

Worship Service: Sunday February 5, 2017
5th Sunday after Epiphany
Theme: "Christ's Light Shines Through our Work and Witness"

WE GATHER – A BLESSED PEOPLE

*Call to Worship:

One: Sunrise breaks through the darkness.

Many: God's grace, mercy and justice shine forth.

One: Come as you are, with devotion and doubt, with weariness and wonder.

Many: God's peace and God's love are present here.

One: Come, worship and know you are loved.

*Hymn: "**I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say**" BoP#671

*God's Greeting (*from 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

(Our Lord has called us to worship and now greets us.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

(As God has greeted us with his peace,
so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.

*The Sharing of the Peace (*We greet each other saying, "The Peace of Christ be with you"*)

*Song: "**Hope of the Nations**"

Jesus hope of the nations
Jesus comfort for all who mourn
You are the source of heaven's hope on earth
Jesus light in the darkness
Jesus truth in each circumstance
You are the source of heaven's light on earth

In history You lived and died
You broke the chains You rose to life

You are the hope living in us
You are the Rock in whom we trust
You are the light shining for all the world to see
You rose from the dead conquering fear
Our Prince of Peace drawing us near
Jesus our hope living for all who will receive
Lord we believe

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WE ARE RENEWED IN GOD'S GRACE

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Reader 1: Perfect Light of revelation,
as you shone in the life of Jesus,
whose epiphany we celebrate,
so shine in us and through us,
that we may become beacons of truth and compassion,
enlightening all creation with deeds of justice and mercy.
Amen.

Reader 2: O God,
you spoke your word
and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ.
Fill all creation with that word again,
so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations
and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples,
we may become one living body,
your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.

**All: Light of the world,
In the sparkle of the snowflake, we see your gentle beauty.
In the towering frosted treetops, we are reminded of your splendour.**

**You created each hibernating animal and every chirping bird.
Even in the cold of winter your creation amazes.
We thank you for blessing the world with such beauty and giving us a place within it. Yet we confess that too often we take your creation for granted.
We squander your gifts and ignore our responsibility.
Sin and pride take us over; selfish wants consume our thoughts.
Forgive us we pray.
Take away whatever holds us back from living fully in your light and loving your world.**

Assurance of God's Pardon:

Amidst the darkness of all our sin, Christ shines a redeeming light. In him we are forgiven, restored and made new.
Thanks be to God.

Song of Commitment: **"Bring Forth the Kingdom"**

1 You are salt for the earth, O people:
salt for the kingdom of God!
Share the flavour of life, O people:
life in the kingdom of God!

Refrain:
Bring forth the kingdom of mercy;
pray for the kingdom of peace:
work for the kingdom of justice;
hope for the city of God!

2 You are a light on a hill, O people:
light for the city of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people:
Shine for the kingdom of God! *Refrain*

3 You are a seed of the Word, O people:
live for the kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
grow in the kingdom of God! *Refrain*

Words and Music: Marty Haugen, based on Matthew 5:13-16
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Youth message: **“Let it Shine”**

Youth Song: **“This Little Light of Mine”**

1 This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine;
this little light of mine;

Refrain

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.

2 Hide it under a basket? No!
I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a basket? No! *Refrain*

3 Don't let anyone blow it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Don't let anyone blow it out. *Refrain*

4 Share my light with others! Yes!
I'm gonna let it shine.
Share my light with others! Yes! *Refrain*

Words and Music: Traditional

GOD SPEAKS TO US FROM HIS WORD

Prayer for Understanding

The Reading of Scripture:

Psalm 112: 1-9
1 Corinthians 2:13-16

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Sermon: **“Enlightened by the Spirit”**

Text: 1 Corinthians 2: 13-16

Theme: "Enlightened by the Spirit"

Paul in trying to help the Christians in Corinth understand their faith and how God reveals himself points out three ways in which the truth of God's word is revealed to God's people.

1. It is given through REVELATION (vs 9-12)

God reveals previously unknown truths to humanity by the Holy Spirit. These truths were made known supernaturally by the Spirit of God. Some of the questions I asked when I just became a Christian was, "how are people able to preach and share the message of God's grace?" "How are people able to read a scripture and then share what it means with a congregation or group?" "How does a Pastor come up with sermon every Sunday and how are they able to keep them new in a changing world?"

A lot of these questions were answered when I entered theological college to be trained as a minister of Word and Sacrament. I learnt a whole lot in theological college and a lot of what I learnt helped to form my understanding of God's word and what it really means to my life. Regardless of all that I have learnt, none of that enabled me to do justice to the Gospel of Christ as it is what has been revealed by God that helps anyone truly understand what they preach. I had very brilliant lecturers who were well learnt and helped us understand very well some of the essentials of the faith. It is not merely what they taught that helped us survive in Ministry because very often you sit down to prepare sermons and nothing clicks, the studies can't provide a spark; no matter how much you read books you just can't see through some biblical texts. The point is friends, we are only able to share whatever truths the Lord reveals to us as God's word comes only through revelation through the scriptures by God's Spirit.

9 But, as it is written,

***"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him"—***

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the

spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

2. Secondly, there is INSPIRATION (verse 13)

In transmitting these truths the Apostle and all the other inspired writers of the Bible gave us what the Holy spirit taught them through the scriptures. There were many brilliant men and women in Corinth who were part of the life of the church. There were also those there who were heavily influenced by the teachers, astrologers and philosophers of that day and age. Paul knew this and was trying to make them understand that in their sharing of the truths of Christ their only inspiration comes from God. He wanted them to know very clearly that it was God's spirit that inspired men and women to do God's work and no matter how learnt people were, there was an ending point to the inspiration they gave.

There were many preachers in Jamaica who inspired me greatly as a young Christian and I admired them greatly. Dr. Burchell Taylor, Dr. Paul Thompson, Bishop Delford Davis and many others. I remember growing up and listening to Billy Graham and thought that he must have been physically hearing from Jesus himself when he prepared to preach.

You see friends, we will have many human influences in our lives but it takes a special kind of inspiration for us to effectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many could not understand Jesus' motivation when he made his dwelling with the lowly, the poor, the marginalized and those who were suffering and sick. Jesus was inspired by God's power to change people's circumstances, no matter who they are. Like Jesus and the Apostle Paul we too are inspired by the Holy Spirit to be God's shining stars in this rather dark and troubled world.

13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.[d]

3. Finally, there is ILLUMINATION (verses 14-16)

Not only must these truths be miraculously revealed and miraculously inspired, but they can only be understood by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that enlightens us so that we come to a proper understanding of what scripture means. We can only preach the truth of the Gospel and live by that same truth when we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Our preaching and sharing of the word with other begins after we have come to a clear understanding of what the scripture means in our lives. That understanding is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. There are many people who know theology and biblical languages and so on; lawyers, doctors, scientists, astrologers, geologists just to name a few. Know theology and having a knowledge of biblical languages does not enable us to understand and share the word. We are only illumined by the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

14 Those who are unspiritual[e] do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

**16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.**

Like the Apostle Paul, we have heard the Macedonian call coming clear and we pray that God will send the light so that we will enlighten others. Amen.

Song of Response: **"Lord, the Light of Your Love is Shining"** BoP#376

Prayers of God's People, concluding with the Lord's Prayer

WE BRING OUR GIFTS

Work and Witness of our Church

A Time of Giving

*Sung Response: **"Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow"** BoP#79

WE ARE SENT...A BLESSED PEOPLE

*The Benediction

*Recessional Song: **"We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"** BoP#765

