, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar and to God what is God's." The late author, speaker, and apologist Ravi Zacharias in talking about this section of Matthew would add, I wish our Lord would have added, "Whose image is on you?" "Whose image is on all people?" Yes, you are created in the image of God; the Creator's image is on you. Give yourself to the Lord. You are somebody! You are somebody to someone!

It is fitting that we are also talking about the LWML today and Jennifer will share more in a bit, but I would like to close with the LWML pledge.

The pledge describes what kingdom people do. By God's grace, this is what the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) does. It is well known for its emphasis on fruit production, as expressed in its pledge:
In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His Kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him.

Amen.

(© 1955 LWML authored by Rev. Harry Fricke)

Announcements

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are given to beautify our church. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday either sign up in the information hallway bulletin board or call Karen Mack 952-831-7428. October 25th Altar flowers were given by Karen Mueller in honor and thankfulness for my two daughters, Judy and Janet's birthdays the week of the 25th.

HYMN Bible Study

Our next Hymn Bible Study for ladies will be on Tuesday, November 17th at 6:30 pm in the Youth Room at Mt. Hope. Please read and complete Month 3-Weeks 1-4, before the get together. We will complete Week 5 and the Monthly Reflection as a group.

Book Club

Book Club will be meeting on Thursday, November 5th at 10 am at Renata Melby's house. Her address is 10727 Zenith Ave S in Bloomington. Depending on the weather we may be inside or out. We will be reading and discussing the book "Animal Farm". For December our read will be "American Dirt".

Action - Sharing Jesus' Love through October

Consider what it would be like to be a first responder-facing danger every day. Say a prayer each morning thanking God for these selfless servants and ask God's protection for them.

October is fire safety month, consider sending your fire station thank you cards and/or baked treats.

From Mt. Hope's Prayer Ministry:

It's Pastor Appreciation Month and we want to thank God for Pastor Fran. Do pray that God would grant him good health, both physical and spiritual and keep him safe from the influence of the evil one. Also, ask God to give him a heart of compassion toward those he leads and serves. May God continue to bless Pastor Fran and his ministry at Mt. Hope.



LWML Lutheran Women *in* Mission

Thank you for participating in the LWML Sunday celebration last Sunday and for your generous MITE offering. May God richly bless this treasure. If you would like to give online please go to the MN South LWML website at www.mnslwml.org. You may also give here at the church, just place your loose change in the big purple MITE box on the entry table. Thank you!

Pictures from the Great MNS Mission Get Together

Pastor Fran Green & Jennifer Adamek attended the gathering.



80 New Testament Bibles were given by our & a Thrivent Action Grant to:
New Freedom Store
Jehovah Lutheran Church
Jennifer Adamek & Pamela Hunter

30 Backpacks with Hygiene Kits, thermal mylar blankets & granola bars were given by our & a Thrivent Action Grant to:
New Freedom Store
Jehovah Lutheran Church



Questions about Lutheran Women in Mission contact Linda Q. at 952-237-526 or Jennifer A. at 952-451-5860.

Operation Christmas Child-Shoeboxes

Hello Mount Hope Family,

As you may know, Mount Hope has been putting together shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child for many years. This year is no exception.

Actually, with the state of the world due to the coronavirus pandemic, shoeboxes are needed more than ever to spread the word and love of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We are planning to pack 51 well packed boxes to do just so!

We still need \$150ish for shipping costs. The deadline for donations is November 1st.

Come and pack the Operation Child shoeboxes at church Thursday, November 5th from 6:00-7:00 pm in the gym. Masks are required, there will be gloves available if anyone needs them. Please call Carrie if you would like to come. We'll have to top the number of volunteers at 12.

Thank you so much! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask!

Carrie Newton - your Shoebox Ministry lead

mrscarrienewton@gmail.com

612-750-9956



Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30am In-Person Worship

Services online at

www.mthopelutheran.org

Phone: 952-888-5059

E-mail: church@mthopelutheran.org

Website: www.mthopelutheran.org

Youtube Channel: Mt. Hope Lutheran
Church

Mount Hope's Staff

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