

Worship on August 13, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 675 Precious Lord, take my hand

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: 1 King 19:9-18
- Second reading: Psalm 85:8-13 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Matthew 14:22-33
- Sermon: Immediate help of Jesus
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 574 With the Lord as my guide

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

Give thanks to the Lord!

We will tell the world what God has done.

Let us bring praise to the name of our Maker.

We will honour God's name with shouts of joy!

Be mindful of all that God provides for us.

Let us give thanks for all the wonders God has made!

Praise song – BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Surprising and mysterious God, you come to us when we least expect it, calling us out of our routines and plans, inviting us to follow Christ into new opportunities. We praise you for the many ways you come to us.

In moments of fear, you speak with words of reassurance.

In moments of doubt, you reach out your hand to hold.

In moments of turmoil, you bring calm to the storm.

You are faithful to us through everything life can bring. And so we place our trust in you this day and every day, and honour you as our Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour.

Merciful and patient God, we confess that we still experience fear and doubt, even though you reach out to us with saving grace. You call us to live with courage and perseverance, However, sometimes, we give up too easily and choose the safer ways. You encourage us to be bold in our struggles for justice, however we remain silent in the face of unfairness. Forgive us all the times we become selfish and turn our back from you. Renew our lives through your mercy and grace.

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

Rest assured, God offers forgiveness and saving grace to everyone. Accept these gifts for yourselves and offer forgiveness to others in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Beautiful God, merciful God, powerful God, gracious and loving God, mysterious God, Emmanuel God, righteous God, Creator God, you have many different names. You have many different aspects of personality. Thank you for your personal approach. Just like all the relationships are different, you build personal relationships with all of us with different ways. This is a great blessing for us. At this time, we remember and pray for our precious children and youth. They are all different. They have different needs. They have different personalities. Gracious and mysterious God, you love them more than we can love them or we can ever imagine. Establish personal relationships with them with the most appropriate ways for each person. Show your love to them. Help them root their faith in you firmly and deeply. Help them build strong foundation of their lives upon you alone. So they are not shaken by any circumstances they face in the course of their lives. Gracious God, hold their hands all through their lives. And teach them how precious you are to them. Be worshipped and be glorified. In Jesus' precious and wonderful name, we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 675 Precious Lord, take my hand

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, as we gather to hear your Word this day, calm our spirits and still our minds so that we can receive your message with clarity and respond in faithfulness with courage. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

First reading: 1 King 19:9-18

Second reading: Psalm 85:8-13 (refrain 2)

Third reading: Matthew 14:22-33

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

SERMON: Immediate help of Jesus

Today’s sermon title is “Immediate help of Jesus.”

As mentioned last week, after feeding 5000, Jesus immediately dismissed the crowds.

“22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,”

Immediately after feeding 5000, Jesus sent his disciples to the other side of the lake. After scattering the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.

Now Jesus was there alone. The disciples were on the water without Jesus.

V24, “by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.”

Storm. Wind. Rain. Many of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen. So, in my opinion, they would be okay with the storm. Not the happiest time, but they went through storms, so they were able to survive through this.

In the Bible, water has some special meanings.

When Moses experienced the miracle of the Red Sea, what happened? **Exodus 14:21-22, “21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. 22 The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.”** Through water, God showed his wonderful power to save God’s own people. God showed his power against the power of water. Also, when judging the enemy, V26, **“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.’”** God used the mighty power of water to judge the enemy of his people.

Also, **Isaiah 43:1-2, “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine; when you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.”**

God is comforting his own people. If there’s any danger, he will take care of them. What is the danger? Water. Water is a danger. It is something fearful to God’s people.

Karl Barth, one of the most respected theologians, viewed water to be **“the principle which, in its abundance and power is absolutely opposite to God’s creation:” it is a representative of all the evil powers which oppress and resist the salvation intended for the power of Israel.”**

In line with this, the disciples were experiencing the opposite power of God through this storm in the middle of the sea. They suffered in the middle of the water for a long time.

V25, “And early in the morning [Jesus] came walking towards them on the lake.”

Jesus spent the night with God in prayer. The disciples spent the night with the storm. By this, we can learn that they were pretty tired. While Jesus was approaching, what were they doing? All night long, they were suffering from storm and wind. They were tired from the works from previous days. Many were fishermen. They should be experts in sailing. But, still it caused them

tiredness. Because of the outer circumstance, the strong storm, and the inner tiredness, **made them lose their focus from Jesus.**

They saw someone or something approaching to them. **V26, “But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear.”**

They lived with Jesus for some time by now. They ate together, they worked together, they travelled together. They were together, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Meaning that, they should be able to recognize Jesus whenever they see him. But, because of the strong storm, their minds were captured by it. Because of their tiredness, their minds went back to their old mindset. **They lost focus from Jesus whom they committed their lives to.** They could not recognize Jesus because of the power of evil shown in water. **They were in fear of the power of evil.** So, Jesus immediately comforted them.

