

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

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 500 Open my eyes, that I may see

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Second reading: Psalm 23 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Ephesians 5:8-14
- Sermon: You are light
- Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 686 How firm a foundation

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

L: Just as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness,

P: the Spirit leads us into places of uncertainty where we confront our weakness and insecurities.

L: Here we are taught to pay attention to those whom others ignore.

P: Jesus insists that God's grace is revealed in unlikely people.

L: God's realm is a place where all are welcome, regardless of their state or position. In a world of disparity, we recognize that some receive what is denied to others.

P: Let us break through barriers that keep many from receiving the grace that they need.

Praise song – BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Gracious and loving God, you are the Source of all that sustains us. You are compassion, embracing us when we call for mercy. You are mercy guiding us through anxious times. You are wisdom, revealing truth to challenge and renew us. Holy One, you bless us with your presence day by day, so we turn to you in worship, to seek your blessing once again.

We offer you our love and loyalty, our prayers and our praise, for you are Love, Light and Life for us, and we belong to you.

God of life and love, these days we confess that events around us shake our trust in your love.

When terror strikes and innocents fall, we wonder if love can defeat violence.

When truth is twisted by misleading claims, we wonder if love can prevail over lies.

When we face trouble, we wonder if you love us at all. Forgive us, God, when we lose our trust in your love.

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, remember the words of the apostle Paul: "Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Today, let us trust that, no matter what is happening around us, no matter what we have done, God's deep love will never let us go. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

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 God, we thank you for your unending love. Your love is so faithful that you still love us when we fall down due to our sinful desires and weaknesses. You are patiently waiting for us. Help us learn your patience and love. Because you love us faithfully with your patience, we are here. God of love, let us have our children and youth in our hearts and help us wait on them. As you trust us, help us trust them. Give us faith to trust that you are holding our children and youth in your arms. God of grace, with your grace and love, sustain our precious children and youth. Let them be yours. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise Song: BOP 500 Open my eyes, that I may see

Prayer for Illumination:

Light of the world, your Word brings new vision and hope. Shine your Holy Spirit on us as we listen to the Scriptures, to open our eyes on your Word at work in the world and show us the path we can follow. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Second reading: Psalm 23 (refrain 2)

Third reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

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

SERMON: You are light

Today's sermon title is **"You are light"**

The scripture begins by identifying who we were and who we are now.

"For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light." (v8)

Paul does not say we were in darkness as the place where we stayed. But, Paul said we were darkness itself.

This first verse is the conclusion of the day. **"For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light." (v8)**

Because of our sin, we were darkness, but once we were saved by the life of Jesus Christ, we became light.

V1, **"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."**

This makes today's point clearer. The source of our light is God. We are becoming the imitators of God, the Light itself.

There are many places in the Bible that shows God's choice to make us light.

"Now in the Lord you are light." (v8)

"You did not choose me but I chose you." (John 15:16)

"You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:14)

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (Isaiah 60:1)

Light of God, it is our identity in the Lord. This phrase, "In the Lord" was an early church indicator for "In the risen Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul is teaching us the awesome fact that in our mystic union with the living Christ we are shining brightly with Christ's light. Our light from God also carries the spiritual energy that can empower us in our struggle with the forces of evil.

V13 and 14 supports this triumphant light. **"Everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper awake! Rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you."**

Exodus 34:29-30, **29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him.**

Moses finished talking with God and went back to his own people. When he was approaching, the people of God realized that his face was shining with glorious light because he was with the source of light, God.

When we are exposed by God's love and glory, do you know the feeling that someone's face is shining with God's light? When God deeply touches one's heart, there is change in heart and it shows on the face.

Are you light? Everything in you is exposed visible in light?

When we were darkness, we were holding our darkness in secret. We did not want to expose in light.

John 1:10-12, “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.”

Jesus came to us as light. All creation was created by Jesus, the Light. But, when Jesus came to the earth, no one noticed the Creator. Jesus came his own people, but we did not want Jesus. We chose to sit in our own darkness, instead of exposing ourselves into the light of Jesus.

When I was in first year university, one of my friends asked me to do a cleaning job at his friend’s office. It was a tire company and there was a helmet shaped neon tubes decoration. By my mistake, I dropped it. It broke. No one saw it. So, I put it back in the place where it belonged and told nobody. It was 25 years ago and I am still shameful for it. I was afraid to tell because it was the very first job making money. I was afraid of losing the money I was to get for the first time in my life.

V11 and 12, “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly;”

This is the exact description of what I did 25 years ago. I am shameful even to mention this thing done in secret.

V10, “Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.”

God has chosen us to be light in this world. This is what God wants us to do.

Colossians 1:10, “so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power.”

We are to be light. That is, **we are to please the Lord.** We are to bear fruit in every good work. This is not easy task. We are to be vigilant in actively pursuing a transformed, renewed state of mind that is pure and blameless. We are standing before the Creator God like Moses. **We are identified as light by God** who created us, who guides us every single moment, who loves us, and who holds our hands and is walking with us.

This is the third week of Lent. Are we coming to God who sacrificed everything for us?

Are we talking to God like Moses? Are we standing in front of the glory of God daily?

God desires you. God wants your attention. God wants you to know his amazing love. In Lent, we witness darkness creeping up to, circling around, and apparently overcoming Jesus. In this hopelessness, we see God intervening. God raised Jesus to life shining his glory on all the earth and all the history and all the people in the past, at this present moment, and in future. This is the time to come to God with our darkness and stand in God’s light. “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people of God

God, here we are standing before your light. Thank you for your light shining down upon us. Thank you for removing all the darkness we have in us. Shameful and guilty, we are. But, by your love, by your grace, and by your light, we are transformed. Our identity is changed. We are no longer darkness, but we are now light. Thank you. Thank you Lord.

As light, as the children of light, help us maintain our true identity. Strengthen us and give us wisdom to discern and courage and power to live accordingly. We desire to be your pleasure. Open our eyes and ears, so we can follow your directions.

Faithful God, right after our worship today, we are going to have our Annual General Meeting looking back how you led us last year. As we witness how you led your church, fill our hearts with wonder and amazement for your faithfulness towards us. Help us plainly see how great it is your love for us. And Lord, be present among us, in our hearts, and help us experience your embracing love for each of us. Lead the meeting and show us your goodness for your church.

Gracious Father, we remember the people around suffering with fear, loss, violence, hopelessness, and sadness because of their life's difficulties. There is war, there is earthquake, there is lie, there is selfishness, there is distortion, there is abused power, there is darkness. We are just weak when we see that. Hold us. Embrace the people who are in hardship. We know that you are with them, encouraging them, giving peace to them, and crying with them. God the Creator, you are governing the whole universe, but at the same time, you hear a very small whispering of cry. So, God, give faith to all people. Show yourself. Show your light. We will become your hands and feet. We will become like Moses' shining face, so we will tell your love and goodness to the world. We will show your light.

God of love and mercy, be present in our daily lives. So, we can hold on to our true identity. In Jesus' precious and wonderful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. As our Shepherd, God calms our fears and tends our needs. We offer our gifts in gratitude for God's goodness, trusting that we can share that goodness in a world filled with fear and need. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 830)

Offering prayer:

God our Good Shepherd, receive these gifts and bless them with your love. Use them to bring light and healing to the world you love for the sake of Christ, your Son, our Saviour. In Jesus' wonderful and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 685 How firm a foundation

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Let us expose our honest selves before God's light. We were darkness, but not any longer, because God is shining his light on us. Our darkness is chased away by God's glorious light. You are light. This is your true identity. Don't hide it. Live as children of light.

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.