

Worship on September 4, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 570 I have decided to follow Jesus
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 211 Take up your cross

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Luke 14:25-33
- Sermon: The cost of the discipleship
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 634 Will you come and follow me

We Serve

- Benediction

Announcements:

. Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us today. This is Sunday, September 4th. God is big and we are small. God is beyond us. Let us give ourselves to God who will lead us to peace and love and eternal life.

. There is the Communion next week, September 11, 2022.

. 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.

. 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.

. 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

Joy comes to those who follow the ways of the Lord.

We will follow the Lord with joyful hearts!

Those who follow the Lord are like trees planted by the river, bearing fruit each season.

May our lives be fruitful and blessed by God!

Worship the Lord who leads us to joy and abundance.

Let us worship God now and for all our days.

Praise song – BOP 570 – I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus (X 3) No turning back (X 2)	The world behind me, The cross before me; (X 3) No turning back (X 2)
Though none go with me, Still I will follow (X 3) No turning back (X 2)	Will you decide now To follow Jesus (X 3) No turning back (X 2)

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of all creation, you have opened the world around us and filled it with creatures of your love and purpose. Each one declares your praise – the mountain states your majesty; the ripened field, your generosity. Birds flying aloft sing of your freedom; the tiny ant works with your persistence. And what do we declare about you in our lives?

We pray that our work will honour your justice and mercy; may our relationships speak of your love and compassion. So may we praise you, O God, not just in this hour of worship, but in all our waking and our working. Challenge us today to live out the praise we offer you through the grace of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God of justice and mercy, we offer you our love and loyalty in worship, yet we admit we do not live out that love and loyalty. We don't always act on our good intentions, we fail to keep our promises, we hurt each other, and then refuse to seek or offer forgiveness.

People must look at us and wonder if this is what means to follow Jesus.

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, Paul declared, from now on, we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!

Thanks be to God that we can make a new start on this very day!

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

Precious Father God, thank you for our desires and prayers for our children and youth. They are too precious. Thank you for our love for them. And thank you for this time that we are offering them to your hands. You are powerful God, you are able to do anything. So, we trust you that you will lead them and you will help them in their lives and in their faith.

God, you are beyond everything. Teach them who you are and teach them who they are. You are big and they are small. You are able, and they are not. Help them rely on you as they grow, as they form their minds and thoughts, and as they establish their relationships. Help them put you in the centre of their life. Be everything for them. Bless them with your love and grace. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: 211 Take up your cross

<u>Vs. 1</u> Take up your cross, the Saviour said, if my disciple you would be; deny yourself, the world forsake, and humbly follow after me	<u>Vs. 2</u> Take up your cross; let not its weight fill frightened spirit with alarm; his strength shall bear your spirit up, and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.
<u>Vs. 3</u> Take up your cross, nor heed the shame, nor let your foolish pride rebel: for you the Saviour bore the cross, to save your soul from death and hell.	<u>Vs. 4</u> Take up by our cross, then, in Christ's strength, and every danger calmly brave; 'twill guide you to a heavenly home, and lead to victory o'er the grave.
<u>Vs. 5</u> Take up your cross and follow Christ, Nor think till death to lay it down, For only those who bear the cross may hope to wear the glorious crown.	

Prayer for Illumination:

God of truth and wisdom, send us your Holy Spirit as we listen to your Word. Refresh our understanding and equip us to respond to you in love, for the sake of Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

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

SERMON: The cost of the discipleship

Today's sermon title is **"The cost of discipleship "**

What is cost? Cost is what we give up to acquire, accomplish, maintain, or produce something. It involves a measure of sacrifice and perhaps loss or penalty in gaining something. Cost requires effort and resources.

