

World Communion Sunday Order of worship on October 1, 2023

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Edwin Webster)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 342 All who the name of Jesus bear
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 763 To show by touch and word
- Prayer with children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Exodus 17:1-7
- Second reading: Psalm 25:1-9 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Philippians 2:1-13
- Sermon: Divine Paradox
- Praise song - BOP 525 Behold the Lamb of God (x 3)
- Communion
- Prayer

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 775 Send forth by your blessing

We Serve

- Benediction

Responsive Call to Worship

The banquet table is prepared and God calls us to the feast.

We have come from east and west, from north and south, to sit at Christ's table.

Here compassion, love, and grace pour out like fine wine.

Here we taste the bread of life, bread for our journey.

There are gifts of God for all the people of God.

Let us taste and see that the Lord is good!

Praise song – BOP 342 All who the name of Jesus bear

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Steadfast God, as the seasons change, we see that you are still at work in the world, transforming hearts and situations. You have shown us the true face of power in Jesus Christ, reaching out with healing and hope to touch desperate lives. We praise you for your love that works for reconciliation among neighbours and nations in this divided world. May we see the face of Jesus as we break bread at his table. Renew our hope by the gift of your Holy Spirit at work among us, so that we can live to praise you with the whole Church that bears Jesus' name.

All-embracing God, we confess that we don't like to feel uncomfortable. We often turn away from suffering or injustice, even when the evidence is right before our eyes. We don't like to feel responsible for reaching out, even when we could. Forgive us, O God. Give us courage to love others as you love us, and respond with the same mind we meet in Christ Jesus.

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

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven by God's renewing grace.

Peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

Praise Song: 763 To show by touch and word

Prayer with Children

Prayer for Illumination:

Send us your Spirit of wisdom, O God, so that we may hear your Word speaking through the Scriptures with ears that understand and hearts that respond in love. Fill this hour with your presence. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

- First reading: Exodus 17:1-7
- Second reading: Psalm 25:1-9 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Philippians 2:1-13

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

SERMON: Divine paradox

Today's sermon title is **"divine paradox"**

Paradox is a self-contradictory statement. For example, save money by spending it. Deep down, you are really shallow. Less is more. Everything I say is a lie. All I know is that I know nothing. It doesn't make sense, but somehow we understand.

In today's passage, Christ humbled himself, but God exalted him most high. And apostle Paul writes, we should have the same mind as Jesus Christ.

We will take a look what the mind of Christ we should learn and follow.

First of all, Paul urges the Christians in Philippi to obey his teaching. As he concludes his instruction, he summarizes his teaching. V12, **“Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence.”**

So, in today’s passage, we need to understand what Paul is saying, so that we can follow his instruction. But, although Paul asked them to obey, this is not for the sake of his benefit or any of his own desires. Paul writes in **V2, “make my joy complete.”**

We can get better understanding what he means from MSG. V1, **“If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care – then do me a favor:”**

This **“Do me a favor” equals to “Make my joy complete.”**

Paul took joy in the growth of God’s people.

Therefore, what Paul desired was their spiritual growth.

Growth. Improvement. Advance. Expansion. Increase. Success. Production.

Familiar words. How do we make it happen? How do we grow? How can we succeed?

We need to achieve opportunities. We need to guard and protect resources. We need to put time and effort for my own growth. We need to focus on myself for the sake of my own growth.

But, here comes the paradox. **V3, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. V4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.**

Paul is telling them how to experience personal growth. That is **V2, “Be of the same mind [of Christ Jesus], having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind [with Jesus Christ].** And that is **V5, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.**

In Paul’s time, it was Honour-and-Shame culture society. If one showed weakness, then it was a shame. But, Paul, knowing the culture and what he was saying, he said the opposite of the culture.

How would you respond to this? Would you accept Paul’s teaching and follow his instructions? Then, you would be treated with shame and disgrace by others.

But, here, Paul gives **the example of his paradoxical teaching: the life of Jesus Christ.**

From v6, Paul introduces the true identity of Jesus. **Jesus was God, but he did not regard himself equality with God.** To the people who were living in Honour-and-shame culture, it’s non-sense! He’s God, but he humbled himself? Why? And furthermore, not only Jesus lowered himself, but also he obeyed to the point of death. He died on the cross just like a criminal.

V9-11, “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus humbled himself, “Therefore” God exalted him.

Our pew Bible used “Therefore,” but, MSG, connects these two ideas with “because.” **“Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honoured him far beyond anyone or anything.”**

This means, Jesus knew that God was much higher and powerful than the society and culture of the time. People tried to be powerful and successful, but when God worked, although Jesus humbled himself, Jesus became the highest name of all.

Jesus showed the life following the will of God. He taught us how to build up our own life, as well as his own church. Paul understood the teachings of Jesus and he is now urging the followers of Jesus to be like Jesus.

I am teaching English via Zoom. The goal of the class is to make a safe community and grow together. The name of the course is "Be Yourself." We try to help each student truly become their own selves. Then, they would shine their own unique light. In the process, forming a safe community is very important. In the safe community, we can express our honest self. We do not think about being honoured or becoming ashamed. We encourage each other and we support each other and we gradually love each other more and deeper.

