

Worship on February 19, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 298 Glory be to God the Father
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 206 Jesus remember me

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Exodus 24:12-18
- Second reading: Psalm 2 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Matthew 17:1-9
- Sermon: Transfiguration of Jesus
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 399 Spirit, Spirit of gentleness

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 rules over the earth in majesty and mystery.

We praise God's awesome name!

The Lord loves justice and calls us together in equity.

We come to honour God's purposes with love and loyalty.

The Christ of glory shines in this place.

With the Spirit's power, we will lift our voices in prayer and praise!

Praise song – BOP 298 Glory be to God the Father

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of grace and wonder, you reveal your presence in so many different ways. Your glory shines on snowy mountain tops and sparkling streams. Your mercy moves in classroom conversations and bedside prayers. Your word of comfort frees us from fear; Your voice can transform our doubts. We come before you in worship to dwell in your goodness and seek your truth, as we offer all our praise and honour to you, with Christ and the Holy Spirit, One God, mighty and merciful, now and always.

God of mystery and mercy, we confess that we sometimes mistake our own desires for your will. We are reluctant to hear a word that challenges our assumptions. We seek assurances that we are right, and resist insights from the experience of others. Forgive us, O God. Shape our will to yours, so we can dwell more closely with you and with one another.

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

Friends 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. God offers us mercy and newness of life this day, so 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

Gracious and loving God, we are grateful that you gave us our children. You entrusted them to us. Help us be good stewards. Help us build healthy relationships with them and help us teach them build healthy relationships with God and with others. Help us guide them to your truth. Lord God, give us patience. As you are waiting for us, help us show them patience. Help us accept them just as they are and embrace them with overpouring love from you, just like your lavishing love pouring out upon us. We trust your grace and love. Help our precious children and youth have your love and grace in their hearts all through their lives. Provide them good people in their lives as they shape their thoughts and inner beings. Let them be rooted in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. We offer them to your hands. Use them for your glory. We worship you and honour you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 206 Jesus remember me

Prayer for Illumination:

God of Word and Wisdom, your Spirit inspired the authors of Scripture with faithfulness in their day. Send us your Holy Spirit as we listen to the Scriptures in our time. Give us fresh understanding and a vision of how to live out your wisdom in the example of Christ, your living Word. Amen

First reading: Exodus 24:12-18

Second reading: Psalm 2 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Matthew 17:1-9

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

SERMON: The transfiguration of Jesus

Today's sermon title is **"The transfiguration of Jesus."**

Jesus asked his disciples, **"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13)**

The disciples hadn't really thought about it. So, they said, **"Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (16:14)** So, Jesus asked them. **"Who do you say that I am?"**

The disciples spent three years with Jesus. They travelled together, they eye-witnessed Jesus' miracles. They listened to a lot of Jesus' teachings and they had personal Q&A times, a lot of them. They were the closest people to Jesus in the whole history when Jesus was on earth in human form. Jesus might have thought his disciples would know him deeply in human relationship point of view. But, Jesus was wondered whether they knew the true identity of Jesus. So he asked, "who do you say that I am?"

A short moment of awkward silence. Peter soon broke the silence. **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."** (Matthew 16:16) Messiah is the promised deliverer, rescuer, redeemer. And the salvation only comes from "the Son of the living God." Peter confessed **the divine identity of Jesus**. However, right after this, Jesus foretold his suffering and death. Again, Peter spoke out. **Matthew 16:22, "Peter took [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.'**

Immediately, Jesus turned and said to Peter, **"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."** (Matthew 16:23)

Jesus was preparing his salvation work. Yet, none of his disciples understood the true identity of Jesus. Even Peter, who confessed the divine identity of Jesus, did not understand what he said.

This transfiguration of Jesus happened six days after Peter confession of Jesus' divine identity.

Jesus' disciples were told that Jesus was not human origin, he is divine. How exciting it would be. They were hanging out with God. Also, there were signs. Jesus was the miracle maker, and the disciples saw them and they knew Jesus' divine character.

But, they were told about the suffering of Jesus too. For six days, there might be some mixed emotions about Jesus. **He's God, but he would have to suffer. ...?** These two ideas don't go together. **How can the almighty God suffer from mere human beings? But, to deny Jesus' divinity, they had seen too much of Jesus' power and miracle and wisdom.**

Meanwhile, in the midst their confusion, Jesus called three of his closest disciples and went up to a mountain. This is the background of the transfiguration of Jesus.

