

Calvary United Methodist Church
March 10, 2019

GUEST MISSIONARY SPEAKER
Rev. Michael Arteen

Children's Message (Pastor Bob Cook):

John 8:12-20

I'll ask our kids to come forward. Good morning. How are you, Mason? Good?

Well, this is now the beginning of a season called "Lent." You've heard of Lent? Okay. Well, it means to lengthen the days, which is why this morning when you got up it was an hour later than you thought it was. When you thought it was 5 o'clock it was really 6. But we all set our clocks back because you are here, right? So you are good. And tonight the sun won't set until 7:03. You will all like that. That is if we see it out there today. But it will be out, no problem.

So in Lent we walk with Jesus through his ministry and to the cross which takes us then to Easter. The first thing that happens when Jesus begins his ministry...he goes to this little place near Jericho and he prays and fasts for 40 days. Have you ever fasted? Not willingly, right? I mean when you are hungry, you are hungry. And there are people who get hangry. Have you heard of that? Some people have. (I have.) You have? It's when you are hungry and angry because you haven't eaten, right? I have members of my family...they get hangry.

Well, 40 days. He drank water, but he didn't eat. But he wanted to pray. And in the middle of that, what happens? The devil tempts him. He tempts him three different times. And Jesus knew that if he gave in to that temptation he wouldn't be listening to God and he wouldn't do what God wanted him to do. So, when we walk through Lent, we remember these things. Sometimes we do take a day and we fast or we might fast a meal. Or we take some extra time and we pray and we really think about what God wants us to do. And we'll always face temptation, which is how I got to be this big.

So, here's your temptation for the day...a nice big fluffy marshmallow (Oooo.) Would you like a nice big fluffy marshmallow? You may have one. Would you like one too? These are the biggest marshmallows I could find. They are pretty big, right? You can have one. Would you like another one? (No.) No? Would you like another one? Well, I'll tell you what. If you can not eat the rest of that marshmallow until the end of the service, I'll give you four. That's temptation. I guess you are not going to take me up on it.

Well, when we are tempted it is always a shortcut and God doesn't always want us to do shortcuts, which is why when you go to school tomorrow you have to have your homework ready, right? Did you already do it? Oh, that's tonight. Okay? Do you have homework yet? You'll have it the rest of your life. I'm old and I have homework all the time. So you have to do those things and you can't give in to temptation to: well, I think I'll just play one more vid-

eo game, watch one more TV program, hang out on the computer, see one more exciting u-tube video. Would you like another one? Do you think you could hold it until the end of the service? I know.

Well, one of the things that God did when Jesus was tempted is he sent angels to minister to him and take care of him and there are angels ministering here all around. Sometimes they have hands like yours and mine and sometimes they come in that way we don't always understand.

Jesus didn't take the devil's bait. He waited and because he did we are all here and he has changed our lives and our world.

So, let's pray: Thank you that in the midst of temptation you help us, Lord. But help us to do all the right things to honor and please you and to find that you bless us. In Christ's name. Amen.

Now, are you going to hold on to that until the end of the service and get four more? (No.) Ok, have a fruit snack then. Do you want to hold on to that until the end of the service?

Message (Rev. Michael Arteen):

It is a pleasure and joy to be here. Grace and I are very happy to be here with all of you, as we are celebrating and we enter the Lent season, we rejoice in the Lord. As we remember last week the story, the great story of the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ, we always remind ourselves to give him all the glory, because it is all about him and he is worthy. Would you say "amen" with me? (Amen) Amen. Are we still asleep or awake? (AMEN) I know it is cold, but it's warm in the spirits. Yes, and we praise the Lord, we give him all the glory wherever we go because it is all because of the Lord Jesus.

Because of the Lord Jesus I am standing here before all of you. I am very happy and honored to share the Word of God with all of you. As Pastor introduced me, my name is Mike Arteen and I come originally from Egypt. I surrendered my life to the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and my Master at the age of 14. And since then I'm experiencing all the joy with the Lord, even among difficulties. We are going through difficulties right now, but we still enjoying the journey with the Lord. Do you enjoy the journey with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you rejoice even in the midst of troubles, problems, difficulties? In our part of the world, it is tough or let me say it is a mess right now in the Middle East. I'm so sad to say so, but this is what is happening. And among all the difficulties over there you will find people rejoicing in the Lord. When you enter the church, or even from outside, you will hear the sounds of the rejoicing and singing and praising the Lord. People are happy. Some of them are dancing and you wonder sometimes, there is a huge difference between what is happening inside the church and what is going on outside of the church, but you will find the answer in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason of the happiness and the joy and we rejoice in the Lord. We give him all the glory.

