

Worship on January 22, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 757 Come sing, O church, in joy!
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 27 As the deer

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
- Second reading: Psalm 40 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: John 1:29-42
- Sermon: They remained with him that day
- The Prayer for the People of God

We Respond

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

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

The Lord is our light and salvation.

We will not be afraid.

Behold the beauty of the Lord!

God will shelter us on any day of trouble and set us high upon a rock.

Let God's people shout for joy!

For Christ calls us and claims us as his own.

Come and worship in unity and love; let us rejoice together!

Praise song – BOP 757 Come sing, O church, in joy!

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Gracious God, You shepherd us by still waters and guide us along the paths of justice and peace.
You send your comfort and courage to relieve our tears and fears in the shadows of death.
We offer our praise in love and loyalty for you are always with us.

Merciful God, you call us to follow your way of compassion but too often we criticize each other. You call us to follow your way of peace but too often we remain divided. You call us to

trust you but too often our fears and doubts overwhelm us. Forgive us, O God, and strengthen our commitment to follow your ways.

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 calls us in love and forgiveness, and welcomes us in with a warm embrace. Hear the good news of the Gospel. Rejoice that in Christ we are forgiven, so be at peace with God, be at peace with yourself and be at peace with each other.

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

God of love and grace, thank you for this opportunity to pray for our precious children and youth. You are the good Father. You are the good Shepherd. You are the merciful God. Embrace our children. Open their hearts and open their minds, ears, eyes, open all their senses, so they are able to experience you. Let them accept you with their sincere hearts. We long for their best life. And we know that it's only possible with you. Be with them and let them live the best life they can ever imagine in you, with you, and through you. Let them glorify you and enjoy you. You are God. We offer them up to your hands. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 27 As the Deer

Prayer for Illumination:

O God, we seek your wisdom and truth in the Scriptures. Send your Holy Spirit upon us to open our minds and hearts to receive the gift of your Word. Challenge and comfort us in what we hear, and strength us to follow Jesus, your Living Word. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Second reading: Psalm 40 (refrain 1)

Third reading: John 1:29-42

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

SERMON: They remained with him that day

Today's sermon title is **"They remained with him that day."**

John the Baptist saw Jesus and yelled, **"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).** Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan River. The Spirit descended from heaven and remained on Jesus. John realized that this Jesus was the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

V35, The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God! 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

John was standing with his own disciples. John saw Jesus walking by. He yelled again, **"Here is the Lamb of God."** One biblical commentator writes that John's exclamation this is the call his disciples to be detached from him. When the disciples heard John, they followed Jesus. They left John.

John knew his time. John knew he has done his role with the appearance of the Lamb of God. His job was to prepare his way. John also said this, **John 3:30, He must increase, but I must decrease.** John knew that this is the assigned moment for Jesus to move into the centre, while John slip off to the sidelines.

John's disciples followed Jesus. Jesus told them, **"Come and see."** They went and saw where Jesus was staying, and **the two disciples of John remained with Jesus that day.** This is where I got today's title. **"They remained with Jesus that day."**

Last week, we talked about how God sees us. God cherishes us. God values us. God considers us precious and meaningful.

The final question was what's the hindrance of accepting God's love as it is.

On Wednesday's Bible study, we talked about **Funhouse Mirrors**. When we stand in front of a regular mirror, we see ourselves. That is the reflection of our own image on the surface of the mirror. When we stand in front of these funny funhouse mirrors, we get crooked images of us. Because we know we are going to look silly, we just laugh at our funny reflections.

But, what if these mirrors give a false reflection of our true beauty? Our income reflects who we are? Our body image defines who we are? Does our social status define who we are? Our GPA? Our physical ability? Number of children? There are various different standards giving us crooked reflections of our true images. These worldly standards and cultural trends press down on our honest selves. Our honest precious image of God is imprisoned in the reflections of various distorted images.

Why did I talk about this?

