

Worship on May 12, 2024 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- 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 31 Peoples, clap your hands
- Time for our children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Luke 24:44-53
- Second reading: Psalm 47 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Acts 1:1-11
- Sermon: Go and share with the power of the Holy Spirit
- Hymn BOP 777 Send me, Lord
- Prayer for people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 274 Crown him with many crowns

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Clap your hands, all you peoples;

We will shout to God with songs of joy.

For God is awesome, reigning over all the earth!

We will sing praises to God every day.

Let us worship God with all we have to offer.

We will offer God our love – heart, body, mind and soul!

Praise song – BOP 457 Now thank we all our God

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of promise and purpose, we praise with thankful hearts. As the beauty of the seasons change the beauty of your world lifts our hearts in praise. God, you lifted up Jesus to be by your side, and so we know that he is always by our side as the future opens before us. Show us the promise and purpose in our own lives – how we can unfurl with new life, and move into the future empowered by your Holy Spirit, embraced by the love of Christ our Lord.

Prayer of confession (Unison) (Let us come to God with the Prayer of confession in Unison)

Lord Jesus Christ, you called your followers to carry the Good News of God's love and forgiveness to the ends of the earth. Yet we confess that we cannot always find the words to tell others of our faith. We try to act out your love, but it's hard to tell others why we do what we do for you. Forgive us. Give us the courage to speak openly of our commitment to you.

Glorious and loving God, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (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, remember the promise the Apostle Paul declares: What will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship? Distress? Peril or sword? Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Let us rejoice that, no matter what is happening around us, no matter what we have done, God's deep love will never let us go.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you.

Praise song – BOP 31 Peoples, clap your hands

Prayer for children

Prayer for Illumination:

O God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, open our minds and hearts to receive your Word, so that we may recognize your call to us to serve in the name of Jesus Christ, the Living Word. Amen.

- First reading: Luke 24:44-53
- Second reading: Psalm 47 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Acts 1:1-11

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

SERMON: Go and share with the power of the Holy Spirit

We talked about Jesus ascending to heaven and the Holy Spirit coming down to us. The gospel of Luke and Acts of Apostles were written by the same author. These two books are written to Theophilus informing what Jesus did and taught from the beginning. Although the author addressed the name of the recipient, Theophilus, his identity is unknown. So, it is a healthy approach for us to read and learn what the author explains to the recipient, as if the author provides information for us.

Today's first reading, the gospel of Luke chapter 24 is the ending of the book 1 of the author. And Acts 1 is the beginning of the book 2. The book 1 ends with the promise of the Holy Spirit along with the summary of Jesus' life. **Luke 24:49, “And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”** Jesus is referring to the Holy Spirit.

Book 2, Acts of the Apostles, starts with the summary of Jesus' life and the reminder of the promise of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 1:5, "... you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

What does the Holy Spirit do?

John 14:17 states that The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

John 8:32 says, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth makes us free. The immediate question comes in our mind is **FREE FROM WHAT!?**

V33, the disciples asked Jesus, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying "You will be made free"?"

John 8:34, "Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.'

Are we free or not? Are we slave to something? Are we free to be our own selves? Are we living with our own freedom? Are we satisfied with our own lives? Are we free from sin? Are we free from hurt? Are we free from any kinds of fear?

We desire freedom. There is a promise from the Bible, from God. God will pour out his own Spirit upon us. WHY? Why is God making us free? What's the relationship between the Spirit of God and our freedom?

Acts 1:8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This verse has direction. This teaches us to go out. Being witnesses is not just staying in our comfort zones. Being witnesses is not thinking only for our own benefits. We witness for other people. God promised the Holy Spirit for us. God pours out the Holy Spirit upon us not just to make us happy but to send us out for the benefit of others.

This tells us that our life is not about us. It is for other people. The first sentence of "The Purpose Driven Life" is **"It's not about you."**¹ "The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. **You were born by his purpose and for his purpose.**"²

We are filled up with our own selves and we are making ourselves slaves to our own desires, whether they are good desires or evil desires.

The works of the Holy Spirit is to reveal everything in the light of God's truth. So, in God's light, we come to the knowledge of what to do with entanglement of life.

Do you know the frustration of **entanglement of earphones?**
or fishing line??

¹ Warren, Rick, The Purpose Driven Life, P. 17.

² Ibid.

