

Worship on October 30, 2022 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 299 Holy holy holy
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 648 I'm gonna live so God can use me

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: Isaiah 1:10-18
- Sermon: Though your sins are like scarlet
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 712 Arise, your light is come

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

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles;

They shall run and not be weary;

They shall walk and not faint.

In the company of all God's saints and pilgrims, come and worship.

We come with prayer and praise to find our strength renewed!

Praise song – BOP 299 Holy holy holy

<u>Vs. 1</u> Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!	<u>Vs. 2</u> Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee, Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea, Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.
<u>Vs. 3</u> Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee,	<u>Vs. 4</u> Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.

Though our eyes in sinfulness thy glory may not see, Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, Perfect in power, in love and purity.	Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
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Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Ancient of days, God of our everyday lives, we praise you for your guidance and care in every generation, and for the example of those who have gone before us, who taught us your name and brought us to faith. In the great mystery of your love, we know these saints gather with, to praise and adore you for your wisdom that instructs, your grace that redeems, your Spirit who guides us, and for the comfort and hope we claim in the knowledge that neither death nor life can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen! Amen! Amen!

Gracious God, you have been faithful to us in every generation. Yet we confess that we are not so faithful to you. We shrink from costly discipleship and we seek cheap grace. Forgive our fleeting enthusiasms and our shallow commitments. And guide us always with the love and mercy we witness in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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, while it is true that we have all sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ. Be at peace with God, be at peace with yourself and be at peace with one another.

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

Merciful and gracious Father God, we are grateful for our children and youth. These days, they are running around, laughing, and enjoying their company and growing up together. Thank you for Anne for leading children's church. Give her strength and wisdom, so through her, our precious children see God's goodness and feel the love of God. We pray for all the parents as well. Give them warm hearts. Living with little ones is challenging many times. Give us patience and love. Help us see them with your eyes and treat them like we treat you. And protect them with safety and provide them all their timely needs. Prepare their hearts so they can accept you from their deepest hearts. Let them know that your love is with them all the time. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 648 I'm gonna live so God can use me

<u>Vs. 1</u> I'm gonna live so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!	<u>Vs. 2</u> I'm gonna work so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!
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I'm gonna live so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!	I'm gonna work so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!
<u>Vs. 3</u> I'm gonna pray so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna pray so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!	<u>Vs. 4</u> I'm gonna sing so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime! I'm gonna sing so God can use me Anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Prayer for Illumination:

God of the prophets and poets, the seers and storytellers of Scripture, thank you for the ancient visions of your truth which still guide us. Send us your Spirit this day to open our minds and hearts to the word you have for us in our times, in the name of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 1:10-18

10 Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11 What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 12 When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; 13 bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation— I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. 14 Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, 17 learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

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

SERMON: Though your sins are like scarlet.

Today's sermon title is **“Though your sins are like scarlet.”**

Our Father God loves us. But, he seems not so happy with his own people in our passage today. We can understand his love and anger when we think of our relationships with our children. Babies are adorable, but they are not always. They do stuff we don't want them to do. They do not have wisdom so they do some dangerous things. They cannot control their bodies, they fall easily. They hurt themselves. Last week, in our Wednesday Bible study, we talked about Sheep. We were able to relate ourselves from the descriptions of sheep. Listen to this.

Sheep are:

- **timid, fearful, and easily panicked,**
- **typically stupid and gullible,**
- **vulnerable to fear, frustration, pest, and hunger**
- **easily influenced by a strong, calm leader**
- **easily prodded into a stampede – they're vulnerable to a “mob mentality”**
- **have little or no means of self-defence, and are easily killed by their predators**

- jealous and competitive for dominance
- always seeking fresh water and fresh pastures, but aren't very discerning in their choices
- stubborn and always insisting on their own way
- easily tipped over onto their back and are unable to right themselves
- bothered by someone who tried to clean or shear their wool
- creatures of habit that often get stuck in "ruts"
- needy – they require more care than any other livestock

Can anyone relate yourself with these descriptions of sheep?

The two things most stood out for me were they had no self-defence, but they are stubborn and always insisting their own way. Do we know what we are doing all the time? Do we have the right wisdom always? Sometimes, yes, but we don't always have the right wisdom we need. But, who doesn't like to do whatever we like to do! Who likes obedience?!?!

Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Because we went our own ways, we turned around from our Lord. So, the Lord had to carry us to save us. We were not able to right ourselves up when we fell down. We need help from outside.

In the parable of the lost sheep, **Matthew 18:12-14, "What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost."**

Against our Father God's will, sheep go astray, babies do whatever they want, we go our own ways. Unless we put ourselves in the case of the one lost sheep, we cannot understand this parable. Leaving 99 to look for the one trouble maker? What if something happens to 99 sheep? But, if we were the one lost sheep, it's a whole different story. This is the time we need the shepherd the most. Each of us is the lost sheep. We need the rescue of our Lord Jesus Christ. We went our own ways and turned away from God. We are not different from sheep.

Now, let us see what's in our passage.

V12-14, When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offering is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation – I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them."

God directly expresses his anger, his tiredness, and his extreme dislike.

What is it? It seems like people are bringing their offerings, they are gathering for God. They are coming to the temple of God. But, what makes God so angry!?

