

Worship on October 16, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 642 O Master, let me walk with thee
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 400 Spirit of the living God

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Luke 18:9-14
- Sermon: Right with God
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 592 I, the Lord of sea and sky

We Serve

- Benediction

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

From the routines of work and school, home and play,

we have come to worship God.

With the weight of the world heavy on our hearts,

we have come to worship God.

In the midst of our fears and our hopes,

we offer our prayer and praise in Jesus' name.

For we trust in God's power and presence,

so let us worship God with heart, mind, soul and strength.

Praise song – BOP 642 O Master, let me walk with thee

Vs. 1 O Master, let me walk with thee in lowly paths of service free; tell me thy secret; help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.	Vs. 2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear winning word of love; teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.
Vs. 3 Teach me thy patience; still with thee in closer, dearer company, in work that keeps	Vs. 4 In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way, in peace that only

faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.	thou canst give, with thee, O Master, let me live.
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Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Creating God, the mountains you raised reflect your strength and majesty.

Sunrise and sunset frame the day with your light and joy.

Fields bursting with grain and trees coloured with autumn glory sing of your steadfast love.

Pictures from the depth of space give a glimpse of your infinity,

yet in Christ you have walked the humble earth. You alone are worthy of our praise.

You alone give us hope. Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of Life, we praise you, and join our voices to those of every precious thing to wonder at your mystery and majesty.

Merciful God, You created human beings with gifts of intelligence and imagination.

Yet we confess we often use these gifts to exploit your creation and put others in their place.

So often we think that we are great when we are small. Or we claim smallness when you set a challenge before us. We convince ourselves that our sin is not nearly as great as others, yet, every sin offends your purpose for us. Forgive us, we pray, and grant us a truer picture of ourselves.

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, God is gracious. Christ has promised that those who humble themselves will be exalted. Having confessed our sin, let us trust the good news of the Gospel. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

May the 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

Loving Father God, we thank you for this time of prayer for our precious children and youth.

With your grace and mercy, teach them your truth. Please open their hearts and minds and let them accept you. As they form their thoughts and inner beings, be with them and guide their path to the truth. Help them come to you when they have difficulties in their lives. Provide them good teachers and friends, so they are surrounded by good influence. Pour out your love upon them, so they do not seek to be loved by their deeds, but help them realize how precious they are in just the way they are. Precious God, be with them and guide their path. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 400 Spirit of the living God

<u>Vs. 1</u> Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me. spirit of the living God Fall afresh on me!	<u>Vs. 2</u> Spirit of the living God move among us all make us one in heart and mind; make us one in love Humble, caring, selfless, sharing Spirit of the living God fill our lives with love!
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Prayer for Illumination:

God of all truth, when we think that we have life all figured out, hold up the mirror of your Word so that we can see our own foolishness. If we think we are beyond forgiveness, reflect to us your Word of mercy and love, offered to us through Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture: Luke 18:9-14

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 10 ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” 13 But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.’

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

SERMON: Right with God

Today’s sermon title is **“Right with God.”**

In today’s story, there are two people on the scene. Who are they?

A pharisee and a tax collector.

What are they like? What is our impression of them?

A pharisee. They are the bad ones. They only try to keep the laws obsessively. They don’t have love or mercy. All they care is whether we follow the law correctly or not. He is a religious leader. They read the Bible again and again and they know it and keep the law, but only outwardly. This is our view.

In their times, how would people consider them?

At that time, their culture is honour and shame culture. So, if someone confidently keeps the laws and is outwardly just and generous, then that’s a good person. He would be honoured. That’s Pharisee. They were respected religious leaders. They were like elders and pastors. They taught the Bible, they prayed, and they gave offerings generously.

On the other hand, a tax collector seems to be miserable in today’s text. And we feel like we should provide them tender loving care.

But, at that time, a tax collector was a bad person. Each of them had to pay the Roman Empire a set amount of tax. They were given some authority to gather money. So, they were able to exercise their power and authority in whatever ways they could squeeze money out of their neighbours. Although they had to meet the requirement of the empire, they were free to collect that money by any means they wanted, and anything collected above what they owed was their profit. Once they met the requirement, everything went in their own pockets.

