

Worship on August 20, 2023 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Christine Tian)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 358 There is a redeemer

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
- Second reading: Psalm 67 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Matthew 15:21-28
- Sermon: Woman, great is your faith!
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 685 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

Let the people praise God;

Let all the peoples praise the Lord!

Let the nations be glad and sing with joy,

For God guide us all with justice and equity.

Let the people praise God, for how we have been blessed;

Come let us worship and offer all honour and praise.

Praise song – BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Welcoming God, you make all things new. You invite all people to receive your blessing.

Justice and right relations have their source in you. We are filled with joy to be counted among your children. As we gather, make us one in witness and worship. Together, we lift our voices to proclaim your all-encompassing love. May our praise join with the praise of all your people, and reach the ends of the earth, for you are our Maker and the hope of the world you love.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not lived as you have taught us. Forgive us those times we have not welcomed others into our community; and those times we have avoided others because something about them made us uncomfortable. Forgive us the ways we have judged people unfairly. Reveal to us our own prejudices, and show us how to see your goodness in those who seem different from us.

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

While it is true that we have all sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's grace and love in Jesus Christ our Lord. To all who humbly seek the mercy of God, I say, 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 this joy of our Risen Lord.

Prayer for children and youth

God of love, we pray for our precious children and youth. Teach them your love. Guide them with your wisdom. Fill each of their heart with faith in you. Teach them your truth and walk with them all through their lives. Precious Lord, protect them with safety. Help them establish good foundation of loving relationships within their families and faith communities and friends. Precious Lord, hold their hands and lead each step of our precious children and youth. Be gracious and be merciful to them. Let them fall in love with you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 358 There is a redeemer

Prayer for Illumination:

God of grace, as we gather to hear to your Word, silence any thoughts that distract us. Open our hearts to receive the challenge and the comfort you offer in the name of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

First reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 // Second reading: Psalm 67 (refrain 1)

Third reading: Matthew 15:21-28 // "This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

SERMON: Woman, great is your faith!

Today's sermon title is **"Woman, great is your faith!"**

What's going on in this story? Who does what?

First of all, Jesus withdrew himself. **V21. Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.** They left from group of people after teaching. We could understand that Jesus wanted some time away from the crowds. Or Jesus wanted to go somewhere. While Jesus

was alone with his disciples, a Canaanite woman came. **“V22, Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”**

To the cry of the desperate mother, Jesus remained silent. He did not answer. We don't know if Jesus showed his awareness of her presence. In this short moment of awkwardness, the disciples did not know what to do. But, very quickly, they realized what to do.

“Ah-ha, Jesus does not want to be bothered. So are we...” They asked Jesus to send her away.

After hearing the cry of the mother whose daughter was demon possessed?

So far, in the ministry of Jesus, they experienced so many miracles. They eye-witnessed the crooked hand was restored, the crippled stood up, the dead rose to life, and all the demons trembled in the name of Jesus. So exciting!! But, experiencing these miracles daily, these miracles became too common for them. **They took the miracles of Jesus for granted. The disciples lost the amazement, and the merciful hearts.** Also, in the Jewish tradition, it was forbidden to talk to the gentiles. In this background knowledge, what do they do in the passage?

What are they saying and to whom? They talked to Jesus to send her away. They asked Jesus to talk to this gentile woman because they couldn't talk to her because of their tradition. When we say, **we are possessed**, when do we say that? When we are focused on something too much with a lot of emotion and effort, we say that we are possessed, or we are occupied. When we are controlled by something, we are possessed by something. **That “something” becomes our driving force. What’s the driving force of the disciples right now in this situation when they faced the woman whose daughter was demon-possessed?** What have they been doing so far before they left Galilee? They've been helping people. But, when they withdrew themselves from the crowds, all they wanted was to have a good rest? Or is it because the woman was a gentile? Their minds are captured by something than the grace and mercy of the Lord. They were occupied by their tiredness or their tradition.

When Jesus said to the woman, Jesus insulted her by calling her dog. It was common to Jews calling gentiles dogs. Here, let's compare dogs and the disciples.

Dogs are faithful. They are loyal. They obey their masters. They always love and respect their masters. Their attitude is always the same. Always welcoming, always loving, always longing for their masters. They sometimes wait in front of food. This animal overcomes their innate nature for their masters. But, disciples of Jesus. Us. What are we going after? **What do we obey?** Some trained dogs do not obey their hunger, but their master. Don't we obey our hunger? It could be money, pleasure, profit, some kinds of selfish gains. In order to gain what we want, sometime, we can betray our masters. We are chasing our desires. **Who is our master now?** We are so faithful to our real masters. Who is our true master? **Whose voice do we obey?** Whose authority are we submitting ourselves? If our God is our master, how do we use our lives? **Dogs are faithful to their masters. They give their total surrender to their masters.**

Back to our passage, when Jesus and the disciples withdrew themselves from the people in need, the disciples refused to help the gentile woman. They were captured by their tradition and told Jesus to send her away. They were blinded and they lost their own identity as the disciples of Jesus. They lost their merciful hearts. Sometimes, Jesus was their master, but their master changes according to their needs in different times. How about us?

