

Worship on July 24, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Robert Revington)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 384 O Breath of life, come sweeping through us
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – Father in heaven how I love you

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Hosea 1:1-11
- Sermon: Children of the living God
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday, July 24th. God loves us no matter who we are and no matter what we did. Let us come to God and enjoy his love for us.

. We were sad to learn that Miss Rita had decided to resign her position as Children's Church Leader as of June 28th. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours as she follows God's path. (The Session of St. Andrew's P.C. – Aurora)

. We need one more volunteer to set up, operate, and tear down for Audio visual department. Please let Rev. Soong know if you are interested.

. There will be Fellowship time in the Church Hall after Worship. Please stay and connect.

. Rev. Soong has his office hours on Wednesday from 9am-12pm. He will take a week off from August 1 to August 7. Paul Ku will come and lead our worship and the Rev. Robert Royal will be the emergent pastoral care.

. Bible Study (Christ-Centred Life) is on Wednesdays morning 10am to 11:15am. All are welcome. Spread the word. It will be the time of connecting each other and praying for each other. (No Bible Study on August 3rd)

. Prayer is unseen, yet powerful. If you have prayer needs, please let us know.

Cheryl Daddis @ cheryl@pathcom.com or Soong @ revsoonghuh@hotmail.com

. Please help Ukraine with donation and prayer.

. Thank you for your continuing support with your gifts. As we offer our gifts to the Lord, let us give our hearts and our lives to the Lord as well. May God be in the centre of your hearts.

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

Responsive Call to Worship

We come before God with thanks and praise.

We will praise God for God's unfailing love and faithfulness.

We bow before God in worship.

We will worship God, for the glory of the Lord is great.

We lift up our prayers to God with confidence.

We have faith that God answers our prayers and increases our strength.

Praise song – BOP 384 O Breath of life, come sweeping through us

<u>Vs. 1</u> O Breath of life, come sweeping through us; Revive your church with life and power. O Breath of life, come cleanse, renew us, And fit your church to meet this hour.	<u>Vs. 2</u> O Wind of God, come bend us, break us, till humbly we confess our need; Then in your tenderness remake us, Revive, restore, for this we plead.
<u>Vs. 3</u> O Breath of Love, come breathe within us, Renewing thought and will and heart: Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us, Revive Your church in every part.	<u>Vs. 4</u> O Tongues of fire, come rest upon us, So we may speak your word aright; Kindle the flame of love among us, Equip your church to spread the light.

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Ever present God, We seek and you offer. We ask and you give. We knock and you open the door. Ever gracious God, you hear the requests of your people and in your goodness, you answer. In Christ, you offer the gifts of new life and hope to all who seek your blessing.

Through your Spirit, you pray within us, even when we cannot find words ourselves.

Receive our praise and our prayers this day, O God, and draw us into your holy presence, so that your love will transform us to serve you in the world you love.

Ever faithful God, quickly we forget the gifts we have received from your grace; instead of giving thanks, we ask for more. We complain about what we lack and fail to trust your generosity. We refuse others the forgiveness we seek for ourselves. Forgive us, O God. Transform our hearts and reshape our desires to reflect your goodness in the way we live.

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, Hear the good news of the gospel: God is generous and merciful, ready to forgive, offering us new life in Christ Jesus. Accept God's gift of forgiveness and share this gift with others.

Peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

Prayer for children and youth and prayer

Glorious and merciful God, you are magnificent. You are great. You are powerful. You are praise worthy. You are rich in love. You are caring. You are righteous. You are personal. As we pray for our children and youth, help them to experience you personally. Help them increase the description who you are in their own experience. Establish meaningful relationship with you as they grow and form their hearts and minds. Capture their hearts and be in the centre of their hearts all through their lives. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: Blessed the Lord God Almighty

Vs. 1) Father in heaven, how we love you; we lift your name in all the earth

May your kingdom be established in our praises as your people declare your mighty works

Chorus) Blessed be the Lord God Almighty, we was and is and is to come;

Blessed be the Lord God Almighty, who reigns forevermore.

Vs. 2) Father of mercy, be exalted; May Jesus' name be lifted high,

For the sacrifice of love has won my pardon, and his resurrection power gives me life

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, as we listen to the Scriptures today, fill our hearts and minds with your living Word, so that our faith in Christ will grow stronger as we build our lives on him. In Jesus Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Hosea 1:1-2:1

1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel. 2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and have children of prostitution, for the land commits great prostitution by forsaking the Lord." 3 So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 And the Lord said to him, "Name him Jezreel, for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." 6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the Lord said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. 7 But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen." 8 When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then the Lord said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God." 10 Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered, and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God." 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head, and they shall rise up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel. 2 1 Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah."

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

SERMON: Children of the living God

Today's sermon title is **"Children of the living God"**

Hosea was a prophet of God. One day, God gave him a command. We all know that this was not a usual one. **V2, Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and have children of prostitution.**

What kind of command is this? God is loving, caring, merciful, and just. But, what on earth is this? What kind of unreasonable command is this?!

Hosea was told to marry a prostitute. A prostitute was the one who sold herself for money. She was unfaithful in every sense. **Faithful servant Hosea and unfaithful prostitute Gomer.**

We are not going to focus on the patriarch, a male head of a family system or poor women right. We are not going to talk about how unfortunate Gomer's background that she had to become a prostitute. We are going to focus on the faithful God telling faithful servant Hosea to marry an unfaithful prostitute, Gomer.

Marriage is said to be a covenant between two lovers that they promise to love each other with their whole hearts. Marriage is the one most sacred and committed act of a human being. But, Hosea is about to make the most solemn and profound commitment to a person considered to be the least faithful, a prostitute.