For example, in Luke 19, there was a chief collector, Zacchaeus. He was fascinated by the teachings of Jesus. He wanted to see Jesus, but there were too many people. So, he ran ahead and climbed up a tree just to see Jesus more clearly. Jesus knew his passion and looked at him and said, **“Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” (Luke 19:5)** Jesus coming to my house? How would you feel? Is this a task, very burdensome? OR is it a joy and honour?

For Zacchaeus, it was a great grace and mercy of God. After Jesus’ saying, **“Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” (Luke 19:8)**

Grace fell on the heart and the life of Zacchaeus was changed. But, pay close attention to the numbers he came up with.

HALF of his possessions to the poor
4 times as much to the people whom he defrauded

He is able to give 4 times as much to the people from whom he took advantage. One, tax collectors were rich. Two, they were too rich that they took too much from the people. Three, even if Zacchaeus pays back 4 times, he had enough money.

Back to today’s passage. The tax collector. He was the same kind as Zacchaeus, who took unjust profit out of their own people.

Picture what’s happening in today’s text. A pharisee walked into the temple. Proud, confident, positive, upbeat, cheerful. **This pharisee considers himself to be righteous.**

A tax collector walked into the temple. He was a rich man and he was not afraid of anyone because he had the authority to collect money from all. But, he does not seem to be confident. Is he crying? He seems powerless. His face expression reveals his regretful feelings. Shame, sorrow, vulnerability, and emptiness. He does not stand in the middle of the court. He tries to hide in the shadow. By his appearance, we can read that he is not confident. **This tax collector does not consider himself to be righteous.**

Listen to their prayers, now.

“God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” (V11)

Can you feel the pride of this pharisee? What is his attitude coming toward God?

God, aren’t you so proud of me? Don’t you just love so much what I am doing right now with my life? I am doing so well. Don’t you agree with me!? This pharisee man is full of confidence and righteousness.

On the other hand, the tax collector. **V13, “But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”**

There is no explanation why this greedy tax collector came to God with a desperate heart. What we know is that he came to God, he considered himself to be a sinner, and he was asking mercy to God.

Maybe, Pharisees were too busy enjoying people’s praise and respect. They are blinded to see their own inner self because of others praise, and eventually, they became blinded to see God thinking that they were righteous and just. Their deeds were great. Their lives were good examples. But, their hearts became satisfied with their own deeds and with others’ respect and praise. They lost God.

This tax collector focused on his inner self and God, not others. He stood before God alone. He trusted God’s mercy, not people’s respect and fame and praise. He acknowledged his own sin. And we know that he cried out for his sin by pounding his heart. Honesty and humility and desperateness.

What was the outcome of their prayers?

V14, “I tell you, this man (the tax collector) went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

To whom did Jesus address this parable? **“V9, He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt.**

The core message of this parable is the way to make right with God. And the core value is humility. **“For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”**

“Be humble,” we say. As soon as we have arrived at that suitable state of humility, we are tempted to take pride in our accomplishment.

What if, later on, this tax collector prays to God, “God, I thank you that I am not like that Pharisee! I have desperate heart for you. I know I am a sinner. And I seek for your mercy.”

When we reach the state of humility, deep inside our hearts, ‘oh, I am doing great. My prayer, my daily Bible reading, my service to the Lord and to church, are great. What I am doing things makes God pleased.”

How do we make God pleased? Through our doings or through our beings?

Think about parents or children. From what are we taking pleasure from our baby, child? Are we happier when they are doing things to please you or when they are happy? Well. It might be controversial, but as parents, we are more pleased when they are happy and healthy. **We take great pleasure from their being, not their doing.**

Then, what about our Father God? Would God be like a slave master to us?

Read the Bible! Pray all the time! Give plenty offering! Serve your church! Earn respect from others! Do this and that! Don’t be lazy! Be active! Work, Work, Work!