The passage I wanted to share with you all this morning is about walking with the Lord, walking with Christ. Are we willing and ready to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ? This is the question and this is the challenge we have to ask and examine ourselves: Are we ready to walk with the Lord? It is not easy always. Sometimes it is difficult and tough. Sometimes it is painful, but it's enjoyable to feel the Lord by your side, to feel the Lord walking with you the walk. It is enjoyable. It helps us to forget our pain and suffering and the tough time we are going through.

Jesus is the light of the world and we remember the great work he has done on our behalf on the cross. We give him all the glory because he is worthy to have all the glory. Walking with the Lord, walking by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit will help us to overcome all the desires and the deeds of the flesh. Sometimes we try hard by ourselves to overcome our flesh and the desires and the needs of the flesh, but it is difficult. We need the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to help and guide us to overcome all the work and the deeds of the flesh. And Lord Jesus had promised us when he will go up with the Father he will send us the Holy Spirit to accompany us in our journey, to guide us on our path, to help us to overcome the deeds of the flesh that we often try hard to overcome and sometimes we fail, but we have the promise of the Lord Jesus that the Holy Spirit is with us, in us, to help us to overcome the bad things that we don't want to do. Let's trust in the Lord, put our trust in the Lord Jesus and in the Holy Spirit and walk in the Holy Spirit. That will help us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. We often want to love one another, we often want to enjoy and have joy in our life. We often want to deal with others in kindness and gentleness. The Spirit will help us, will lead us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, peace, love, joy. We all need that and by the Holy Spirit, when we walk by the Spirit, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit. A man walking by the Spirit, we all need to walk by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of the Lord. Walking by the Spirit.

But also walk in love. Walking in love, we all need to love one another, right? We cannot be sitting here in the church worshipping the Lord, praising the Lord if we don't have love for one another. We need to have the love. Love is the greatest according to 1 Corinthians 13:13. Faith and hope and love, but love is the greatest. We have to have the love for one another. Love is the greatest. But love also witnesses. It is the witnessing that we are the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 13:35. That's how people from outside can know we are Jesus' disciples, when we have love to one another. Where we serve the Lord in Palestine we pray and we ask the Lord for the situation over there. It is very difficult. You often find the spirit of hatred between Israelis, Palestinians due to the conflict and the situation going on. We pray, "Lord, why those people cannot love one another? Why? What's the problem? There is a huge land for everyone to live in. Why they just can't live with one another? What's the problem?" They don't have the Lord in their hearts. They are missing Christ in their hearts. But when they have the Lord Jesus, they get to have the love to one another. And they can easily find the solution for the problem going on. They can easily live with one another in peace if they have the love of the Lord Jesus.

So, I encourage you to pray. Some parts of the world are suffering. Lack of love. Lack of love. But we are Christ's disciples. We are called to love one another because the Lord has loved us first and He has done an amazing job on our behalf on the cross. We much love one another. Love is the greatest and love is witnessing that we are Jesus Christ's disciples. Walking by the Spirit, walking in love.

But also walking as a children of light. Walking as the children of light because he is the light. Jesus Christ is the light. He has no darkness at all and we must reflect his light. We just reflect his light to others. The first question I ask the Lord when I went to serve the Lord in Bethlehem. Of course it wasn't in my imagination growing up in Egypt that one day I would be serving the Lord in Bethlehem, his birthplace. The Lord honored me and it was a surprise. And I often say when we walk by faith with the Lord, the Lord surprises us. Do you agree with me? When we walk by faith with the Lord Jesus Christ he surprises us in a good way, of course. In a good way. And the Lord surprised me. I wasn't even dreaming one day to minister as serve his name in Bethlehem, his birthplace. It was an honor. But when I went there I find a difficult situation going on and I asked the Lord: What shall I do here? How can I help those people? What do you want me to do, Lord, in this place? And the answer I often received is: Just reflect my light to others, just be a faithful steward and reflect my light to others.

