

## **Order of worship on February 11, 2024**

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Stephen Knowles)

### **We Gather**

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 328 This is my Father’s world
- Prayer for worship and Lord’s Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling
- Prayer for children

### **We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Mark 9:2-9
- Second reading: Psalm 50:1-6 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-7
- Sermon: Treasure in a clay jar
- Praise song – BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
- Prayer for the people

### **We Respond**

- Special Music – Edwin Webster
- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 376 Lord, the light of your love is shining

### **We Serve**

- Benediction

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### **Responsive Call to Worship**

God said, “Let light shine in the darkness!”

**Lord, shine your light into our lives.**

We see God’s glory in the face of Christ.

**The light of Christ is with us day by day.**

Let us follow the light of Christ together.

**Let us worship God with thanks and praise.**

### **Praise song – BOP 328 This is my Father’s world**

### **Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

God of grace and glory, you reveal your presence to this worried, chaotic, and hurting world in radiant glory and gentle whispers, on mountain tops and in shadowed valleys, in classrooms and hospital beds, in homes and churches, in the quiet of nature and on busy streets.

Yours is the presence that pushes beyond our fear to calm us; yours is the love that transforms our doubt with reassurance. We have come to dwell in your goodness this day and to offer the praise you deserve, grateful for all the ways we meet you, Source, Saviour and Spirit of Life.

God of patience and purpose, we confess that we don't expect you to surprise us. We think we know what you expect of us and so we're reluctant to consider a new challenge or a new opportunity to serve you. Forgive us when we are set in our ways. Work in us by your Holy Spirit to keep us open to new encounters with you in the world as it changes, so you will always find us faithful.

**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**

John records that God is love and that God's perfect love casts out fear. Friends, we are promised that those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them. Claim God's forgiveness in this Good News: God's perfect love abides in you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

### **Praise Song: 371 Love divine, all loves excelling**

### **Prayer for children**

#### **Prayer for Illumination:**

God of wisdom, deepen our understanding as we hear the Scriptures read and interpreted today. By your Holy Spirit, reveal new insight into your truth, and equip us to live it out as we follow Christ, your Living Word. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

- First reading: Mark 9:2-9
- Second reading: Psalm 50:1-6 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-7

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

### **Sermon: Treasure in a clay jar**

As we stand before the word of God, let us look inside our hearts. What do we have in our hearts? And how do we feel about the things we have in our hearts? In other words, what is occupying us? Is it a worry about tomorrow? Is it concern about money, relationships? Whatever you have in your hearts, how do you feel about it?

"I am doing very well." "I like my everyday life." "I am very very satisfied with my current life." Sometimes, our hearts could be like this. Or what about the times when things are not going well? Disappointment, sadness, depression, suspicion, nervousness, busy-ness. Sometimes, we are just lost. We don't even know where we are at and we don't know what to do. There are times we have to endure this kind of challenging times.

People say, "Follow your heart." Yeah. Way to go! Only when we are doing well. What about the times when our hearts are saturated with negative emotions? Would you follow your hearts at that time?

This is what the Bible says about our hearts.

**Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it?"**

The human heart is deceitful, wicked, corrupted, hardened, incurable, weak, selfish, and unreliable. I looked at different translations of this verse and the human heart is beyond remedy. In short, our hearts suck, not cool. Our hearts are bad. This is what the Bible claims.

**2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.**

The author, the apostle Paul, writes that we are not supposed to display our own selves, but Jesus Christ. When we preach the Gospel to others, the only thing should be left is not us, but the message of Jesus Christ. It's not something from our hearts, but only the message of Jesus.

**V4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

The mind was blinded. People are blinded and they are not able to see the light of the glory of God.

Here, from these 2 verses, we learn that our mind is not reliable, but we are to proclaim the glory of Jesus Christ to the world.

Now, let us look into our hearts. What do we have? Do we have the glory of God? The joy of salvation? The love of God? Are we holding onto the firm promises of God who is always with us and helping us?

We fall. Our hearts are shaken. Let us take God as our anchor, as our foundation because he is holding us and pours out his glorious light upon us all the time. Let us rely upon God who is the Life-giver, and the Master of our lives.

**Today's sermon title is "Treasure in a clay jar."** This is the name of the church I wanted to title when I first decided to become a pastor.

So, deep in my heart, in the centre of my heart, I have this image.

**2 Timothy 2:20-21, "20 In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. 21 All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work."**

The Bible tells us that we are like utensils. We are plates and bowls and cups.

What is the main function of bowl, cup, or a plate?

We put something in or on these utensils.

I am not a good artist, so I won't be able to visualize this image. But, please **imagine** with me. There is a bowl of clay. It's a bit rough in texture. Clay jars are made up of some fine dust of the earth and water. So, it's not super strong. When you take a close look, it's got some cracks. It is very easily broken. But, when you look in the cracks, there is something shiny.

