

Worship on February 12, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 321 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
- Second reading: Psalm 119:1-8 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20
- Sermon: Choose life so that you and your descendants may live
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

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

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

How blessed are we when we meditate on God's teachings;

and when we desire God with our whole hearts.

Let us praise God with attentive minds and eager spirits,

for we are God's servants, working and praying together.

So let us worship God and praise God's holy name.

Let us seek God's path and listen for God's call.

Praise song – BOP 321 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of all life and each life, You are the light of minds that seek to know you.

You are strength for those who seek to serve you. You reveal truth to those who search for you.

In worship, we pause in your presence, resting from our work and responsibilities, from our worries and distractions. We come to enjoy your presence and praise you for the gift of life in Christ and in creation. Receive our prayers and praise this day, for we open our hearts in love and loyalty to you, O God, you are our All in All.

God who is our all in all, You call us to choose life and walk in your ways, but we are tempted by shortcuts and easy solutions. You ask us to turn from anger and settle our differences, but we cling to grievances and point fingers at others. You ask us to be true to our word, but we prefer to keep everyone happy. Forgive us, O God; and give us wisdom to discern and give us courage to follow the paths you set for your people.

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 invites us to choose life and find the blessing that comes from following God's ways. Accept God's gift of forgiveness and choose new life. Forgive one another and discover the peace of Christ.

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 grace and mercy, thank you for this time of prayer for our children and youth. We pray for our own children and for the next generations. Faith is a gift. But, the faith is shaped by learning. As parents or grandparents and friends, help us show them good examples of faith. Let them see the lives of Christ-followers when they look at our lives. Also, we want to teach them how to pray and what to pray for. We pray for Turkiye and Syria after the big earthquake. Loving God the Father, help them. We are small and powerless, but we can pray for them. As we pray together with our precious little ones, help us include the people in Turkiye and Syria. Therefore, they can have perspective of caring for others. Let our children and youth become helping people. We pray that you, God, use them as your hands and feet for your glory. Prepare them for you. Be pleased and be glorified through our precious children. We confess your goodness and faithfulness. We praise and worship you all through our lives. In Jesus' precious and faithful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

Prayer for Illumination:

God of promise and purpose, in the midst of life's distractions, still our minds to listen. In the midst of competing voices, speak your Word of truth. Send your Spirit to help us make wise choices. In the name of Jesus, our teacher and saviour, we pray. Amen.

First reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Second reading: Psalm 119:1-8 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

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

SERMON: Choose life so that you and your descendants may live

Today's sermon title is **"Choose life so that you and your descendants may live"**

This is the last part of Moses' final sermon to the people of Israel. Moses led God's people in the wilderness. They are about to cross the Jordan for the land of promise from God. And Moses could not go with them. So, this is **Moses' farewell speech.**

The key point of today's passage is **CHOICE**. Choice between what?

V15, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity."

Moses is giving them two options. **"Life and prosperity" VS. "Death and adversity"**

Is this really asking to choose between these two? If I gave you the same two options, what would you choose? I hope, 100%, **Life and prosperity.**

In my common sense, no one would choose death and adversity. We all want to live and we all want goodness out of our lives. So, what does this mean? It is more like hortatory. Moses is urging the people of Israel to choose God. If you choose God, "you will have life and prosperity." BUT, if you don't choose God, then you will get death and adversity.

When raising children, I don't know whether you are the same, I give my children two options.

"If you clean up your toys, you can watch TV."

"If you don't clean up your toys, you cannot watch TV."

I already know what they want. I already know what's good for them. I am not saying that watching TV is good for kids. What I am saying is, cleaning up is good for them, so they get the prize they want. The focus is on cleaning up. They need to learn cleaning up after playing.

Very similar to this case. God already knows what's good for us. The life and prosperity is good for us. But, God is telling us, as if he is giving us choices. In his heart, he is encouraging his people to choose obedience, so we may have good gifts from God.

V16, "If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess."

V17-18, "But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess."

Therefore, it is not giving us choices, but it is exhortation to choose life, to choose God. Or it is the warning what will happen if we turn away from God.

But, when we make choices, we want something like very crystal clear ending.

We want something like **super bright flashlight**. We want to see all the things clearly. We don't want any surprises. But this is not the way God leads his people according to the Bible.

Psalms 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

A lamp is different from flashlight. It only brightens up one or two steps. We know what will happen in a very near future, but not far after that. Why does God describe his own wise word as like a lamp, not an ultra-bright flashlight? If we know everything, we don't need God. We don't have to trust God because we know everything. If we have the control of everything, why do we pray? Why do we seek God's guidance? If we can do with our own strength, then we do not need help. We turn away from God if we have all the things we need.

Knowing God, following God is walking with God one step at a time.

Like a shepherd, God knows where to go next. He has plans where to feed his own sheep today and tomorrow and future days. But for sheep, do they have any plans? Do they care about where to eat tomorrow? Do they know what's going on? Do they want to know future plans? No. They do not want to know and they do not care. All they care is NOW. All they care is if they have food now. **Like this picture of a man with a lamp**, we can only see a little bit. The lamp shows only one or two steps. This is how God leads us. This is how God shows us his plans.