What would be the reason of God telling his faithful servant prophet to get married with an unfaithful prostitute?

Will the prostitute become faithful to her husband and have a happy life afterward?

Chapter 3, this is Hosea saying, **"1 The Lord said to me again, "Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer of barley and a measure of wine. 3 And I said to her, "You must remain as mine for many days; you shall not prostitute yourself; you shall not have intercourse with a man, nor I with you." 4 For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. 5 Afterward the Israelites shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; they shall come in awe to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days."**

Gomer had three children in chapter 1. But, according to chapter 3, we learn that she still continues her prostitution. She keeps turning back from her husband.

In chapter 3, God reveals his heart. V1 **"Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."**

God so loved the people. He was not able to give them up. But, Israelites kept turning back from God. God rescued them from the slavery in Exodus. God provided food and drink in the wilderness. God gave them the land of milk and honey. God gave the victory over all the people around Israelite. God was their King and Lord and Protector. But, they wanted king, so God gave them kings, Saul, David, Solomon, and so on. God gave them what they needed as well as what they wanted. But, still, they left God.

God was angry. Enough is enough! I love you, but you are hopeless. I want you to know how I am feeling. I will do anything to make you turn back to me.

God formed a broken family of Hosea with Gomer to teach us how we are unfaithful and hopeless. Hosea's broken marriage reflects Israel's broken relationship with God. **V2, "When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and have children of prostitution, for the land commits great prostitution by forsaking the Lord."**

God is beyond our understanding and God is good and loving. So, everything God does is right and good, even the command to Hosea to get married to a prostitute and form a broken family. God is merciful and compassionate on his people, us. The root of mercy and compassion is a Hebrew word, **rachamim**, which means **womb**. Therefore, God's mercy and compassion for us is the same heart when mother looks after her child. What kind of mother would harm her child!

With a broken heart, God calls Hosea to show what the relationship between God and us is like.

God's anger is expressed in naming children. Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-ammi. **Jezreel** is the name of the Valley where Elijah killed 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. This could be the symbol of the victory of God, but at the same time, it could be the place of judgment or the place of destruction. **V4, "I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel."**

Lo-ruhamah means no pity, no mercy. **V6, I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them.**

Lo-ammi, v9, "you are not my people, and I am not your God."

God is angry and saying to his people through the names of the children of Hosea. I will punish you! I will no longer love you. And we are done! You are not my people and I am not your God!

But, listen to this. **Psalm 103:8-14, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust."**

God does express his anger toward us, but he does not keep his anger forever.

God pours out his anger, but he cannot help with his love for us and he changes the names. For Jezreel, like God was glorified in the Valley of Jezreel when Elijah showed God to the people of Israel, **v11, "The people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head, [which is God] and they shall rise up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel."**

The glory and the victory of the day will come again. The split Israel, Judah and the people of Israel will gather together as one one more time and worship God. The meaning of the name Jezreel was completely changed from destruction to victory.

In addition, **2:1, "Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah."** Their names got rid of the prefix "Lo," which means no. Therefore, their names became from no mercy to mercy, not my people to my dear people.

The relationship with God expressed in the marriage with Hosea and Gomer was broken and miserable. But, now, God restored the broken relationship with us and rescued us from unfaithfulness and hopelessness. God gave us hope and life.

Through this ridiculous command to Hosea, God gave us the confirmation that we are the children of the living God. There might be time that there seems no hope. There might be time that there seems only desperateness. But, God was holding us faithfully. God was leading us and was walking with us all the time.

We are the children of the living God. He created us. He restored us and will restore us no matter who we become and what we do. God's faithful love never changes. You are the children of the living God. Have this in your heart and live as the children of the living God.

This is the word of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

God, you have feelings. You have emotions. You love and you hate. Thank you for your anger. Through your anger, we learn. Through your anger, you teach us the right and wrong. We were broken, we were hopeless, we were unfaithful. We were away from your mercy, we were not your people. But, you came to us to rescue us. You restored our broken relationships. You changed us. You changed our identity. Like we teach our children in love and guide them in the right way, you showed us the right way. We are your children. Thank you.

As we come to your presence and pray to you, align our hearts to yours. We want to follow your steps and live for you. Guide our hearts in your ways.

We pray for the people in your loving hands in their situations. Gracious Father God, at this time, place your hands upon them, in their situations, in their bodies, upon their sicknesses, in their emotions, in their relationships, in their troubles, in their worries, and all the things they are going through, and with your loving care, with your power, strengthen us. Make changes. Give us healing. Help us overcome, help us stand strong, guide us walk through. You, God, are at work in our lives. You are the living God the Lord Almighty. We trust you and we offer up our lives into your hands. We are yours. Lead us.

In Jesus' precious and powerful and beautiful name, we pray Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. God responds to our needs and requests with great generosity. This is God's great love. Let us share God's love with others through the offering we present this day.

Offering prayer:

Generous Father God, we offer you our gifts, thankful that your love is overflowing in our hearts. Bless these gifts so that your love will flow through our gifts to meet the needs of those who cry out to you and to us. Thank you for all the things we have. Use us. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

<u>Vs. 1</u> Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood	<u>Chorus</u> This is my story; this is my song. Praising my Saviour all the day long; This is my story; this is my song. Praising my Saviour all the day long;
<u>Vs. 2</u> Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight Angels descending bring from above Echoes of mercy, whispers of love	<u>Vs. 3</u> Perfect submission, all is at rest I in my Saviour am happy and blest Watching and waiting looking above Filled with his goodness, lost in his love

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. We are the children of the living God no matter what we do and no matter who we are. Have confidence in your heart. God is with you and God is leading your life. Have God's faithful love for you. He never gives you up.

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.