Now, change the focus from the jar to our lives. When we work, we are just one of the people in society. Not many people recognize what we are doing. For example, when I was working at Canada Post, I was just a mailman who's carrying other people's letters and parcels. Everyone can see me working. People saw me driving by, but never focused on me. I am just a nobody. If you are working at a store, you are just a store clerk. A teacher? A doctor? A professor? A homemaker? An owner of a company? Whichever work you do, you are just one of many people around our lives. Not so special person. We are like the clay jars we are picturing in our image. One of many utensils.

Everyone passing by us in our everyday lives, they look just fine. But, when we look at them closely, they too have cracks in their lives. They have hurts, pains, scars, and difficulties. They are not that smooth. They have rough textures. They have ups and downs in their lives. We are not that different. We are so-so. That's our normal usual life.

But, there is a light shining through the cracks of our lives. What is this?

**V6 For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

When everywhere is covered with darkness, God breaks the silence. "Let there be light." God divided the light and the darkness and he shone the light in our hearts. God made his light known to us.

So, who's light is this? We can see the light coming out through the cracks of our lives. But, is this all that ours? Our great accomplishments? Our patience? Our efforts? NO, God shone His own light in our hearts and we shine the light of God as we reflect the light from God.

**V7, But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.**

This light is the glory of God. This light is the life of God given to us.

Remember **Genesis 2:7, "the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."**

Just like making a clay jar, God formed a human shape with dust of the ground. And what did he do? He breathed. Whoo~~ God breathed his life into the nostrils of the human shaped dust. God shared his life. Then, this clay person became a living being. Living soul. Our spirits have the life of God.

When we fall in love, we say, **"I have you in my heart."** **"You are in my heart."**

What do I have in my heart? Look into your heart.

We are all clay jars. Easily broken. We get hurts. We fall. We are weak. We make mistakes.

But, we are not going to stay like this because where did we get our life?

What did God breathe into our nostril? HIS BREATH. HIS LIFE.

Please know that the breath we breathe is from God. This is the life of God.

We are THAT GREAT and we are THAT VALUABLE and we are THAT AMAZING and we are THAT PRECIOUS. That is who we are, as a broken clay jar.

Even though we look like mere clay jars, what do we have in us?

We have the life of God. We have the glory of God. We have the power of God. We have the promise of God.

Put your hope in the Lord only who gives us life, who pours out his glorious light upon us.

Look into your heart again. What do you see? Do you see the light coming out from the deep inside your heart? I hope you do because you have the life of God in you.

Sometimes, or many times, our lives treat us not so nicely. We have some brokenness. But, remember, we are beyond this world. We have the glorious light in our hearts.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

### **Praise song – BOP 687 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine**

#### **Prayer for the people:**

It's your blood that cleanses me. It's your blood that gives me life. It's your blood that took my place in redeeming sacrifice. Washes me whiter than the snow, than the snow. My Jesus, God's precious sacrifice.

Glorious God, Father, thank you for our life. Thank you for your love. Thank you for the encouragement we have received from you today. Although we are not perfect, you still love us. Although we have some brokenness, we can still reflect your light and your love through our lives. Merciful Father, hold our hands and walk with us.

We pray for our church. There are some brokenness, hurts, and difficulties amongst us. There are needs for physical health, relationship struggles, financial matters, and mental challenges. God, we want to bring them to you with honesty and humility. Listen to our prayers.

At this time, let us take two minutes to lift up our prayers need to God. Use this prayer time to look inside your hearts as well as remembering the people with prayer needs.

2 minutes

Loving Father, thank you for listening to our prayers. Strengthen the relationship with each person, so we all can experience the freedom, the glory, the joy, the greatness you are pouring out upon us.

Be glorified and be pleased through our worship. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This Wednesday is Valentine's Day. Also, this Wednesday is Ash Wednesday which remarks the beginning of Lent, the time we remember the love of Jesus Christ for us to the death on the cross. Who are we that the Creator of the whole universe died for us? Who are we that God constantly focuses on every move we make and word we say? Remember his love and let us give what we can, not because God needs our help, but to see how God can use us. Let us praise God and honour him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

#### **Offering prayer:**

God of abundance, thank you for this time of offering. In the challenging lives, we have come to your presence. Receive our time and our attention and our body. In our limited situations, we brought some gifts for you. Receive our hearts and receive our willingness. It might not be our

most, but it is our best. So, God, use us. Use us for your glorious light. Through our broken and weak lives, we pray that your love and goodness be displayed and proclaimed to this world. Be glorified and be worshipped through our everyday lives. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Song for the Journey BOP 376 Lord, the light of your love is shining**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. We face challenges in our everyday life. Remember whose life we are breathing in our breath. God breathed his breath in us. God poured down his glorious light in our hearts. So, we have light. So, we have life. Live life and live light.

**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.