Think about whom you want to spend time with. Is this someone who has distorted images of oneself? Or someone who knows that she or he is cherished, loved, and valued. These people are shining, full of energy. They live their lives with their whole selves. They are able to face themselves honestly without any hindrances. There is one such person we find in our passage.

"Come along and see for yourself." (John 1:39) This the claim of that person.

Are we confident to show where we stay? What we do? How we are doing? When we are doing? In all the things we are doing, **can we be 100% transparent?**

Jesus is inviting John's disciples. And they remained with Jesus that day. Of course, it was late afternoon. So, they might not be able to depart. But, I focused on "remained." Whether because of the situation, or because of their desire to stay with Jesus, they stayed that day with Jesus.

<<pictures>>Look at these humans and their dogs. They have similar images. They resemble each other. What happened? Why do they look similar? They spent time together, a lot of time.

What if we remained in Jesus for a long time? What will happen?
Like these people and their dogs, we will have similar images.

What is Jesus like? Honest, confident, kind, gentle, and strong in his inner being.

We want to spend time with people who have the likeness of Jesus. These are the people who have the images of the Creator – the true image we were created.

This Jesus strengthens us and cares for each and every one of us. **1 Corinthians 1:4-9, “4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

God is inviting us into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The two disciples of John the Baptist were fascinated by Jesus when they spent some time with him. They remained with him in the fellowship.

How do we experience our true selves? Remaining in Jesus. Being with Jesus.

Spend time with Jesus. Do you set a time to be alone with Jesus? It could be 3 minutes before you go to bed. Short review of each day with Jesus. It could be 5 minutes when we open our eyes. We can plan each day with Jesus. Invite him in our schedules.

Remain in Jesus and grow strength through the fellowship with Jesus. And know who you truly are. This is from Ephesians 2:

“1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

Let us remain in Jesus. Let us follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

This is the message of the Lord for us today. Let us pray.

Prayer for the people of God

Like Jesus called the disciples of John the Baptist, you call us too. Thank you for your invitation. Thank you that we came and we are able to see how you are working in our lives. For that, open our eyes, open our hearts and minds. We want to see you. We want to experience you in our daily lives. You are working in our lives. Help us realize that.

Help us build our personal relationship with you. You are awesome. You are fascinating, the Bible says. Many people say that they experienced you. Why not us? We want to join them confessing the beauty of you, and amazing intervention in our lives. We stand before you with expectations and great hopes. Fill us with you. We want to follow you all through our lives.

Lord Jesus, we are praying for the people in our congregation. There are sufferings from their physical pains, illnesses. Lord, be gracious to them. Shine your light upon them now. With your healing power, place your hands upon them, on the areas that need your special attention. Heal them. Recover them. Help them. Encourage them. Be with them with your confidence and presence. Also, there are people with relational struggles. You are the Light shining upon their lives. You are the Lamp which does not give them the clear picture of everything in their future. But, you are showing one or two steps ahead. Give them faith. Help them see with your eyes and help them engage others with your hearts and with your love. There are people with various situations in their own lives. Hold their hands and guide their lives. Because you are with them, let them have peace in their hearts even though they are in storms. Give us faith that you are the King and Ruler of all.

As we worship you, take our hearts and let this be pleasing sacrifice to you. Help us worship you with our whole hearts. Be praised and be worshipped in our daily lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Jesus called the first disciples who followed, not knowing that we would follow their examples so many centuries later. We bring our gifts in Jesus' name, not knowing whose lives will be touched, but trusting that something good will come of everything we offer to God through God's amazing work. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God.

The Doxology (BOP 830)

Offering prayer:

God, you called nobodies as your disciples. And you worked greatly through them. You have called us to follow and here we are. We offer what we have and ask you to bless our gifts. Give us the courage we need to invite others to join us in following you, Jesus Christ, our friend and saviour. Amen.

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

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Who do you want to spend your time, your life? Jesus invites all of you to follow him. He's saying to you, remain in me, in my grace, I am giving you life. Let us follow Jesus and have true life.

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.