V27, “But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Jesus usually talks with parables and riddles. He asks questions and gives time to think before he gives all the answers. But, now, Jesus, **IMMEDIATELY, IMMEDIATELY,** speaks to his disciples. **“Take heart! It is I. Do not be afraid.”**

Two things.

One. Jesus cared for them. Jesus wanted to free them from their fear, immediately.

Two. Jesus is proclaiming that **the power of evil is nothing to be afraid of** because Jesus is God. In the Bible, only God can overcome the power of evil. **“It is I.” “Ego eimi” “Εγώ εἰμί** This is what God introduced himself to Moses in the burning bush. God used this. Ego eimi. Here, Jesus is using the divine name to announce his presence. **“I am here.”** overcoming the power of water, the power of evil. **Jesus is identifying himself with God,** who saved his own people with the miracle of the Red Sea, who promised the protection against the power of water and the river in Isaiah. Here, **Jesus is saying that “I am God.”** Here I am. Look at me.

Here comes Peter. **V28, “Peter answered [Jesus,] ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’** Jesus said, come. So, Peter got out of the boat. Stepping his foot on the water. He began to walk towards Jesus. But, at the moment, strong wind came to Peter. His mind became frightened. And he began to sink in the water. Let us pause here.

Would you go out of the boat? Jesus was on the way coming to us. Then, we wait. Why did Peter do this? What’s in his mind? At first, when they saw Jesus, what did they say? **“It is a ghost!”** The disciples were not too sure about the identity of Jesus. **“If it is you.”** Peter wants to make sure that it was Jesus. William Willmon, in her sermon, said this. **“If Peter had not ventured forth, had not obeyed the call to walk on the water, then Peter would never have this great opportunity for recognition of Jesus and rescue by Jesus. I wonder if too many of us are merely splashing about in the safe shallow and therefore have too few opportunities to test and deepen our faith. The story today implies if you want to be close to Jesus, you have to venture forth out on the sea, you have to prove his promises through trusting his promises, through risk and venture.”**

“Ego eimi” “Εγώ εἰμί” “It is I.” “I AM”

God calls you to get out of the boat. Would you take this invitation? It is the most risky, most exciting, and most fulfilling way to live life to the fullest. It seems reckless. But, Peter can

become reckless based on the promise of God, the invitation of God. Peter firmly trusted the immediate help of Jesus when needed.

How does your life look like comparing the life of Peter? Are you venturing forth? Are you staying in the shallow end and enjoying your comfort?

This story starts in terror, but ends in worship. What was the cause of the change? God, who is trustworthy. Trust that Jesus is God. Trust the immediate help of Jesus in any circumstances we may face. Even it's water, it is the safest and the most exciting life if we are walking with Jesus. **Imagine what's your walking on the water?** Let us walk and live with our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

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

Prayer for the people

Loving God, thank you for giving us your message. Thank you for showing us your heart. We are very excited to know you and thrilled to experience you in our lives. When we are in trouble, you don't wait, but you comfort us right away, immediately. You reveal yourself immediately to us. Because we are weak, because we are impatient, because we are captured by other things, you just plainly refresh our focus right away. You make us turn our eyes on you. Thank you. As we live our daily lives, we are sure that there are times we will lose our focus from you. Every time, we are in panic, speak to us. Hold our hands. Teach us who you are and turn our eyes back to you. We want to fix our eyes on you, alone.

There are many who need you. In fact, we all need you. And we all need each other's prayer. So, we stand before you with humble and desperate hearts. As we pray to you, please listen to our prayers and answer us in the way we can understand.

First of all, we are praying for our worship. Help us trust that you are present when we seek you. This time of worship is seeking your presence as a group. Help us experience you at this time of worship. And this experience may expand to our personal worship in our daily life. God, we want to know you and we want to be with you. Let this worship experience become the centre of our lives.

We pray for the people who have physical illnesses. Place your hands upon them right now and with your healing power, with your grace and love, please heal them. We also pray for the people who are troubled with their life's issues. Family, finance, jobs, business, study, relationships, faith, sins, disobedience, and etc. Turn their eyes back to you. Fix their eyes on you. Teach your heart, teach your word, teach your will. When they look upon you, may all their concerns become small and come to your presence with thanksgiving and praise and worship. Give them peace and encouragement, so they gain power and energy to stand up once again.

Gracious God, watch over us. Hold our hands and walk with us in our daily lives. We want to be with you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. Be thankful for the good gifts God gives us in Christ and in creation, let us present the fruit of our living for the work of God in the church and in the world. As we offer our gifts to God, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 79 Vs. 1)

Offering prayer:

Faithful God, bless the gifts we bring to you today. Use them and us to plant seeds of faith, hope and love in the world, so that your goodness will flourish and your name be honoured for Christ's sake. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 574 With the Lord as my guide

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Ego eimi. I am. It is I. Jesus is God. Amen? Yes, Jesus is God. Being with God, living with God, and walk with God is the most important thing in our life to live our life to the fullest. Trust his help. Trust his love. Trust his power. Storm deepens our trust. It assures us the saving grace of God. If you are in storm in your life, remember God's immediate help. Trust the promise of God. I AM is with you all the time.

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.