As a fishman, when this happens, I am so frustrated. I usually go fishing at night after sleeping children. At night time, this entanglement of fishing line, oh man. I really need light.

The Bible teaches us that we are in darkness. I have some darkness like experience for few months. On Black Friday last year, I got a good deal for my cellphone plan. I was able to pay only the half of what I was paying. Great. But, when I stayed in my office in the basement, I don't get reception. When my phone rang, I had to run upstairs to answer the phone. I cannot talk on the phone in my home office. I looked up the cellphone tower map in my area. I found that my cellphone company had only few towers around. I will show you different company's cellphone tower. So different. This caused me a lot of inconvenience. I was not able to talk on the phone freely.

Bad reception is pretty frustrating. Have anyone experienced it?

Thinking of it, I thought of the Holy Spirit. The connectivity of the Spirit of truth.

How well are you connected to the Holy Spirit?

How well do you receive the signal?

How many "cellphone towers" do you have to have a good reception to the Holy Spirit?

This truth shines the light upon us. Imagine sitting in pitch-darkness. When there is a small candle light, what will happen? We will be able to see. More candle, it will become brighter and clearer. This means connection. The light provides connection. The light connects. In the light of the Holy Spirit, how closely are we connected to God? How well are we connected to others?

Look at this cross. There are two beams. One, from top to bottom and the other, to sides.

This cross teaches us the love of God from top to bottom and the love for others to sides.

When two people love each other and try to hug each other, the posture would be the cross. In order to love and hug others, we should be firmly standing on the ground. Otherwise, we fall down. Only if we can stand firm, we can embrace others. Only when we are filled up with the love of God, we can love other, we can take care of others. Only when we overflow, we can give to others. Otherwise, we experience burnout or we pretend. Only when we are filled up with the Holy Spirit, we can become witnesses for the benefit of others.

Here is a sung prayer called "Here's my heart." The lyric goes like this.

Here's my heart Lord / Here's my heart Lord / Here's my heart Lord

Speak what is true. / I am found, I am yours, I am loved, I'm made pure, I have life, I can breathe, I am healed, I am free.

This is about connection with the Lord. When we are connected with the Holy Spirit, when we are in the light of truth, we are found, we are Gods, we are loved, we are made pure, we have life, we can breathe, we are healed, we are free.

With this God-given freedom and love, let us embrace each other. Let us share this overflowing heart with the broken hearted. Let us become God's hands and feet healing the people around us. May the Holy Spirit guide you with his wisdom and courage.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Hymn BOP 777 Send me, Lord

Prayer for the people: <<Prayer needs from people>>

Send us Lord. Lead us Lord. And Fill us Lord.

We invite you in our hearts. Fill our daily lives with your presence. Thank you for your faithfulness sending the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Help us realize your presence in us.

We come to you with humble and honest hearts. Search our hearts and make us face your truth in your light. With our needs, we come to your feet with desperate hearts. Listen to our prayers and grant our prayers.

We pray for those who experience physical and mental difficulties. Heal them and comfort them. Embrace them. We pray for those who have struggles with relationships. Disentangle their hearts. Restore their brokenness. Or help them have clear cut from the relationships, so they may have new start. Fill their hearts with love, so that they still want each other's wellness.

We pray for those who encounter challenges of life.

Also, we pray for China. There are people who experience fear and loss from flood. Protect lives and provide their needs. Give peace in their hearts and comfort them.

God, you gathered us as your body. Help us remember each other and pray and love for each other. Also, with the power of the Holy Spirit, help us look beyond our comfort zone and with the courage from above, help us step outside from our own lives, and reach others with the good news of your love and grace.

Be glorified through our lives and be lifted up. Use us for your people. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: The power of the Holy Spirit is with us. The Holy Spirit is in our hearts. This is the best gift from God. With our renewed life, with our hearts filled with God's Spirit and power, let us offer God what we have. Let us give to God with joy and thanksgiving. Let us praise God and glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Offering prayer:

Eternal and ever-present God, bless the gifts we offer today with the power of your Holy Spirit. Use them and use us to witness to the love of Jesus Christ and bring healing and hope to the world in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 274 Crown him with many crowns

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Acts 1:8, this is the promise of God, "you will received power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Then what do we do? "And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Long for the Holy Spirit. May your hearts and lives are filled with the Holy Spirit and the power from above. So that you may benefit others with God's love and grace and power.

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.