Today's passage is very strong. The most striking word would be HATE. **V26, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple."**

Does discipleship really require one to "hate" parents, spouse, children, siblings, even one's own life? One theologian says, **"Hate may be hyperbole, but it does not underestimate potential costs of discipleship. Life meets almost everyone with choices that are emotionally costly. In ordinary circumstances, it mostly works out. However, when Jesus uses the word "hate" in the same sentence with parents, spouse, child, he raises the ante, the price. He is not speaking about cold abstractions."** This is the question about whether we are able to push away those whom we are most inclined to embrace.

In a conflict situation, can we choose Jesus over our loved ones? Can we say yes to Jesus instead of taking care of our own interest? We need to think about what we can give away for Jesus and what we keep for ourselves when thinking about our discipleship.

Discipleship. What is the focus when we say we want to follow Jesus?

Jesus is focusing on the high cost of discipleship. We must give total dedication to follow Jesus. Without definite decision, a person cannot be his disciple. Jesus emphasizes this three times in today's passage. **First**, he required a person to **hate** parents, spouse, children, siblings, and even one's own life. **Second**, he commands **carrying the cross** and following him. **Third**, he demands the **giving up of all possessions**.

At the heart of the discipleship, there is self-denial. This means to give up one's own interests and needs. This is sacrifice.

Then, we can ask **what for?** We can go right to the beginning of the discussion.

Why do we want to follow Jesus?

Embracing the values of Jesus is becoming his disciple.

And to live out the value is Christian life, the life of Jesus followers.

Why is it so important to us that we want to deny our own selves for Jesus?

Okay, what is the purpose of our lives?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism starts with this very question. **"What is the chief end of man?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever."**

This is the reason we are made. This is our chief purpose for living. God created us for his own glory and he created us to enjoy him, his love, his grace, his power, his presence, and the relationship with him.

In order for us to know God, we need to know the values of God. It is not theoretical study, but it's life. So, not only knowing what it is, but also we are to live the values and teachings of Jesus through our lives. This is the meaning of knowing the values of God.

Wait a moment, knowing the values of God is **one, learning what it is** and **two, living it out?**

Following Jesus is **one, learning his values**, and **two, living with Jesus' values**.

Oh man! We cannot glorify God nor enjoy him without being his disciple according to this logic.

In order for us to follow Jesus' value, we need to deny ourselves first.

Love. What do we love and whom do we love?

Our dream, comfortable life, abundance, freedom, our family, friends, church members, the list goes on.

But, **what is the root of that love?** How does our love glorify God and how does it reflect our enjoyment of God? Can we say that they are all from God and they are all God's?

What if God takes away everything we have, how would we feel?

If we were in Job's case, how would we respond to God? Job was blessed with every good gift we can think of. He was rich, he had many blessed children, he was healthy. But one day, everything was gone.

Job 1:20-21, Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

What did he see from God that he put God first over his everything?

What about Joseph in Genesis? Do you know how long he was a slave? He was slave for 13 years. However, wherever he went, whenever the Bible describes Joseph the Bible writes this.

"The Lord was with Joseph." Genesis 39:2 When Joseph was sold to Potiphar.

"The Lord was with him." Genesis 39:3 When the house master saw Joseph.

"The Lord was with Joseph." Genesis 39:21 When prisoners saw him.

"The Lord was with him" Genesis 39:23 When chief jailer saw him.

For 13 years of slavery, Joseph was faithful to God showing God's values in his life. Whatever the situations he experienced, Joseph glorified God and enjoyed him.

And apostle Paul, **Philippians 4:11-13, "Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me."**

We can see that Paul's value did not come from his possessions.

Job put God before his family members, his possessions. Joseph put God first before his own interests and needs. Paul put God first over all his experiences of need and plenty.

They followed God. They were the disciples of God. **What was the cost of their discipleship of Jesus Christ? What was the value they were after?**

Why did they deny themselves and bore their own cross?

BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THE LIFE BEYOND THIS LIFE.
They had faith that God is big and they are small.

Their God was much bigger than their cross. Their God was incomparable to their troubles, their hardships, their loss of loved ones, their suffering from disease, their hunger, their pain, their emotions, or their life's problems.

