

Thanksgiving Sunday Order of worship on October 8, 2023

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

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 457 Now thank we all our God
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 420 Praise, I will praise
- Prayer with children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Deuteronomy 8:7-18
- Second reading: Psalm 65 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 17:11-19
- Sermon: Took it for granted
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830 Praise God from whom all blessings vs. 1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth

We Serve

- Benediction

Responsive Call to Worship

Give thanks to the LORD, for God is good;

God's steadfast love endures for ever.

God crowns the year with bounty;

Pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy.

Valleys deck themselves with grain, and sing together for joy.

So let us all praise God for all God's goodness to us.

Praise song – BOP 457 Now thank we all our God

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of abundant love, when we hunger for fulfillment, you offer us the Bread of Life.

When we thirst for your presence, you fill our cup to overflowing.

You draw near to us in every place, at any time. Holy One, in you our deepest desires are fulfilled. So to you, O God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, we offer you thanksgiving, honour and praise with all your people, here and everywhere, now and always.

God of abundant mercy, you see our failures to keep your law of love. We have not always loved our neighbours as you taught. We find it impossible to love our enemies as Jesus commanded. Forgive us all the times we failed to live out your love. Renew in us the courage to offer others the generosity of heart you have shown us in 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

Friends, believe the good news! Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation; the old life is fading, the new life has started to emerge – in us. Know that you are forgiven, so have the courage to forgive one another.

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

Praise Song: 420 Praise, I will praise

Prayer with Children

Prayer for Illumination:

O God, by your gifts of Word and Spirit, open our minds to greater understanding, our hearts to deeper love, and our wills to eager service, through Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

- First reading: Deuteronomy 8:7-18
- Second reading: Psalm 65 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 17:11-19

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

SERMON: Took it for granted

Today's sermon title is **“Took it for granted”**

In Jesus' time, when anyone had leprosy, a contagious skin disease, they were isolated. The people with contagious diseases were banished from the town. Like 14 days quarantine when get



COVID 19. **At that time, like this picture,**

there were walls to protect the town. So, the people with contagious diseases had to live outside the wall. They were isolated from their loved ones, family, friends, and their hometown. Usually, outside the wall, they gathered together and helped each other to survive.

In today's passage, Jesus and his disciples were outside the walls. They were travelling from Samaria to Jerusalem. So, the lepers were able to see them.

V12, As [Jesus] entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance,

Jesus was approaching the gate. The lepers who lived together recognized Jesus. They couldn't come close to Jesus because they knew they were contagious. They kept the safe distance and shouted to Jesus. **“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”**

V14, When [Jesus] saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

It was obvious to Jesus that they wanted healing. So, Jesus plainly told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”

Here, what does it mean to show themselves to the priests?

This was the only way for them to be able to go back to their old life. They were required to make sure that their leprosy was healed completely by showing themselves to priest. When they went to the priest, then the priest carefully examined them and if their disease was healed, then the priest pronounced them clean. Then, finally, they were able to go back to their family and to their society.

Knowing what it meant, the ten lepers ran to the priests. But, on the way, they were healed. **V14, “And as they went, they were made clean.” V15, Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. V16 He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan.**

How many were healed? The Bible says, **“They were made clean.”** We know there were ten. Ten became clean. But, only one person came back to thank Jesus for Jesus’ healing.

We are able to say that Jesus ministered the ten lepers. But, only one came back and had faith in God. Other nine might come back to the faith, but they were happy enough only with their healing. They never got to the point of **v19, “Your faith has made you well.”**

Then, only 10% of Jesus’ ministry was successful. Can we actually say that? What is the meaning of one? Or small “success”?

There was a young man who had Tuberculosis. It is a contagious respiratory disease and he was rejected from everywhere including from his family. Because he was a son of a concubine, his disease was a good excuse to kick him out from the family. With desperateness, he did not know where to go.

At that time, he came into a church which was planted by a pastor. The pastor’s name is **Nakano Maki**. Maki’s couple worshipped God by themselves. They tried to invite people, but no one came. So, for a long time, they had worshipped by themselves in an empty church. At that time, this young man came in with coughing and spitting blood.

The pastor did not refuse him. He did not run away from the contagious disease. He carefully took care of the young man. By the warm and loving care, this young man was able to recover and learn the gospel. He was fascinated by the teachings of Jesus and the love shown by the pastor.

This young man later went to a theological school and became a pastor. He devoted himself to missionary work and social reform movements **from 1909-1960**. His name is **Toyohiko**

Kagawa. He was **a Japanese Protestant Christian pacifist, Christian reformer, and labour activist.** He wrote, spoke, and worked in various areas with the Christian principles.

His achievement covers a wide range from cooperative movement, farmers' movement, labour movement to disaster aid, peace activity, women right movement, and poverty prevention. With all the help, his nickname was **Japanese Gandhi.** The pastor who took care of Kagawa did not have a big church. Then, was his ministry unfruitful? His ministry was a failure?

No. He became the foundation of Kagawa's ministry. He raised Japanese Gandhi. Without this nameless pastor, there would be no Japanese Gandhi.

So, small number does not necessarily mean "small" in God's big picture.

God can use one person to change the world.

Like this, like the one Samaritan who came back to express his gratitude, let us remember the true meaning of what's happening in our lives and what we have in our everyday life.

