

**Worship on June 18, 2023** (CCLI: License Number #3156883)  
(Welcoming Elder: Stephen Knowles)

**Sunday Order of worship**

**We Gather**

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 274 Crown him with many crowns
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- **Praise song – BOP 307 God of the sparrow, God of the whale**

**We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Exodus 19:2-8a
- Second reading: Psalm 100 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Romans 5:1-8
- Sermon: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Prayer for the people of God

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 425 We praise you, O God vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 315 A mighty fortress is our God

**We Serve**

- Benediction

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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**

Holy and generous is God, the Creator of all things.

**Loving and gracious is Christ, the Bearer of healing and hope.**

Gentle and wise is the Holy Spirit, the Breath of new life.

**Trinity of grace, we call on you today.**

Come and worship the God who made us and loves us all!

**We come with joyful praise and hopeful hearts!**

**Praise song – BOP 274 Crown him with many crowns**

**Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

Creator God, You have made a world of such amazing diversity – with unique living things we cannot number! We praise you for such wonder. You have created such amazing diversity in humankind – through culture and language, custom and community, expressed in so much creativity and compassion. We praise you for such wonder. In Jesus Christ, you show us how much you love your creation and how we can live by your love. By the power of your Holy

Spirit, give us new eyes to see the wonders you have made and teach us how to love your creation with humble and grateful hearts.

Creator God, The diversity in your creation amazes us, but we confess we often prefer what seems familiar. We'd like everyone to speak our language. We wish others held our values and shared our customs. We fail to see how our own preferences affect others and the earth itself in harmful ways. Forgive our easy assumptions, and teach us to listen to the stories of others with open minds and hearts.

**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, The prophet Micah declared that God requires three things of us:  
to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

To all who seek reconciliation with God and neighbour in kindness and humility,  
God offers forgiveness and peace. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**May the peace of the Lord be with you.** Let us take few moments to greet each other and share this joy of our Risen Lord.

### **Prayer for children and youth**

God my mercy and grace, it's almost the end of the school year. We remember our precious children and youth. Thank you for leading them through the year. There might have been good times and not so great times, but you were faithful to them protecting them and guiding them. Thank you for your love. In our ordinary life, we take everything given to us just as natural. Many times, we forget to give thanks to you for all the things you have given us. Gracious God, give us wisdom that all things are from you. Open our eyes to see you working in our midst. Let our children and youth put their lives upon you, the only Solid Rock, the only unshakable foundation. Teach them that the true blessing is not from this world, but you. You are the only one who are to be praised and honoured all through our lives. Give our children and youth worshipping hearts. Let them live in your presence. Let them worship you all through their lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

### **Praise song – BOP 307 God of the sparrow, God of the whale**

#### **Prayer for Illumination:**

God of mystery and wonder, amid the distractions of our times, give us undivided hearts and attentive minds. O God, help us discern your wisdom in the scriptures, so that we may follow Christ, your living Word. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: Exodus 19:2-8a

Second reading: Psalm 100 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Romans 5:1-8

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

**SERMON: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Today’s sermon title is **“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

Today’s scripture is one of the foundational messages of the gospel. I hope and pray that God may speak to each of your heart according to your current situation and need.

Paul assumes that we are already justified by God. **V1, “Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Jesus Christ died on the cross washing all the sin of all human kind. This happened, so we are justified by God. We became clean. We became the children of God. We are in peace with God.

The fruits of justification are **1) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**, and **2) We have the hope of sharing the glory of God.**  
**In other words, we enjoy peace in the present and hope for glory in the future.**

This peace, this new relationship with God, has been brought through Jesus Christ. Because life was given to us by Jesus, he is understood to be our Lord and Master. Jesus gives us access to this grace of God through our faith. **This grace is unearned, unmerited gift of God.** With thankful heart, we take this grace and stand upon it as our solid ground and we take this grace as our confidence.

In this world, we live by faith. We are not under the laws of this world, but we live by faith under the rule of grace. **We enjoy the peace we have with God, while not yet experiencing the fullness of the glory that is our ultimate destiny in Christ.**

Therefore, by justification, **we have peace with God and hope for the glory of God.**

**Do we deserve this grace? No. This is why Paul wrote we can boast.** This boasting is appropriate because it calls attention to what God has done for us. **When this boasting brings attention to the grace of God lavishly poured upon us through Jesus Christ, it brings glory to God.** We did not do anything. It is done by God’s grace and love alone. So, by boasting, we give God glory.

But, wait, we can boast on what? The scripture says, **Boast on sufferings?**

When does suffering come? We need to know the nature of suffering.

**Suffering comes when someone is different from the majority.** When someone goes opposite direction, we consider that person wrong or we label them strange.

