

Worship on January 10th, 2020

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP# 349 – My hope is built on nothing less
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture Psalm 1:1-3
- Sermon: Successful Life?

We Respond

- Prayer for the people of God
- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – BOP# 625 – Seek ye first

We Serve

- Benediction
- Postlude (Paul T.)

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us live right now and those who are worshipping God through this video. This is Jan. 10, 2021. How is your new year going so far? I hope and pray that this year may be filled with God. Let us seek the face of the Lord together as we worship God.

. Today, we have a sad news. Our long time active member Enid Maize was passed away on Jan. 7. We don't have any information other than that. Let us pray for her family.

. The Purpose Driven Life Bible study will start on Thursday, Jan. 21st, 2021 @ 7pm – via ZOOM – link will sent through email. If the majority of participants need the book, we might be able to consider buying it together. So, let me know.

. Thank you for your offerings. May this year 2021 treat us better than last year. May our gifts shine the light to the darkness of this world.

As we come into the presence of our God, let us calm down our hearts and minds, and focus on our Lord.

Responsive Call to Worship

One: The time has come! **All: The time is now!**

One: The reign of God has drawn near. **All: The kingdom of heaven is here.**

One: Let us turn our lives around and accept the good news.

All: Let us hear and follow Christ who calls us to follow. We worship in his name.

Praise song – BOP #349 – My hope is built on nothing less ---- PPT

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of tenderness and strength, of possibility and power, on this Sunday, the first day of the week, you began creating, bringing light out of darkness and order out of chaos. On this first day of the week, you began your new creation, raising Christ out of the darkness of death and breathing new life into your world and your people. On this first day of the week, you call us to waken from our slumbers and gather in your holy name. We gather to listen and wonder, sing, pray, and be fed. You call us to be your instruments of hope in a hurting world, and so we gather to answer your call and bring you our prayer and praise.

Trusting in God's steadfast love, we offer our prayers of confession:

God of majesty and mercy, forgive our wrongdoing: things we have done knowingly... things we have left undone... hurts we have inflicted unintentionally... and hurts we have tried to disguise. Forgive our acts of selfishness, harmful things we have done to please others, and those done to please ourselves. In the week ahead and the year ahead, help us choose a better way.

This time, we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers at St. Andrew's, Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Believe the good news of the Gospel! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free to make a new start. Thanks be to God.

Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the wisdom of the Lord.

Prayer for Illumination:

God, as we come to the scriptures, to hear your Word for us, we pray that your Spirit will stir our imaginations, add to our insight, and challenge our assumptions, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-3

1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread,

or sit in the seat of scoffers; 2 but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: Successful life?

Successful life. That's what everyone wants.

When we think about our success, what words can you think of?

“money, health, family, passion, love, friends, value, fun, fame, respect, happiness...”

These are the examples of words we can think of. I am sure that you can think of more.

To achieve a successful life, what do we do?

In our daily lives, we do our best. For our passion, we pour out our energy. We pour out our lives to succeed. Where do we invest most of our time? These days, we talk about Work Life Balance.

But, still, those who are eager to succeed ignore this. They work work work. They put most of their time and energy in their work. Why? To succeed.

Then, we need to pause at this moment. What is succeed? What is successful life? We are the people of God and we have God's life in us. And we are bearing the image of God. And most importantly, we have hope for eternity. In other words, this worldly life is a moment for us because we are hoping to stay with God ETERNALLY.

Again, where do we pour our out passion?

We need to use our life for the most valuable thing, most appealing thing, most interesting thing, most worthy thing, most meaningful thing.

Our question of the day is, what is the centre of our life. Where do we invest ourselves?

For most of us, this is our reality.

As believers, Jesus followers, or Christians, we value our faith. However, we chase stable life. In other words, we love money and there is no difference between believers and non-believers when we talk about reality of life, or maintaining our lives.

Are there any differences you can think of? Then, we can have our discussions with Ponder Upon Questions.

Believers believe that God has some plans for everyone. God gave each of us different characteristics and abilities, so that we are to serve God in different areas of the kingdom of God.

Then, why do we pursue the same thing? All human wants to become rich. These days, as a lot of people talk about Work and Life Balance or Minimalism, many people are content with the things given to them. However, still, we have desires to have more. We want to be rich.

There are many people who look up to Mother Teresa, who was humble and lived a serving life helping orphans and poor people. But, there are few people who want to live their lives like Mother Teresa. In our real life, most of us are eager to be like Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, or Bill Gates, the richest people in the planet.

We sure have desire to live a good life. But, who are the examples of good life? Mother Teresa? Bill Gates? Jeff Bezos? Warren Buffet? Steve Jobs? Billy Graham?

Who is our role model for a good life? Who do we want to learn from? What kind of passion do we have? Where do we want to pour out our lives?

Average life span in Canada currently is 82.5 years. Someone compares a human life to a battery. Battery has a lifespan. In the same way, we have lifespan. We all die like a battery. Some batteries go into TV remote controllers. Some go into a wireless mouse. Some go into a flashlight. A battery is used in different places for different purposes. Human, likewise, we spend our lives in study, in different jobs, in many different things. But, there is an end.