When I was preaching to Sunday school children, they loved when I did this motion.

God is BIG, and we are small.

These disciples of Jesus had faith in BIG GOD and small us.

In John 6, Jesus told the crowd, **“you need to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood in order for you to have eternal life in me.”** This freaked out the crowd. Many left Jesus because of this teaching. So, Jesus told the remaining disciples, **“you do not want to go away also?” (John 6:67)** Peter answered, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” (V68-69)** This is, **“I don’t know what eat my body and drink my blood really means, and a lot of what you say is a mystery to me, but you’ve ruined me for you.” (The Jesus-Centred Life)**

Job’s value system, Joseph’s value system, Paul’s value system, and Peter’s value system were completely ruined for Jesus. They accepted the value of God is BIG and we are small. They cannot follow the values of this world any longer. The value of BIG ME. Their loved ones are important, but not as much as Jesus. Being rich and being healthy is important, but not as much as Jesus. Understanding what God is talking about is important, but being with him is more important. Living a plentiful life in this world is great, but not as important as preparing for eternity. Our struggle, our difficulties, our sufferings are not easy, but they are small comparing to what God prepared for us. This is the confession of the disciples of Jesus. Their value system in this world is completely ruined because of Jesus and they follow Jesus with their everything.

They put God first over their every interest and everyone.
This is their cost of being disciples of Jesus.
What is our cost of discipleship? What is our cost of the gospel we believe?

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

Precious Father God, thank you for bringing us here and challenge us today. We make excuses not giving our everything to you by saying not now, but later. We usually focus on our interests, our emotions, our needs, and our people. They are too big for us. They are our main focus. But, the Lord teaches us that you are BIGGER than all these. You urge us to have faith in you. Big God, and small us. We learned that God is incomparably bigger than us. Change our hearts. Give us faith. Help us have you in the centre of our hearts. Help us deny ourselves to be your disciples.

Precious Father God, we want to have your eyes, your heart to see ourselves as well as the world. Fill our hearts with you.

We pray for the world. The war in Ukraine has been over six months now. The world is suffering because of the selfishness and sin of few people. Have mercy upon them. Change their hearts. Protect the people. Stop this nonsense. Stop this craziness, God. Too many are lost. Too much pain and too much suffering.

Gracious Father God, there are food problem, war, pollution, natural disasters, violence, selfishness, and hatred in the world. These seem too much. They are too much. But, you are bigger than these. You are beyond all these. Open our eyes to see you. Our hearts are stumbled. But you are holding us.

We pray for our church. We remember the people who are suffering with their illnesses, emotional difficulties, relational struggles, and many other life’s problems. Gracious Father God, you are holding our hands. You are beyond what we see or what we think. Protect us. Help us. Heal us. Fix us. Restore the joy in our hearts from you. Reconnect our hearts to yours.

Thank you for our willingness to follow you. Thank you for the struggles we have in us. This is the evidence that you are working in us. In this process of becoming your disciples, we will embrace your values. Renew our value system, so we become more like you.

Precious God, your love is too precious for us to ignore. With your love, change our hearts and make us complete in you. Be glorified through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful and beautiful name, we pray Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. On the Labour Day weekend, we offer to God the fruit of our labour to support in the redeeming work God has begun in the world. Give in hope and in trust that God will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine through our gifts. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

O God, we offer these gifts to you. Bless them and use them to heal and reshape the world you love with the Good News we celebrate in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 634 Will you come and follow me

Vs. 1 Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known; will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?	Vs. 2 Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
Vs. 3 Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same? Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen, and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?	Vs. 4 Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same? Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around, through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?
Vs. 5 Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you and never be the same. In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show. Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.	

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God is BIG and we are small. God is bigger than our burden, our suffering, our emotion, our desires, our loved ones. God is beyond our everything. Have God and live with God. Let us put God first in our daily 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.