The transfiguration of Jesus affirms that Jesus' true identity as God. Therefore, this gives the disciples great joy and hope. **Jesus is the true Son of God** the glorious and almighty. This transfiguration of Jesus was the sign of new life that awaits Jesus the Faithful One beyond the cross and it signals new life for Jesus' followers as well.

But, at the same time, after realizing the true identity of Jesus Christ the Messiah, the disciples began to see with the eyes of God **the chaos to come as Jesus foretold them**. Death of their master, loss, fear, and resurrection and the works of the early church. **The challenge to the disciples is to live in a world without Jesus' bodily presence.**

Around the transfiguration of Jesus, there are two opposite emotions: hope and fear.

We, as Christians, stand before the dilemma. We cannot choose one between these two sides of transfiguration. We have to embrace both.

On Wednesday, it is the first day of Lent this year. Lent is the time of remembering the love of Jesus Christ who loves us with his own life. This is the time of reflection and preparation before the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

This transfiguration of Jesus teaches us there are two extremely different responses in Jesus' life and death. And we have to embrace them both.

After rebuking Peter, Jesus taught the life of true followers of Jesus. **“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) MSG version, “Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?”**

Take up your own cross. This is letting God seat in the driver's seat.

In other words, it is relying on God, not our own power or wisdom. We respond to difficulties by seeking God for guidance and strength.

Who is Jesus Christ for us TODAY? How are we responding to Jesus?

Are we making our own decision to live a Christ-centered life? Then, we will have the **Christ-Centered Confidence** even though we are not with physical Jesus.

The disciples did not quit trusting Jesus even after his death by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 26:3-4, **“Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace – in peace because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.”**

When we trust our God, we experience the Holy Spirit's presence, provision, and power and, as a result, we grow spiritually. **Ephesians 3:20-21, “God can do anything, you know – far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.”**

Philippians 1:6, “I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”

These are just a few examples of God's promises for us.

By the transfiguration of Jesus, we know for sure that **Jesus is the Son of the living God**. Also, we know how the divine Jesus suffered and died for us. Moreover, we know the promise of Jesus that he sent the Holy Spirit for us.

Through Jesus' transfiguration, **Jesus began his journey toward the death on the cross for us.** As we begin this year's Lent, let us think about the question of Jesus to his disciples.

“Who do you say that I am?”

Do your life and actions reveal Christ-centered confidence? Let us answer this question through our lives. God is working in our lives and he will never stop working in us until he will bring his good works to completion.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God:

Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, thank you for showing your divine identity through your transfiguration. That is a mystery we cannot understand. That is the sign only you can show us. So, we put our trust on you alone. As we worship and follow you, be with us and guide us. And use us, so we can show you to the world through our lives.

Lord Jesus, we hear too many sad stories. There are too many self-centered desires around us. It causes death, anger, depression, violence, and many more harmful emotions and actions. Gracious God, help us. You are the God of life. Shine your light. Shine your life upon your sinful people. God the Father, you are embracing all the pain of the world. You are present in all sufferings and hardships. Strengthen our godly desires. Help us stand up and make changes in this dark world as your light. We want to see your glory in all the earth. Raise your people and show your power.

Please continue to shine your light upon the people in Turkiye and Syria. Show your love through your people and God, pour out your love upon them, all the people who lost their loved ones and friends.

Loving God, this week, the Lent season begins. As we remember your love and sacrifice for us, fill our hearts with your love and help us grow spiritually and come close to you. You died on the cross to save your people. So, Lord, help us spread this great news to our surroundings. Let your love be overflowing in our hearts and your love may be shown through our lives.

We pray for our congregation. We try to love each other and care for each other. Hold our hands and strengthen us, so we become the community of love and community of life. Remember each individual who are going through hard times. You are the God who hears the smallest sighs. You care for each and every one of us, so Lord, in our intimacy, pour out your love and make us stand strong.

God of love, protect us and help us all through the week. Be praised and worshipped through our lives. In Jesus' precious and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. God reached out to the world in Christ Jesus, calling us to share God's transforming love. We offer our gifts as a sign of our readiness to follow him, praying they will become tangible tokens of that transforming love. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 830)

Offering prayer:

God of love that transforms lives, we offer our gifts in gratitude for all we have received in Christ, your beloved Son. Take our gifts and transform them into acts of love that will bless the world in his name. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 399 Spirit, Spirit of gentleness

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. That's the one we trust. This is the one who holds our hands and guides our daily lives. Trust him and rely upon him with all our hearts.

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.