

Worship on March 28, 2021 –Palm Sunday

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP # 374 – Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Galatians 2:15-21
- Sermon: Who loved me and gave himself for me
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering (invitation and prayer first)
- Offertory Hymn – BOP # 445 – Open our eyes, Lord

We Serve

- Benediction

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 March 28, 2021. It is Palm Sunday which the Passion week begins. As we worship today and remember Jesus during the week, let us honour his love and sacrifice.
- . Lent Prayer Challenge – it is to pray for a person each day during the Lent.
- . Ralph Jessup was passed away on March 20, 2021.
- . The Purpose Driven Life will resume on April 11th. For Bible study with discussion questions, please stay after the worship. We will still share and pray for each other.
- . If anyone wants to volunteer to participate in worship, please let me know.
- . Next week is Easter Sunday. Sadly, we won't be able to have in-person gathering, yet, let us spread greeting with the love of Jesus and invite friends to join our worship. I will tell you a little secret today. Zoom link we are sending you every week, is the same link for many many weeks. I am going to use the same link for a long time. So, it is safe to save the link for yourself, and spread the link to your friends.
- . Good Friday service is on April 2nd, @ 10:30 am via Zoom. – it will be the same link as well.
- . Thank you for your support with your gifts. May God use us and our gifts for his kingdom.

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: Jerusalem, at last! We join the crowd streaming to the mountain. We watch Jesus approach on a lowly donkey. We hear the crowds cry "Hosanna!"

All: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

One: There is a joyful song in the air: the people cheer and the palms wave. But the adulation of the crowd is shallow.

All: Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna to the blessed of God. Son of David, save us now.

One: The crowd grows—the people want to be part of something important.

All: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

One: Let us pray.

All: God of all times, we have followed Jesus into the crowded city. We too want to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Reveal to us what true glory, leadership and obedience look like under your reign. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Praise song – BOP #374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of all people and all places, God of all situations and all times, you are the light of the minds that know you, and the strength of those who serve you in times of challenge and times of joy.

We come to worship you this day, setting aside our work and responsibilities, our relaxation and pastimes, to listen for your voice and reflect on the wisdom and courage we witness in Jesus. As tension mounts for him and for us, we turn to you for hope and healing, for courage and compassion.

God of compassion, we confess that we prefer darkness to your light, and our ways to yours. We do what is easy rather than what is right. We have been dishonest with ourselves and each other. Forgive our fleeting enthusiasms and shallow commitments. As we witness again the story of Jesus confronting his enemies, strengthen our desire to follow him and serve you with courage like his.

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 in Christ at St. Andrew's, apostle John records Jesus' words: I do not call you servants any longer, but I have called you friends. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. Dear friends, Christ has laid down his life for us and invites us to love one another as he has loved us. Rejoice in his redeeming love and share it with each other day by day..

Prayer for Illumination:

God of truth and wisdom, Jesus, your Living Word, confronted those who stood against him with your truth. Send us your Holy Spirit to hear your truth again in his story. Inspire us with his courage and conviction that we may love you more fully and serve you with wisdom and truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: Galatians 2:15-21

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. **“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”**

SERMON: Who loved me and gave himself for me

Today's title is “who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Today's scripture talks about how we are justified. It is not by the works of the law. In other words, keeping laws cannot make us free from our sins. Also, if we can be justified by what we do, then, why do we need Christ?

Jews were the people of God's laws. They were chosen and they thought they were the only ones who were justified from their birth. And everyone else, Gentiles, would never be justified by God because they were not in the laws of God.

However, Jesus Christ came and opened the way to God for everybody.

Today is Palm Sunday. This is the day Jesus walked into Jerusalem. People welcomed Jesus. They cried out “Hosanna!” Save us! Be our political leader and be our king! Save us, Hosanna!

So, is this a victorious day for Christians? Jesus was welcomed and Jesus was lifted. Everyone calls out his name. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! So, is it a great day for Jesus?

Fame, people's love, the energy all over the city because of Jesus. How would Jesus feel about that?

Do you know what Jesus did immediately after entering Jerusalem?

Matthew 21:12, “Jesus went straight to the Temple and threw out everyone who had set up shop, buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of loan sharks and the stalls of dove merchants.” (MSG)

“He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.” (NRSV)

Very strange course. It's like pouring out ice cold water. Jesus put off the excitement of the entire city.

WHY? Why couldn't Jesus leave them alone so that they can enjoy the feeling of excitement?

Jesus knew that it was not from their true faith, but from their own desires.

Jesus came to us with a clear purpose. **Matthew 20:28, “Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”**

Jesus knew which course he had to walk. And that was not the same as what people wanted.

Jesus is the only One who is God and human at the same time.

Can you think of any other gods people believe and worship and call out their names?

I googled “gods of the world.” Someone posted 15 most worshipped deities.

Jesus, Allah, Shiva, Buddha, Brahma, Ganesha, Mahavira, Vishnu... etc.

I haven't studied all other gods, with small g. But, when you think of worship, what kind of images you get? From the Bible, people worshipped Baal and Asherah. They bowed down before the statues of their images. We try to serve gods in various ways.

But, what did Jesus say? “I am not here to be served but to serve as a ransom for many.”

What kind of gods have ever did something like this?

“I am God (with capital G) but I am here to serve! I will sacrifice myself for you. I will give my life for you. I will die for you so that you can live.”

There are some gods in the Bible with small g. But, no gods ever said that. Have you ever heard anything similar to this from other than Jesus Christ?