This whole world is eager to boast their own selves. Their own possessions, their own positions, their own experiences, their own fame, popularity, or their own accomplishments.

But, what is Paul saying to this world? Opposite. We didn’t do anything. **We have nothing to boast about our own selves, but we have Christ to boast.** We live to glorify God, not to honour our own names. From there, suffering comes to Christ-followers.

**Karl Barth reminds us, the degradation, the contempt, and persecution that Christians inevitably suffer at the hands of the world are in fact their badge of honour.**

**Matthew 5:11-12, “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”**

**1 Peter 1:16, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

We say God is holy and the goal of our faith is holiness. **But, what is holiness?**

It is to be consecrated to God. It is connected to God.

Okay. **Holy, Devoted to God, Sacred, Consecrated, Connected with God, Dedicated to God.**

These are, many times, in the air. Too abstract.

**Then, what does holiness look like in our daily lives?**

**God defines Holiness different.** God is holy and we are not. God and we are different.

**Between this world and Christ-followers, there must be difference. That is holiness.**

What does the Bible say about the ruler of this world?

**Ephesians 2, 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.**

**1 John 5:19, “We know that we are God’s children, and that the whole world lied under the power of the evil one.”**

So, when we are taking different route from the world, we will be persecuted. There will be sufferings by following the steps of Jesus, by boasting the grace of God, not our own selves, by being different. **This suffering is the evidence of the grace of God in us.** Therefore, we are able to boast in our sufferings. In this, boasting becomes more a matter of rejoicing or being triumphant because of God’s goodness in our lives.

How can we not boast? The redemptive act of Jesus Christ was performed on behalf of those who were not only helpless but also undeserving of help. That is us.

**Now, it is a matter of our value.**

**God vs. World. God vs. Money. God vs. Wants. God vs. Fame. God vs. Recognition.**

**God vs. ME**

Because, by nature, we focus on our own selves, we are not able to glorify God by our own wills. We want to boast God, but at the same time, we want to glorify ourselves. We feel satisfaction when we serve community in the name of God. We feel like we are somebody. Deep in our honest heart, we have struggle between worshipping God and worshipping me.

**Romans 7:14-8:2**

**14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin.**

**15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.**

**21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.**

**8 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.**

This long passage tells us that we have two hearts. We want to worship God, but at the same time, we want to be glorified, we want to be worshipped. I don't want it this way, but I can't help it. There are two different, opposite desires in me. God vs. me. In this conflict, Jesus Christ came and freed us. That is connected to today's message.

Why do we boast God? **We have peace with God in this present moment and we have hope for the glory of God in the future.**

Suffering brings endurance, builds character, and produces hope. That is important. But, being able to boast the name of Jesus Christ and knowing what we are boasting is much more important for us.

We did not deserve this grace. We did not earn this life in God we have. We did not do anything that Jesus Christ came to us and died for us. We did not do anything that God first loved us.

Did we?

What can we boast of our own selves? **While we were still sinners, while we were helpless, while we were unworthy of God's attention, God sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ to us.**

**Let us stop boasting our own selves. Let us know who we truly are and who God truly is.**

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

### **Prayer for the people of God**

Gracious and loving God the Father, thank you for bringing us here today to worship you. Thank you that you sent your one and only Son Jesus Christ to save us when we were not even worthy of your attention. Thank you for your patience that you are still waiting for us so that we turn back to you. Loving God, we have two hearts. We want to love you but at the same time we want to love and worship our own selves. Help us know who you are and what you did for us.

We confess that we were nothing and we are nothing without you. Make our hearts humble before you and faithfully follow your steps.

God of love, this world is all about me. Pleasure, fame, having more. The whole focus is valuing one's own self. There is nothing about loving you or caring others. With this spirit, there are full of sadness, competition, conflicts, violence, selfishness, and sin.

We are not different, many times.

You called us light and salt. We want to be your light and your salt for this world you created. Strengthen us God and use us.

You are the Head of the church. And we are your church. Be the Lord. Be worshipped and be glorified through all the things we do. Take care of your church and use your church.

In Jesus' precious and wonderful name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This is the time for offering. God's Spirit equips Jesus' followers to bring healing and hope to the world God loves. The gifts we offer God are tangible signs of that

healing and hope at work in us and through us, for the sake of Christ our Lord. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him.

**The Doxology (BOP 425)**

**Offering prayer:**

God of grace and goodness, your world is full of gifts that sustain our lives. We offer our gifts in gratitude. Bless them and make them signs of your presence at work in the world, touching lives in need with your love and strength in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 315 A mighty fortress is our God**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. God's grace is poured upon us. God's love is beyond our understanding. We always fall, but God is still steadfastly loving us, unchanging. This is our life's foundation. Let us boast our God, not us. Let us live our lives with God and for God. God's mighty hands be with you.

**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.