Before Jesus died on the cross and redeemed us, the purpose of worship was to restore their broken relationship with God. Worshipers with sin came to the presence of God with their sins to the temple. They brought an animal. Why? To transfer their sins upon the animal. We call

these animals sacrificial animals. So, they come in front of the priest. The priest put one hand on the worshiper's head and the other hand on the head of the sacrificial animal. And he prays to God, **"God, in order for the reconciliation of this broken relationship, we offer this sacrificial animal to you. Please accept the blood of this animal for the atonement of this worshiper."**

By bringing their own sacrificial animals, people were able to become righteous before the eyes of God. The tendency of Hebrew people is easily understood. Throughout the history of religion, the trend has always been to maximize the physical while minimize the spiritual. The physical aspects of religion are observable and, to some extent, measurable, whereas the spiritual aspects are very difficult to measure. How can we be sure that we are being loving toward our neighbours? However, we can count the number of times we have gone to church, and we can record the amount of money we have given. Easy to track our faith. And easy to show off by doing the things God wants. These things, bringing sacrificial animals, coming to the temple to worship God, giving offering, and some visible things, are the symbols of our devotion, our sincere hearts to God shown in ceremonies. But, these ceremonies replaced the hearts. For example, just a night before your birthday, you had a fight with your spouse. You didn't have a chance to make up with your spouse before going to sleep. You were too angry. But, next morning, on your birthday, your spouse gave a present with a card saying, "I love you so much."

How would you be happy with that present and card?

Do you see what I mean? That's empty even though the present were the most wanted item ever. The saying on the card, "I love you," is meaningless now. It was so precious yesterday, but not now. No heart in that love. Only responsibility of a spouse.

In God's eyes, his own people, who were devote and who loved God and followed God's ways, are empty. They have their rituals, but it's empty, no love, no heart. How disgusting it is! How bitter is the feeling!

But, God does not abandon us. With his anger and hatred, God only spoke about what we did, not about ourselves. What he hates is how we worship! Also, God uses I-sentences. **"I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams." "I do not delight in the blood of bulls." "I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity." "They have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them."**

Enough of anger and hatred of what they are doing for me. So, God gives them final warning.

V15, When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood."

God's love and grace and mercy framed in their ceremonies. God's goodness became religion. And this religion supported the continuation of the iniquity of God's own people.

In V16-17, God is telling them what he actually wants. **"Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."**

Stop bringing empty "I love you" on the card. Stop bringing offerings out of responsibilities. But, restore your hearts. And look after the people in my name.

What God wants is simple: **repent** – change your attitude and come to me.

In Isaiah's heart, the religion is a way of thinking, acting, and living that a person elect in response to God's grace. Religion is not ritual, not ceremonies. Religions is life responding to God's love and grace.

Even though our sins are like scarlet, even though our sins are red like crimson, even though we all are like sheep and went our own ways, God does not give us up. God hates our deeds with emptiness, but God never dislikes us. He talks about our wrongdoings, but never stops loving us.

Know what we are like and know what God is like. We are so weak and small. **Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure."** What we can rely upon is God alone. Let us come and lay down our whole selves and accept God with our whole hearts.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

Gracious and loving Father God, thank you for bringing us into your presence. We are like sheep many times. Without knowing what we are doing, and where we are going, we just continue what we want to do. We laugh at sheep learning what sheep are like. But, in your eyes, we are like them too. God, help us. God, you want our hearts, not our deeds. In this format of worship, help us put our hearts. Help us bring our whole hearts to you and fill our hearts with you alone.

Merciful God, thank you for electing the new leaders through election last week. We pray for all the new and re-elected leaders. Give them your wisdom. Guide them govern with your love and grace. Help them look after the abandoned people. Help them bring peace, love, and togetherness in our community. So, in our communities, help them make changes. Shine your light upon their hearts and lead them in your paths.

We pray for your church. Through all the worship services and all the worshippers gathered in your presence on your day, be worshipped and be glorified. Let our worship be pleasing to you. Through our worship, change our eyes, so we can see our lives with your eyes. Help us deeds, so we may reflect your goodness through our lives. And capture our weak and small hearts, and fill us with your greatness and love.

Lord, we remember our congregation. There are people who are struggling with their sicknesses. Help them with your healing power. Embrace them into your arms and give peace in their hearts. Provide what they need and heal them.

Also, there are people with challenges with life. Each day is a present from you, at the same time, each day is a challenge for us. Precious God, let us walk with you every moment we live.

Especially, we continue to pray for Iran and war in Ukraine. Out of selfishness, their power is misused. People are in danger. Would you please stop this madness God? Using bigger violence to stop violence seems not right. Lord God, change their hearts. Let your light shine upon their hearts. Let them know you and let them kneel down before you and stop their evil deeds.

Precious Father God, hold your people in your hands. Provide them safety and encourage with your love and guidance.

Father God, this worship is a form of ceremony. As we come to you with this format, help us pour out our hearts into it. So, we may truly worship you with gladness and gratefulness for what you have done in our lives.

God, please come into our hearts and change us. We long to be with you and we long to love you with our whole hearts. Please hold our weak and fallible hearts. You are our only hope. Be with us. Thank you for not giving us up. You are our Lord. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. When we gather as God's Church, we celebrate the gifts of so many others, for so many centuries, offered in Jesus' name. Now is our opportunity to join our gifts to theirs, so that God will be praised and Jesus' love will be spread in this generation and those to come. Let us pray for our offering.

Offering prayer:

Generous God, you are faithful and fruitful in every generation. Bless our gifts and make them fruitful beyond our imagining in the work of your kingdom. Keep us faithful in this generation so we can offer the inheritance we have received in Christ to the generation that comes after us. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 712 Arise, your light is come

<u>Vs. 1</u> Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey; show forth the glory of your God which shines on your today	<u>Vs. 2</u> Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door; proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor
<u>Vs. 3</u> Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born, bind up the brokenhearted ones and comfort those who mourn.	<u>Vs. 4</u> Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song! Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. It is good that we have come to the presence of our Father God. Now, let us have hearts. Let us come to God with repentance in our daily lives. Let us come to God with gratefulness and ask God for his mercy and guidance. God never stops loving us just like we never despise our own children. Let us celebrate his unending love for us.

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.