So, choose God. Choose life. **This also means to have God-ward attitude.**

This is seeking God's wise governance over every detail of our lives.

We are talking about life and death, but I am mentioning **every detail of our lives.**

Why every detail matters when speaking about life and death issue?

Have you ever had a **papercut?** Have you ever had a toenail problem or fingernail?

It seems very small and insignificant. But, it bothers. And this **bothersome small issue** takes away our focus. These small details of our slives could take away our happiness. When we drive, someone's wild and reckless driving manner could ruin our joyful emotions, instantly.

When we get into a fight against our spouse, it is from a very small issue, most of the time.

Life is in little things. After fights and arguments, many times, we don't even remember why we fought. But, we are left with the hurts and frustrating emotions. This is the consequences of making wrong decisions, chooing death.

So, **this final lesson of Moses is telling us to choose life in every detail of our lives.** However, **the choices are not usually labelled "life" or "death."** Most of our decisions do not seem important, but life and death are before us every day. We choose death when we ignore God and choose anything inferior. **Death is a slow process of giving ourselves to what does not matter.** **Modern life is impoverished with lack of purpose.** We race to meet deadlines that are insignificant and bow before ideas that are not worthy. How do we know them? How do we know what's important or not?

That is the process of walking with God. That is our willingness of asking God for his wisdom. That is the choice following God's lamp, not the flashlights the world offers to us. That is the choosing narrow path against the wide. It is trying to have God's patience. **Try to be patient with our own imperfection.** Imagine our little children. Of course, we get impatient because of their repeated mistakes and imperfection, but we don't become impatient as much as we are with our own selves. **Like God is waiting for us, let us wait for ourselves.** Also, let us try to be patient with others as well. It is not easy, but it will help us if we remember to love God with our everything.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise."

This is, **CHOOSE GOD ALWAYS EVEN IN THE SMALLEST DETAILS.**

Believe God that he has plans for your life. He knows you and he desires life for us.

Be present with God and walk with him every moment of your life.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God:

God of love and grace, we thank you that you love us faithfully. Thank you for not giving us up. Thank you for continuously calling us to be with you. Through Moses, you urge us to choose life. Because you know which way is best for us, you lead us. Help us listen to your voice and help us follow you with our whole hearts.

At this time, we pray for the earthquake in Turkiye and Syria. Lord, sometimes, we tend to blame you for this kind of disaster. But, still, we believe that you are good.

Good good Father, for some reason, you allowed this disaster. We cannot understand the reason why, but you are working according to your perfect plans. So, Lord, give us faith trusting you.

Also, God, we pray for the people who lost their normal life because of the earthquake.

Many died, many are missing, and many are terrified and saddened. Be present among them.

Embrace their hearts. Shine your light upon them. In their deep deep sadness, make yourself known to them. You are there. You are crying with them. You are suffering with them. You are with them. You don't just leave them alone in their difficulties. That is who you are and you are working in all kinds of ways. So, God, show yourself through this. We don't have wisdom how to pray. We cannot understand your plans nor your wisdom in this. We just ask for your wisdom and guidance.

And also, we pray for all the people who are helping them. Many are sending money, many are going there to help them. Gracious God, use your people and work through them.

Help us join this good works. Remind us to pray for them. And, help us support in all possible ways to help them with what we have. Good good Father, pour out your love upon them, so in the midst of the sadness and anger, let your light shine from within.

We also remember our church. Loving God, you purchased your own church with your precious blood. All churches around the world are yours. You are the Head. You are the King. You are the Lord. Make sure that we know who you are and place you at the right place. You are sitting on the throne of the church. You are leading your church in your own ways and in your own desires. We are followers and we are your sheep. Help us know who you truly are and help us know who we truly are. We thank you for our church. We are so precious in your eyes. We are trying to love you. We are doing our best to live as your people. Hold our lives. Give us wisdom. Give us strength to hang in there. Hold our hands. Walk with us in all our circumstances. Take care of all our difficulties and challenges. We offer our lives into your hands. We are yours.

Be glorified and be worshiped through our lives. Be pleased through our worship and through our daily lives. In Jesus' precious and wonderful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. God sets choices before us. Some can bring life and blessing, but others lead to despair. When we give our lives and gifts to God, we make a choice for life, a choice to bless others in God's holy name. So trust that God will bless the choice we make today. Praise the Lord. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 830)

Offering prayer:

Gracious and generous God, we bring our gifts to you in thanksgiving. Bless them and surprise us by all the Holy Spirit can accomplish with them. Bless our lives, too, so that our choices will

always honour you for Christ's sake. You are an awesome God. Be present in our lives and be glorified through our lives. In Jesus' precious and amazing name, we pray. Amen.

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

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God knows what the best is for us. God has great plans for us. God is our shepherd who knows what comes next. God is the lamp on our feet. It only lightens up one or two steps. This teaches us to trust God with our whole hearts with all the details of our lives. God wants us. Stay with him and have 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.