Is this our Father's heart?

And what if we take pride of what we are doing? Because of my good deeds, God will be glorified and that's all because of what I did with my power, with my effort, and with my own willingness!

Well, sometimes, this is right. This makes sense. But, when it happens, the state of our hearts are passionate and humble. We are filled with God's love and grace. But, right at that time, from the deepest of our hearts, "**Wow, it's working. I can do this.**" God loved us first when we were still sinners, when we were still in darkness. We did not do anything. We didn't even deserve God's grace. God first loved us not because of what we did, but because of our identity whether we know that we are the children of God or not. Just because we ARE his babies, God poured out all the goodness upon us.

Humility could be interpreted in many ways. But, before God, in order to make us right with God, we have to maintain the heart of humility. Knowing our tendency to be proud, we need to ask the mercy of God. This is the only way. "**God, be merciful to me, sinner.**" If we lose that heart, then we are going to the path of pharisees. If we remember and come to God with the heart of this tax collector, just like what happened to him, we would be justified. We will be made right with God.

Ask the mercy of God. God will be with us and guide us and lead us and make us right with him.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

God of grace and mercy and love, we thank you that you do not take pleasure from our deeds. You are pleased from the way we are. Thank you for your love and your grace calling us to come to your presence just the way we are. Help us be honest with you and help us have humble hearts that we are saved not by our works, but by your love alone. Doing our best is important, but relying on our works leads us to the path of pharisees. Help us always watch our hearts. Our hearts are too easy to fall. Let us not rely upon our hearts, but to your grace and love alone.

Thank you for gathering us here today in your presence. As we look around our surroundings, we are just amazed by your handy works. The colour of trees, beautiful and clear sky, and the fresh air. Thank you for giving us this earth. Lord God, help us know your love and let us stay close to you. Because you are with us, we are able. Give us wisdom and courage to be faithful steward of this beautiful earth, nature. What we are given freely is too precious. Help us have the grateful hearts and live with your image. Help us live as your partner taking good care of all your creation.

Gracious Father God, we thank you for our church. Church is not the building, but your people. Of course, we thank you for our building, but we are more grateful and pleased how you are pouring of your blessings upon each of us. Help us open our eyes and ears, so we can hear your voice and see what you are doing in our lives. Your grace is at work in each and every one of our lives and we praise you. And we come to you with prayer remembering our church family members who needs our prayers. There are people who are suffering with their illnesses. Gracious Father God, put your hands upon them, and with your healing power, heal them. Recover their health. Encourage their hearts and their family members. Also, there are people who are struggling with their life's situations. Provide them what they need and protect them with your almighty hands.

We also remember that you are holding this earth. Because of our selfishness, we screw up sometimes. Sometimes, we make big mess like war, oppression, famine, and violence. You are the big God who created the whole universe, but at the same time, you are the God who takes care of the smallest sighs. God, help us.

Through our worship, Lord, be glorified and be pleased through our daily lives. You are the Lord of our lives. Help us have you in our hearts in every moment we are awake. Thank you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Sometimes we think what we have to offer doesn't matter. Somebody else has more to share. But God knows the value of a few loaves and fishes shared, a lost coin claimed, one tiny seed planted from which a tree grows. Trust God with what you have to offer and see what God can do. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

Good and generous God, receive our humble gifts, offered in hope and gratitude. Make something of them – and of us, so that the world will be surprised by your love and what we can offer them in Jesus' name. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 592 I, the Lord of sea and sky

Vs. 1 I, the Lord, of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry All who dwell in dark and sin, my hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?	<u>Chorus</u> Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night; I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.
Vs. 2 I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain I have wept for love of them; they turn away I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?	Vs.3 I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame I will set a feast for them; my hand will save Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Let us do our best in our lives. And let us remember that our hearts are too weak to be humble. We want to be humble and keep humility before God, but not possible. We only ask God for his mercy. God is gracious and generous. All we can do is to ask God for his mercy. Let us have God.

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.