

**Worship on July 30, 2023** (CCLI: License Number #3156883)  
(Welcoming Elder: Christine Tian)

**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 500 Open my eyes

**We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 King 3:5-12
- Second reading: Psalm 119:129-136 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
- Sermon: In his shade
- Prayer for the people

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

**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**

Give thanks to God and call on God's holy name.

**We will tell of God's wonderful works!**

Let the hearts of those who seek God rejoice.

**We will sing God's praises!**

Give glory to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

**We will remember God's mercy in all our words and actions.**

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

**Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

God of the past, present and future, we marvel at the wonder of your creation.

We praise you for gardens growing, birds singing, stars twinkling, for shouts of playful joy and restful evening sunsets. Such delights around us remind us of your goodness. God with us, day by day, you also surprise us with moments we will treasure for ever, and with confidence that turns small beginnings into projects that make a huge difference. You promise us a life beyond anything we can imagine, a kingdom marked by grace, love and justice for all.

In Jesus' name, by the power of the Holy Spirit breathing within us, we praise you for your loving kindness, and the hope it brings to us day by day. We will live to serve you, and offer you our love and loyalty now and always.

Merciful God, We confess that we are not always merciful people. We turn away in anger rather than seek solutions. We criticize those who differ from us in culture or conviction, rather than seek understanding. We can hold grudges for a lifetime. Forgive us our failures to live out the mercy we claim from you week by week. Open our hearts with your great 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**

Who is in a position to condemn us? Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. This is good news for all of us. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. So be at peace and make peace with one another for Christ's sake.

**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 of love and grace, thank you for this time for prayer for the children and youth. As we pray to you, help us hold them in our hearts in love. Our next generations need our love. Fill our hearts with love and let your love overflow to them from us. Help us love our children and youth. Gracious God, teach them your truth, open the hearts of our children and youth, so they may follow you and they may fall in love with you. You are unseen, but you are alive. It is very difficult to know. Reveal yourself to them in the most suitable ways for each person. So, God, let them live their lives with the confidence from experiencing your love, grace, power, mercy, and presence. Let them build their own selves upon the sure foundation. Hold them in your arms and guide their paths. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

### **Praise song – BOP 500 Open my eyes**

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

God of the seeking heart, we search for truth in a world filled with hidden agendas. Send us your Holy Spirit to guide us to the treasures hidden in your Word, for the sake of Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life for us. Amen

### **First reading: 1 King 3:5-12**

### **Second reading: Psalm 119:129-136 (refrain 1)**

### **Third reading: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

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

### **SERMON: In his shade**

**Today's sermon title is "In his shade."**

Mustard seed is very tiny. (PIC) But when it grows, it becomes one of the biggest trees. Mustard seeds are usually 1-2 mm. When it grows, the usual size of the tree is 20-30 feet tall, and 20 feet in circumference. So, it can provide very wide shade.

However, I learned it for the first time as I prepared today's message, back in Jesus' time, mustard tree was a weed. People did not like it. When they saw a mustard grew up, then they pluck them out right away. In Palestine, in the desert, where there was not much water, they didn't even have enough water for other crops. So, mustard tree which consumes a lot of water was not welcome.

But, today, Jesus is saying that the kingdom of heaven is like a smallest seed becomes a greatest tree. **V32, "it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."**

The smallest and tiniest mustard seed is like us or what we do for God. Our service might be like a mustard seed in the big picture of God. In the vast universe, the earth is like a tiny dot. In the earth, who are we? How great are we? We are like a small dust on the surface of the whole earth.

You remember these 4 fingers and the small space between? **God is SOOOOO BIG, and we are so small** that every human being could fit in this small space comparing us to God.

So, sometimes, we neglect what we do. Sometimes, our service or our love for God seem too small. Sometimes, our offering seems so insignificant. We are like a mustard seed. Also, people look at us like a weed. They don't welcome us. We are like a weed.

But, still, we pray to God, we try, but, many times, it seems not working. Then, we think... **(PIC) Am I a seed on a pathway? Am I a rocky road? Or Am I like a thorn bush?** Why can't I bear much fruit?

We wonder and we lose our confidence.

But have close look at v32. Jesus is talking about the smallest seed like us. **V32, "it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."**

This mustard seed was regarded as garbage. The mustard tree was plucked up when anyone finds it. Useless. Not wanted. Mocked. Criticized. Pushed away. Rejected. Regarded insignificant. But, what happened?

The birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

When we are not welcome, we need to remember Jesus. **(PIC) Psalm 118:22, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.** The cornerstone sets the beginning. It is the most important foundation. It is the most important piece of the whole building.

When God sowed our faith in our hearts, it could be like a mustard seed. Small. Insignificant. It needs to grow up, so that it can be visible, so that the faith has some influence in our lives.