This is how it works. Let's say that you and I are classmates. In the first class, teacher gave us the topic to discuss in small group. One-on-one conversation. Because it's the first time, it's a bit awkward and somewhat nervous. But, as time goes, we meet again, twice, three times, and more. Then, we are building personal relationships in community. We learned few things about each other already. Now, we want to know how things went since last time we talked to each other. In build rapport, we want to know more about each other. That is relationship and in curiosity, we want to talk more and more. But, the rule is to speak in English. That's how we develop our language skills. In this supportive and encouraging and loving relationships, we humble ourselves. And we respect others. We let down our own interests and we try to listen to the interests of others.

As time goes, we deeply love each other and we get our support and energy from our class. I think this could be the ideal picture of church.

Self-centred focus, we might be able to get some degree of fame and honour. But, when we put down own interests and focused on others and put others first, we are also respected and we are regarded important by others. So, I do not have to honour myself, but others honour me. We cherish each other as we cherish our own selves by putting others first.

This is how Jesus want us to build our church. Community of support and love. When we have the mind of Jesus Christ who humbled himself, we would be vulnerable. But, we will be able to experience the protection and support from others. Others will embrace us. Other will care for us. Other will honour us. Just like when Jesus humbled himself, God lifted him and all people praise him.

Today is World Communion Sunday. The theme is unity. All the churches remember the cross. The vertical beam is the line from top to bottom. God's love coming down to us. This symbolizes the love relationship with God. And the horizontal beam is the love for others. Like when we hug, we should be able to stand firm, so that we don't fall. That's the foundation of the love relationship with God. And, when we open our arms, we embrace others. We love others. We support others with the love we have from God.

Jesus always had the intimacy relationship with God and he always opened his arms to embrace people. Have the same mind of Christ and love God and love people as we remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord giving his body and pouring out his blood for us.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise Hymn: BOP 525 Behold the Lamb of God

Communion At The Lord's Table This is the time for Communion at the Lord's Table.

This table is set for all; around it there are no divisions.

Just as bread is not made from one grain, but from many, and wine is not made from one grape, but from a full harvest, so too, we, who are many, are made one in Christ.

This is a sacrament of unity. Come and join with neighbours east and west, north and south, to celebrate Christ's presence with us all. As we join the Lord's Table, let us confess our faith with the Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed (BOP 539)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) (Please say BOLD print together)

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

L: It is our calling and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, Lord God, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth. You spoke, and all things came into being: the sun, moon and stars, the earth, sky and waters, and everything they contain.

Your Holy Spirit swept over creation, bringing order out of chaos and life out of the formless void. From the elements of earth, you created humankind in your image. You breathed life into us and called us to love and serve you.

But we turned away, seeking to live in our own way. Yet you have never turned from us.

Through the law and the prophets, you called us back to you. In the fullness of time, you sent your son, Jesus Christ, born of a mother's flesh, to reveal your grace and love.

Again and again, you welcome us back to your side with the open arms of a loving father.

Therefore we praise you, God, joining our voices with those from every time and place, to proclaim your glory in the unending hymn: **We lift our hearts in joyful praise:**

(Sanctus) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: Holy is your son, Jesus. Walking this earth, feeding the hungry, calling the lost, offering healing and teaching to all who sought him, Jesus revealed your kingdom at work in your world.

Among his friends, on the night he was betrayed, he took bread, broke it and said, "Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me."

After supper, he took a cup and offered it to his friends, saying:

“This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from it, all of you.” Every time we eat this bread and share this cup in Jesus’ name, **we proclaim the mystery of faith:**

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: O God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and wine. May they be for us the body and life blood of our Lord Jesus, healing, renewing and making us whole. Unite us in worship and witness with your Church throughout the world so that together we will bring honour and glory to your name. Through Christ, by Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE – prepare your Bread and Wine

“This is the **body** of Christ, broken for you.” (BREAD)

Take, eat, remember, and believe that the precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. (Let us take it)

“This is the **blood** of Christ, poured out for you.” (CUP)

Take, drink, remember, and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. (Let us drink it)

Prayer after Communion:

Jesus, name above all names, beautiful saviour, glorious Lord. Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, Living Word.

We praise you and lift up your name. You humbled yourself to save us. You gave up your glory to lift us up. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your love.

We also humble ourselves and we want to embrace others. We want to love others just as you loved us. Fill our hearts with your love, so this love maybe overflowing from our hearts to our surroundings.

On this World Communion Sunday, we remember and pray for unity. There are more selfishness than understanding. There are more self-interest than generosity. There are more divisions than connectedness. That’s who we are and that’s the nature of human being. Gracious God, this is why we invite you in our midst. We need you. Let your church follow your steps. Let us humble ourselves and embrace each other. Build your church and let us become safe community, so we can hold up each other and support each other. Build your church with unity, so your love and light be shared to the community around us.

This week, we want to think of ourselves as ambassadors for Christ, seeking reconciliation where people are divided, carrying the peace of Christ into each encounter. With your peace, guard our hearts and minds. Hold our hands and walk with us.

In Jesus’ precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: World Communion Sunday celebrates the relationship we share with Jesus' followers around the whole world. Let us share our gifts with God, so there can be an outpouring of generosity in Jesus' name around the globe. Let us praise God and honour him with the Doxology BOP #830.

Doxology 830 & Offering prayer:

Generous God, we have received so much from you in Christ and in creation. Bless the gifts we offer, so that they will speak of your love for the world in all its detail and diversity. May our gifts touch the need around us in the name of Christ who makes us one. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 775 Send forth by your blessing

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. With the power of Christ in us, let us humble ourselves. Let us encourage and support and love others. Let us build up the church of Christ, so God maybe glorified through our lives. Think of the cross. The Love of God and the love for people. Through the week, love God and love people.

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.