People need to see the light of Christ, to overcome the darkness within them. And that's what we get to do: reflect his light to others. Shine the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not from us, it's not because we are so good. No, it's all because of him, it's all because of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are reflecting his light to others, reflecting the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. But can you imagine with me if there is a sin within me, if there is something wrong happening in my life, can I reflect his light to others? Of course I can and that's what we need to do, to examine ourselves within the light of Christ. Are we faithful? Are we faithful to you, Lord? Are we ready to reflect your light to others or is there a sin or something that does not please you happening in our life that we need to repent, that we need to stop doing so we can reflect your light to others. Reflect the light of the Lord Jesus Christ; that's what we are here for, reflecting the light of Jesus Christ. He is the light that can lighten every humankind. His light overcomes any darkness, whatever is the darkness, his light overcomes it. And he had transferred us from the darkness into his marvelous light. We are all transferred from the darkness into his marvelous light.

We owe him a lot, do you agree with me? We owe the Lord Jesus Christ a lot. And we have to be working, we've got to work for his kingdom, reflecting his light to others. Our colleagues at work, our neighbors, if we are studying our friends in schools or college, reflect the light of Christ to others so they may know about him, so they may come and accept him as a Savior. This is the greatest desire for any disciple of the Lord Jesus, to bear fruits for the Kingdom. Bear fruits for the Kingdom. And he is with us. The Lord Jesus equips us so we can be a faithful steward and serve him and minister to others.

How can we reflect his light? After we examine ourselves, after we make sure that we are living the holy life that pleases him, the Word of the Lord, the Gospel, the Scripture will guide us. As the words in the song it says: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and the light to my path. The words of God is a lamp and the light. God speaks to us in his words. Every morning He wants to tell us a message, an encouragement verse. Do we eat from the Word of God? Do we meditate on the Word of God? We need that for sure. With the Holy Spirit in us that will help us to be a light to the world, salt for the earth, sweet aroma for Christ, shining to others. Amen? You all agree with me? Back home whether in Egypt or in Bethlehem when I say Amen I hear strong Amen, very loud amen. Amen. (AMEN.) Good job.

Walking by the Spirit. Walking in Love. And walking as children of light. But also very important walk is to walk carefully. Walk carefully, please. The Lord wants to encourage us today to walk carefully. Nothing wrong with that. Walk carefully with the Lord. Just be careful from any sin that might interrupt our walk with the Lord. Please walk carefully with the Lord. Little children when they just start to learn how to walk, they walk very carefully, right? And we must learn from that. We need to walk carefully from any sin in our path. So we just want to walk in the holy life as a holy to the Lord because our Father and Master is a holy God and we need to follow his steps, walking holy, walking carefully. Be careful of sin.

Joseph, he was walking so carefully with God and when the sin came to him, he asked a very important question: How can I do this and sin against God? How can I do this and sin against God? And that's what we shall remind ourselves: how can I do this whatever it is and sin against God? We need to be careful of the sin. We need to walk faithfully before the Lord. Walk with integrity. Walk with integrity before the Lord. This is the life that pleases the Lord, when we live holy for Him and never underestimate any sin, but we are called to escape, flee from any sin. Sometimes to be brave is to stand and face things but in this aspect we are called to flee of sin, escape of sin. Just escape to the Lord from the sin. Just leave it behind you as Joseph did and escape. Flee. Do not underestimate sin. Be careful of any sin. Refuse to defile by anything that does not please the Lord as Daniel did. Even from food which was not pleasant to the Lord he refused to defile with it. And the Lord blessed him. The Lord rewarded him.

Be careful, walking carefully with the Lord. He is the most important thing in our life. Everything else comes behind and after, so our goal, our heart desire is to please him. Lord, our heart desire is to please you in our life. Let it be our prayer today as we have entered the Lent season. Lord, our heart desire is to please you. Whatever you want us to do, Lord, we will do it, we want to please you.