No one. No other gods with small g.

There is none like our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ.

Today's scripture, Paul writes, **vs. 20, “And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”**

Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple. He did not take the love and fame from people's wrong desires. But, he chose the suffering. He chose the cross. He chose the death, the death breaking the power of Death. Jesus died to defeat Death.

Jeremiah 10:11, ¹¹ Thus shall you say to them: The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.

There is no other gods than our Lord Jesus Christ in the whole world, in the whole universe!

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to JESUS the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

There are so many witnesses experiencing the grace of Jesus. They were in the time of Jesus.

They were in everywhere in our history. And they are everywhere in our present time. And they will be everywhere in future. Jesus is the one we ought to fix our eyes on. Because Jesus didn't come to us to be served or rule over us like any other gods of the world, but Jesus came to us to give his everything for the sake of his love for us.

This is Jesus whom we believe in. This is the love of Jesus that we are receiving right now.

So, how is your inner being? How's your hearts? How is your identity? How are you accepting yourself, your honest self?

Remember what kind of love we have received. Remember who pours out love for us. And remember where to fix our eyes.

Jesus is our worth. Jesus cherishes us. We are his treasures. We are the reason that Jesus had to choose the cross. We are the reason that Jesus had to bear the pain and shame. To give us love, to make us love ourselves, Jesus loves us just as we are. We are still weak. We still have all kinds of evil desires. We still fall. We still hide from him. But, Jesus accepted all our pains and shame. Jesus loves us just the way we are. So that we can love ourselves just like Jesus loves us.

Today is Palm Sunday. The Passion week begins today.

Jesus walked toward the cross from his birth. We consider Palm Sunday is the beginning of his suffering as he entered Jerusalem. Until Friday, Jesus experienced pain and shame for us. Every day, remember Jesus and remember his love for you.

I hope and pray that Paul's confession of today's scripture become our confession to Jesus.

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:19b-20)

Let us pray.

Loving God. You sent your one and only Son Jesus Christ for the sake of the love for us. Jesus, you had to infinitely shrink yourself to become human like us, to be with us, to lead us to our true home. Holy Spirit, endlessly, you are guiding us whispering into our ears. God of the whole universe, and God who listens to the smallest sighs, you are infinitely big, but you never lose a smallest thing. You take care of all things, small and big. We praise you for your wisdom and power and ever-present presence in our daily lives. Your lavishly pouring out love surrounds our lives. We worship you with all we have and with all that we are. Enjoy our worship and be glorified through our lives as we remember and worship you as we live for you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for the people:

Gracious and merciful Father God, thank you that we have faith in you. We believe that you listen to our prayers. One by one, you answer our prayers in the best way. You have stored the best for us. Sometimes, we hope that you would work in our ways, but we know that you have much better ways. Give us firm faith that we have patience for you until you work in our lives.

We pray to you for our congregation. Ralph Jessup was called to you last Saturday. Heavenly Father, it is the most glorious thing can happen to us, but we admit that losing our loved one gives us sad feelings. Especially, we pray for Jessup family. Give peace upon them. Encourage them and let them grieve with you and in your presence. There will be funeral. Fill the hour with your love and comfort and hope for our reunion in your kingdom.

We also pray for the people who are facing physical and emotional pains and difficult situations. Give us strength to hang in there and to overcome our difficulties. And place your healing hands upon those who are sick, and heal them. Free them from their pain.

We also pray for this COVID 19. The vaccine now is released and many are getting their shots. Thank you. We pray that it works and we pray that all can get vaccinated, so we can be free from corona virus after the vaccine. We pray for the people who got their shots. Let it protect them without any side effects. Also, we pray for those who are waiting for their turn. Until we get vaccinated, protect us from the virus and keep us safe. The weather is getting nicer and we are

tempted to gather with friends and meet people outside and go places to enjoy this beautiful weather. There should be nothing wrong with this, but now there's potential danger. Until everything settles down, help us have patience and limit ourselves not to be exposed to any virus. But, still, we thank you for this beautiful weather and blessings in our lives. Let us enjoy your love and blessings with humble hearts. We worship you and praise you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray, Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. As we begin our journey through Holy Week today, we remember what Jesus faced, how the crowd cheered him one day and called for his death by week's end. Close friends betrayed him and ran away. In our offering, we declare our love and loyalty to Jesus and his ministry in the world God loves. Let us show our faithfulness to him in the gifts we offer today. Let us pray.

Offering prayer:

Lord Jesus, we offer our gifts to God in your name. Compared with the gift you gave for our sakes, what we can offer seems so small. Bless our gifts with your love so that they have power to accomplish more than we can even imagine for your sake. Receive our humble thanks and bless our lives, too, so that what we do and say will show we have the commitment to follow you, whatever the cost. In Jesus' name, Amen. // Let the Lord's offering be received as we sing our hymn.

Offering – BOP # 445 – Open our eyes, Lord

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus chose the cross. Jesus had to go through suffering and pain. Jesus died on the cross. For what? For what reason, the most glorious God of the whole universe, the most powerful God wears a mere human body? It is because of you. You are the reason why the almighty God had to experience death. Let us remember Jesus and his love for us in this Passion week. Jesus loves you.

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 does it mean, to me, that Christ lives in me?**
2. **How can I follow the way of Jesus? How can I take my own cross in my life?**
3. **How can I fix my eyes on Jesus in my daily life?**