In our today's passage, a good man or a blessed man doesn't walk with the wicked, nor stand with them, nor sit down with them. But, a good man enjoys the word of God. Look at this as progression.

When we want to hang out with someone, we chase them. We walk with someone we want to be together. And we stand together and have a chat, like small talks. And then, we sit down together and spend more time together. And eventually, we become alike.

Psalm 1:1, Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

Listen to NIV, "**Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,**

This is what blessed people do not do. Then, let's see what the blessed people do. **V2, "whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night. V3, That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers."**

Different ends of different lives.

So, here's the question again. What is in the centre of our lives? What is a successful life in our real life? What is not walking with the wicked? What is not standing with the sinners? What is not sitting in with scoffers?

And what is delighting the law of the Lord, the word of God? What is in the centre of our life?

I committed my life to God when I was sixteen. I thought it is the most meaningful way to use my life. I love worshipping God, I love God's word, I love to learn and discuss faith matters. I love to study God's word with people and help others to see truth of God. That is why I thought to be a pastor is the best way to use my life to please God and honor God.

However, after serving many different churches over 10 years, I have different idea about choosing a career. Being a pastor is awesome. I love it. But, to please God, becoming a pastor, becoming a chief, becoming a bank teller, becoming a doctor, UBER driver, computer engineer, or any job titles does not matter. What titles you have does not count for God. As I witness many lives of believers, I concluded that God counts how we live our daily lives over what we become.

So, what is the most successful life? It is life being with God, walking with God, and having close relationship with God. That is the best life we can live.

But, what does it look like? I don't know; you tell me. Each individual has to answer this question by standing before God alone. Our God is very personal God. He comes to us with many different ways according to our own needs. He knows the exact ways each person needs. So, let us ask God to lead us to the best life we can live. It is not about having more, doing more, but being with God.

Before prayer, I will introduce Ponder Upon Questions for today. Each Sunday, I prepare few questions so we search for the meaning of our lives and deeper connection with God.

Ponder Upon Questions.

- 1) What is in the centre of my heart now?
- 2) What kind of life do I want to live? What is the picture of my best life?
- 3) What is the plan that God has for me?
- 4) How can I invite God in my life?

I hope and pray that in this year 2021, all of us can engage deeper and personal relationship with God.

Let us pray.

Loving Father God, we thank you that you are with us. You love us and you care for us. And you want to walk with us all through our lives. We believe that you are holding our hands all the time. When we walk in the wicked path, help us get back to the right track. When we stand with sinners, alert us to come back. And when we sit down with mockers, have mercy upon us and turn our eyes toward you, so we can fix our eyes and life to you. Help us survey our honest hearts, help us know where we are and make us desperate for you. We want to have you in our centre of our hearts. Watch over us and be praised through our lives. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people of God

Gracious and loving Father God, we stand before you with humble hearts. We are like flowers fading. We are weak. So, we come to you and take you as our shelter. Cover us under your wings and protect us with your love.

We pray for our congregation. First days of the new year, we lost Enid Maze, our church family. Comfort our hearts and give peace among us. Give us your heart that we rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. Especially, we pray for our church family and Enid's family, fill our hearts with confidence that you are holding Enid in your arms and give us hope for your kingdom in eternally.

Also, we pray for the people who are in need in our congregation. Help us connect more spiritually in prayers for each other in this time of physical disconnection. We want to remember those we are experiencing physical pains, emotional difficulties, and situational challenges. Strengthen their body and mind and give them power to overcome. Because we are walking with you, because you are holding our hands, we are safe and secure. Help us stand strong.

We pray for corona virus pandemic. Few day ago, it was 3500 COVID cases, but not it's 4300 cases. It's increasing exponentially. Our daily activities are very limited. The world is in panic. 2nd wave or 3rd wave.. we don't know what's gonna come next. Merciful God, we repent before you. We did not maintain your creation as good stewards. So, we are turning back to you and ask you for wisdom and mercy and power to restore the broken world. Give us same heart so we can actively protect this earth and change our careless and wasteful lifestyle.

As your people, we seek peace. Peace with you, peace within ourselves, peace with each other, and peace with your creation. Help us and be with us. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. In the season of Epiphany, God's gift to us in Christ is revealed to the world. Our gifts to God in Christ's name reveal our commitment to the love and mercy, the forgiveness and hope we have received. May our generosity mirror our trust in him. Let us pray for the offering first.

Offering prayer:

God our Maker, we bring our gifts to you in thanksgiving for your gifts to us in Christ and in creation. Bless what we bring and who we are, so that our gifts will bless the world you love in Christ's name. Amen.

Let the Lord's offering be received as we sing our hymn.

Offering – BOP # 625 – Seek ye first

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. What are we gonna hold in our hearts as we carry on our daily responsibilities? What are we gonna focus on in our everyday life? Coram Deo. It means "in the presence of God." Live with him and be in the presence of God every moment of our lives.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

- 1) What is in the centre of my heart now?
- 2) What kind of life do I want to live? What is the picture of my best life?
- 3) What is the plan that God has for me?
- 4) How can I invite God in my life?