V15, Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.

This one person realized and stopped. He had the courage to change what he aimed. The ten, with one heart, looked forward to meeting the priest to show their clean bodies. But, this Samaritan acted differently. Running toward the goal is how we live. When realized something important, there are people who are able to stop and think. They turn around and act upon what they have realized. But, on the other hand, other people ignore the findings and continue to live in the way they used to live.

How are we doing? Do we have the courage to change our life-course upon realizing something crucial? **Momentum. It is the tendency or force of continuing moving forward.** Where is your life going forward? We have what we have and we are used to what we are doing. We take it for granted. What is given is what is given. What we have is what we have. But, this one man was able to see the change of his body. His dead skin was changed. Suddenly, it felt different. It was like a baby skin. He slowly slowed down and looked around his body. This is the courage to stop and change the momentum of life. We are so used to live under the standard of today's culture and the teachings of this world. Do we ever stop and question about where we are going and what are happening around our lives?

We are so busy looking upward.

If the harvest rate is only 10%, then this is not a success?

Is a small church a failure? In whose perspective is this?

The life of this Samaritan man was completely transformed! The universe of this one person was completely turned around. By the ministry of a nameless pastor, Japanese Gandhi was able to be raised.

Feeling discouraged now? There is no progress? Look around your life. What do we have?

Where is God in our life? Is there something we can give thanks to God in our daily life?

In our busy life, look around our life. Do our best to find out what God is doing in our daily life.

No one recognizes our hard works? No one acknowledges what we are so grateful?

Look at the nine people who didn't stop.

Did the nine who became clean care about this one man? Not really. In our life, many times, we do not care about others so much. Everyone is busy taking care of their own life. Isn't this true for us? We can talk about others, but do we really care about them? Many times, we just forget

about them and focus on what's important to us. Do not live before the eyes of others. Do not live for other people.

There is one person who sees you all the time. There is one person who loves you with the love we can ever imagine. Live before God. **What would God say about our daily life? What would God think about our daily decisions? What would God say about what Jesus did to the ten lepers? What would God say to the one Samaritan man who turned and thanked Jesus? What would God say to the nine lepers who became clean, but continued with their momentum? Where is our focus?**

Coram Deo: to live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.

Coram Deo. Live before the eyes of God. God takes care of 8 Billion people every moment. But, he cares for us not as a group of humanity, but as a single person. God cares each and every one of us. Customized care.

Do not take God for granted. Look around the works of God in your life and give thanks to him. Coram Deo.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Prayer for the people:

We give you thanks, O God, for all things that make life good, and pray that all people will share in the blessings we know. For the world, for the wonders of earth, sea and sky; for beauty in nature and wildlife; and for the rhythm of the days and seasons;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (1/7)

For waters that refresh and sustain life; for soil that is fertile and rich; for those who tend crops and care for harvests; for those who produce, deliver and market our food; and for those who make sure the hungry are fed;

we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (2/7)

For days to work and strength to do it; for the many different gifts and talents you have given us; for those whose work is dangerous and demanding, for those whose positions are necessary for communities to flourish; and for moments of leisure and rest when you restore us;

we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (3/7)

For human life; for talking and thinking together, working on problems and plans; for burdens and joys shared; for relationships that give life meaning; and for the wisdom exchanged between old and young in mutual support:

we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (4/7)

For our circle of family and friends; for children and their curiosity and joy; for the insight that comes with patience and experience; and for events shared and memories cherished;

we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (5/7)

For your grace in times of anxiety, doubt and grief; for healing in times of illness, confusion, and distress; for rejuvenating strength and renewed purpose; for scientific knowledge and discovery to confront disease and improve health;

we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (6/7)

For the trust that you hear each prayer and know every need; that you love and care for each soul and body; and that you walk with us through all our days and seasons;
we give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings. (7/7)

Lastly, we pray for the world. We remember the victims of the Hamas attack in Israel. Be present with the survivors. As declaring war, give merciful and compassionate hearts upon people in Palestine and Israel. Change the hearts of the leadership, so they do not sacrifice their innocent people for their political and religious greed. Let them look upon you and give them wisdom remembering God.

Also, there was a strong earthquake in Afghanistan killing over 2000 people. Gracious God, have mercy on us. Cry with them and be present in their desperateness. Provide them and show yourself to them.

On this Thanksgiving Day, we offer our prayers, spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' precious and powerful name. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: Our thanksgiving to God comes during complicated times. There have been many losses through fire, storm, flood, wars, and earthquake. Many harvests are diminished by drought. Some days, it is hard to feel thankful. Yet, we trust that God can turn what we share into an abundance we cannot imagine. So offer what we can and trust God will bless our gift and our good intention for it. Let us praise God and honour him with the Doxology BOP #830.

Doxology 830 & Offering prayer:

Gracious God, we offer our gifts as tokens of our gratitude for what we have to share in these challenging times. Bless our gifts and our energy so they will bless others in need in our community and around your world, for the sake of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song for the Journey BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Give thanks to the Lord. God is working in your life. God is leading your life in the best way and in the best timing. Sometimes, we don't understand what God is doing. Live with God and his standard. Stop our momentum and live with God's rhythm. Live with God daily. Coram Deo.

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.