The cornerstone does not seem important in the process of building. But, in the process of building, it sets the guideline, the standard. The builder comes back to the cornerstone and check how they are doing.

God planted faith in each of our hearts. Please know that you have the seed of faith in your heart. For some time, it could be bothersome. It hinders when you work. Work ethic is not always pleasing to God. When you engage relationships with others, your faith tells you to love all, but it seems not possible to love some. We all know that we need to be honest, but being honest all the time is not easy, nor beneficial. As well as when parenting our children, we know how we are supposed to pour out love to them, but we experience our weaknesses.

Listen and imagine this might be your life.

**(PIC) Colossians 2:7, Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.**

Isn't this the life we want in God? Isn't this the image of the Kingdom of heaven Jesus is teaching us today? Everything starts from small. Everything needs the time to grow. So are we.

**(PIC) If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:20-21, "For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."**

Are there some limits for you? Hindering you to do what you need to do? What you want to do? Health. Money. Circumstances.

Of course. There are challenges we encounter every day.

Regardless of our age, health conditions, circumstances, knowledge levels, or anything, we have been faced different kinds of difficulties all through our lives. And we will continue to face difficulties.

Imagine this again.

**Colossians 2:7, Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.**

I want my life to be filled with joy and overflowing love and thankfulness. And I want the same for you. And that is the desire of God for us. **Philippians 1:6, "I am confidence of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."**

God planted faith in us. He will take the charge of growing the faith in us, so we experience the Kingdom of heaven. Moreover, with the faith in God, God does not leave us alone. God is always with us and his presence is in our lives with the Holy Spirit. This is the works of the Holy Spirit in us.

**Acts 1:8, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'**

**(PIC.) If you feel like your faith is small, look at this mustard seed and the tree.**

For size, how many times the seed grew? Like 50,000 times? With God, with the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no obstacles in front of us. There will be challenges, but our almighty God is with us. All powerful God is guiding our steps. This small mustard seed is who we are in God. God will guide you all through your life. He will never give you up. You will become this tree. So, be encouraged and be filled with confidence and courage.

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

**Prayer for the people**

Lord, we are your servants. Speak Lord, your servants are listening. That is what young Samuel said when the voice of God called him. Heavenly Father, we are small like a mustard seed, but with your help, we are becoming this giant tree. With you, we are magnificent mustard trees. At the same time, we have authority and responsibility to invite the world to your shade, so you can provide rest and security for them. That is who we are. Thank you for calling us your church. Thank you for giving us your power. From now on, we make up our minds. We are going to stand up as your church with your power. We are going to use your power, so we can witness your love and grace and goodness to our surroundings. Lead us. Help us function as your strong church. Let the birds of the air come to us and have lives in your shade through us.

We are praying for this world. The earth is aching. With pollution, with carbon emission, we are bringing the life of earth, as well as our life, to the end. Help us be aware of importance of our own small actions. Small actions collectively make changes. Help us participate to save the environment.

Also, there are many wildfires in Canada. So many people are evacuating from their homes. Their lives are threatened. They lost everything they have. Help them. Provide them their needs. Protect them from dangers. Also, help all the people who are fighting against these fires. Help them save the environment, your creation. God, help us. We are desperate without you. Please God, help us.

We also remember each member of our church. Some are hands, some are eyes, some are feet. We all have different functions. Together, we are building up your body. You as are cornerstone, we are being built as your church. Help us be connected to each other with love and care. We pray for the people with physical illnesses. Loving God, heal them. Provide them the best help in medicine, medical assistance, and emotions and relationships. We pray for the people with all kinds of struggles in life. Relationships, finances, and different challenges of life. Gracious God, you know our hearts. You know what we need. Lead and guide us to the direction of what you want and what we need. Help us listen to you closely. Give us faith to follow.

Watch over us through the week and be glorified and be worshipped through our daily lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This is the time for offering. God surprises us. Small mustard seed becomes a giant tree. A stone which seemed useless becomes the cornerstone. God works beyond our wisdom and plans. Let us give ourselves to God. When he uses our lives and our gifts, he will make amazing stories. As we offer our gifts to God, let us praise God and glorify him.

**The Doxology (BOP 79 Vs. 1)**

**Offering prayer:**

God of all true treasure, we offer our gifts with thankful hearts, knowing you keep providing what makes life truly rich. Bless these gifts so that your goodness is multiplied to touch the lives of those in need, for Christ's sake. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Our all-powerful God guides our steps. Our loving and gracious God uses a smallest and tiniest mustard seed. He can use us. He can make us like a giant mustard tree. Whether we feel like we are valuable or not, in God's eyes, we are so precious. Have this in your hearts and live with him, live in his love.

**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.