When I felt the calling to go and serve the Lord outside of the United States, it wasn't an easy decision, of course. And especially when the Lord guided me to go to Bethlehem, Israel, Palestine. It was a very difficult decision. Even my family back in Egypt, by parents, were wondering who would leave the United States and go to live in Israel, Palestine. This precious country, America, the land of dreams, do you know that? This is the land of dreams for

many many people all over the world. And they just want and dream to come and live here. There is much goodness in this country and of course wherever I go I say God bless America as this country has blessed many people over the years, supported many families, people came here, immigrated and worked and sent support and financial support to their families building homes in their countries, helping many many many countries in Africa and Asia and different parts. Who would leave America and go out? But when the Lord asks, we must say: Here I am, Lord. When the Lord asks whom shall I send? We must say: Here I am, Lord, send me wherever you want me to be. I am for you, I am with you, Lord. I am ready for your calling.

Are you ready for the calling of the Lord Jesus Christ? I didn't hear...I hear a few yeses. Are you ready for the calling, if the Lord calls you? (Yes.) Better to be yes, even if it is not easy yes, but it's pleasant, it is pleasant to serve the Lord. It is pleasant to carry his name. What an honor, what a joy, to carry the name a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an honor. He is worthy. Walking carefully.

The last point I want to speak about is walk in wisdom. Walking in wisdom. It is very important and when the Lord Jesus Christ sent his disciples for missions and for ministry, he told them: be wise. Be wise. The Lord is telling every one of us today: please be wise. We need wisdom in our walking with the Lord, in our path with the Lord we need to be wise. Wisdom. The Lord promised us that He would never leave us nor forsake us and He promised to give us wisdom in what we do, in what we speak, even if there is a persecution, tribulation, the Lord promised to give us wisdom and the Lord keeps his promises. If he promised with one thing, he keeps his promise and fulfills all his promises and He gives us wisdom. We need to have this wisdom when we minister to others, in whatever we speak we need to be encouraging to one another, to be a blessing to one another, to be kind with one another. We need wisdom in our ministry, among difficulties, persecution and in the way that we walk with the Lord. We need wisdom so we can please him and be helpful to others as well. But if we lack wisdom, we have to answer when James tells us in the first chapter, verse 5: if we lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you. If you need wisdom, you ask and it will be given to you. Lord, may you give us wisdom today. Please, Lord, give us wisdom so we can be helpful to you and to others as well. We need to ask for wisdom, his wisdom.

Walking by the Spirit. Walking in love. Walking as the children of light. Walking carefully. But also walking in wisdom, walking with the Lord. As close as we get to the Lord Jesus, we will be able to walk with him faithfully and honestly. We need to get close to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all what we need. We need to get close to him. We need to read the Word of God more. We need to spend more time in prayers, to change into his image every day. That's all that we need: to change into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ every day. He is the perfect, the great image of God and we need to be changing into this image every day. What a joy, what an honor to change into the image of Christ, to be his litter, Christ's litter, to be his light and salt for the earth. Lord, help us today to change into your image. Will you

say amen with me? (Amen.) Walking with the Lord, walking with the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, I encourage you but I urge you as well. It is an enjoyable walk, reliable walk, achievable walk when you walk with the Lord Jesus. I did experience that joy in my life, walking with the Lord. Every day I feel his presence in my life, I live in his goodness, grace and mercy. I give him all the glory because he is worthy. Take the decision in your heart today to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ and I promise you, you will never regret. You will experience joy every day because all answers for all questions are in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of all our heart desires.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, we do thank you and glorify your name on this great day, Lord. Lord, we do love you as you have loved us first, Lord. We thank you for the great complete work you have done on the cross on our behalf. Lord, we give you all the glory as you have transferred us from the darkness, Lord, into your marvelous light. We thank you, Lord. You have enlightened our hearts, Lord, with your great amazing light, that light that overcomes any darkness and every darkness. Lord, help us to walk faithfully before you. Lord, help us to please you. Lord, help us to serve and glorify your name, Lord. That's all that we need in our life. That's what we are here for, to help and glorify your name and to bear fruit for your kingdom, Lord. Help us to bear fruit for your kingdom, to be fruitful. Lord, help us to fix our eyes on you as you are the author and the finisher of our faith. We love you, Lord. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, help us to walk in love, Lord. Help us to be as children of light and to overcome any darkness within us, Lord. We thank you, Lord, because you have promised us you will be with us, you will never leave us nor forsake us, Lord, and we do experience your presence with us every day. We thank you and we glorify your name. I pray for my brothers and sisters, Lord, blessings. Take them into new depth in you, Lord, so they can know you better and more every day, to change into your image, Lord. We thank you as you listen to our prayers and you respond. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.