Let us take a look at the gentile woman. Who is her master in this story? Her eyes are fixed on Jesus alone. Jesus is the only hope for the woman. She was not accepted by Jesus at first. But, **she kept calling Jesus against the ignorance of Jesus, against the refusal of the disciples, against the insult of Jesus.**

Jesus told her, **v26, “He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”** Jesus was saying to her, **“I am sent for my own children, and you are not on my list. To me, you are like a dog. I won’t give my power to you. I won’t help you because you are like a dog to me.”** So far, she was so nice and humble. If you were the woman, how would you respond to this? You were badly insulted for nothing you have done wrong. No one can choose where to be born. But, to her, this insult was nothing because she was desperate for Jesus’ help. **V27, “She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” “Yes, you are right Lord. I am like a dog to you. I am not worthy in your eyes. I know I don’t deserve your grace. But, even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”** She comes to Jesus with her everything. She came to Jesus with total surrender. What does it mean to us? When coming to Jesus, when we pray, how desperate are we? What if, God treated us like Jesus treated the gentile woman? Are we still going to keep our faith in God?

For the woman, even the bread crumbs from your table, even though you treat me like a dog, you alone are my hope. You are the only one who can help. I do not have a second plan. I have nowhere to go but you, Jesus. **What plans do we have deep inside our hearts?**

Through this passage, Jesus teaches us two things. **One, we are the disciples of Jesus.** He wants us not to forget our true identity. Sometimes, we lose our passion and we lose our focus from God. We forget true meaning of grace. **Do not be occupied by something else than Jesus.** Our focus should be not our own desires, but Jesus.

Two, when we come to God, we need the total surrender of ourselves before God. If someone treats me with ignorance or disrespect, I just don’t deal with that person. That’s it. **I am not desperate for that person. I have second plan, third plan, and many other plans.** But, Jesus wants us to know that we do not need other plans but Jesus. Jesus becomes our ultimate and perfect source of everything. He is enough. Let us look up to Jesus and follow Jesus with total surrender and total faith.

V28, Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

This woman’s unwavering faith trusting Jesus with total surrender touched Jesus.

Ask God for the faith like her. Pray that you want to touch Jesus’ heart too. **Stand firm on the true identity as the children of God, the saved child of God.** And surrender your whole selves to God. **Jesus is the only way, only focus of our lives.**

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

Prayer for the people

Lord of all, King of all kings, you are our Lord. You alone are our King, Lord, and Master. Give us the undivided heart to follow you. Fill our hearts with faith to trust you. Help us surrender ourselves to you with our everything. We confess that you are our Master. Thank you for giving us faith to confess. However, we are still so weak. We fall down easily. Our eyes wander around and lost focus from you because of our weaknesses and sinful nature. Help us, Lord.

We are encouraged because your disciples fell down too. Even though they were weak, you used them and made them the bearers of your precious gospel. In the same way, you chose us and

gave us life to become the bearers of your precious life. Thank you. Help us stay close to you all the time, so that we won't walk by ourselves, but walk with you always.

Like the gentile woman, we want to come to you with our full hearts, with the desperation, Lord. Help our weak faith and help us not to plan our lives with our own wisdom, but help us become submissive to you. Help us obey your words. Almighty God, the Bible says that you have power. Let us experience your power in our daily lives.

Heavenly God, loving God, give us the grace to pray with our heart as well as our lips, and to serve you and our neighbours with our daily choices and decisions as well as our prayers.

In places where the church celebrates with joy today, where it laughs with children, where it honours the elderly, where it is angry because of persecution, where it stirred to action because of injustice, we pray that you lead and direct your church.

In places where people are disillusioned, where they are frightened or frustrated, where they are tempted to act and speak unkindly, we pray that you nurture your people.

In places where there are programs of compassion in need of support, where the poor are ignored or pushed further to the margins, where faith requires nurturing, where confidence is diminishing, we pray that you will inspire new vision.

In places where people feel that they have no voice, where healing feels beyond imagination, where there are not enough words to express pain, where people are deaf to cries of sorrow, we pray that you will bring new life.

Especially, Lord, send us rain all over Canada, especially where there are wildfires. Rescue people. Extinguish the fires. Help people. Have mercy upon us.

Gracious and loving God, let your glory fall in all the places and let your power be experienced in all the people. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. With deep gratitude for the healing and freedom that Jesus offers, let us present our offerings to God. Through our gifts, may that healing and freedom be shared in God's world in Christ's name. As we offer our gifts to God, let us praise God and glorify him.

The Doxology (BOP 79 Vs. 1)

Offering prayer:

O God, we place our hope and trust in your loving kindness. Because we want to praise you with more than just words, we offer our gifts to support Christ's mission in the world. Bless these gifts and use our energy for your good purposes, so that the world will know your loving kindness. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 685 How firm a foundation

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus loves us always. Jesus never gives us up. Jesus always focuses on our situations. Jesus knows us. Give your hearts to Jesus. Do not make any second plans. Our Jesus is merciful and powerful and gracious and loving. Let us trust Jesus with our everything.

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.