

Sunday Worship on June 9, 2024

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

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 685 How firm a foundation
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 64 Be still and know that I am God
- Prayer for children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Mark 3:20-35
- Second reading: Psalm 130 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 4:13-18, 5:1
- Sermon: Power is in the unseen
- Hymn – BOP 570 I have decided to follow Jesus
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 637 Take my life, and let it be consecrated

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Let us give thanks to God with our whole hearts;

We give thanks for God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

Call upon God to increase our strength of soul.

In the midst of troubling times, God reaches out to us.

So we gather to worship God, trusting in God's goodness and guidance.

We come to offer our prayers and praise, seeking God's renewing love day by day.

Praise song – BOP 685 How firm a foundation

Prayer of Adoration

God of all creation, we marvel at all the detail and grandeur you call into being. You tend the fragile beauty and balance in the world, receiving praise from the depths of the sea to the tops of the mountains. You have seen your Church grow from tiny beginnings into a worldwide community, full of diversity in voice and vocation. Open our eyes to your purposes for each of us and all of us, and for the Church in every location. Awaken us with insights from your Holy Spirit and show us how to fulfill your will in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Prayer of confession (Unison) (Let us come to God with the Prayer of confession in Unison)
God of purpose and possibility, you give us work to do and the skills we need to do it. Yet we prefer to follow our own ways. We think we know better. Forgive our stubborn natures. By the power of your Holy Spirit, create in us a teachable spirit so we can learn new ways to serve you.

Heavenly Father, 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

The prophet Micah reminds us that God requires us three things: to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God. To all who turn away from self-interest and seek reconciliation with God and neighbour in kindness and humility, God offers forgiveness and peace.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (May the Peace of the Lord be with you.)

Praise song – BOP 64 Be still and know that I am God

Prayer for Illumination:

Loving God, our souls wait for you, more than those who watch for the morning. Send your Holy Spirit to open your Word for us, so that we will hear your voice and follow Christ, your Living Word. Amen

- First reading: Mark 3:20-35
- Second reading: Psalm 130 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

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

SERMON: Power is in the unseen (please feel free to grab some snack and drink)

From Sunday to Thursday, I attended General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I had a great time, meeting new and old friends national-wide, learning the foci of our denomination, and participating in making important decisions.

I was treated very well and fed well. I am very grateful for this opportunity. And thank you for your support and prayers. Here are some pictures. ** pictures ** meeting, speaking, food, etc.

Today passage is continuation of last week's passage. We talked about who we are and what we have. The Bible says that we are clay jars, easy to break, very vulnerable, but we are custom made by the potter's hands for our own purposes. Also, because we have the most precious treasure, Jesus Christ, in our life, we cannot be defeated.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10, **“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. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.”**

Paul concluded this section with **v12, “So death is at work in us, but life in you.”**

Here, death symbolizes our surrounding circumstances, situations we face every day as we are weak and vulnerable jars of clay.

Although we don't experience this conflict much these days, in Paul's time, there were conflicts due to their faith. I paused for a long time when I wrote this part of my sermon. I was thinking about whether I experience any conflicts due to my faith. What are the differences of my values and the worldly values? These days, there are not big distinctions between Christians and non-Christians. It's a very big topic. Here, we are going to have some table discussions. Can you brainstorm **the examples of conflicts as Christ-followers these days?**

((PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION – 5-7 min))

So, what are some examples you could come up?

Being kind when you drive. Not fighting when making complains. Be gentle when talking to others. Give offering weekly or monthly. Come to church, taking time for church.

This is not applicable for us, but some countries still persecute believers. They don't have freedom to worship God.

Certain circumstances are obviously hindrances. According to the scripture, it is stated outer nature. But, I am saying that some attitudes of individuals could be outer nature too. We have learned and created some norms, how we should feel or react, in different cultures and contexts. Sometimes the pressure of keeping certain attitudes stifles us.

Although we are living in this context, the grace of God is beyond what we are experiencing.

V14, “because we know that the one who raises the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

God not only empowers individuals but his grace and love and power of God extend to others.

When we display the light of God, the glory of God through our lives, God promises the renewal of our inner being day by day. Our gratitude will increase day after day. **V16, “So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.”**

Sometimes, we feel tired following Jesus because of the differences saturated in this culture. But, we cannot give up the values in the teachings of Jesus Christ, even though it's unseen.

Paul declares, **“So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.”**

Paul's teaching has a direction. First, God fills individual life. We think about my own self first. Imagine God fills you up with his love and grace. Even though we are with God and we have the gift of God, we still experience difficulties and challenges. Outer nature.

Although this outer nature is suppressing us, because we have Jesus Christ the most precious treasure in our hearts, we can overcome. In this difficulty hindering us to go out, we can still shine the light of Jesus Christ and spread the life that was promised from God.

Lastly, Paul refers our life the earthly tent. **2 Corinthians 5:1, “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”**

If our tent is gone, we will have a building and a house made for us by God himself. Let our hearts be filled with the hope of the unseen blessing of God prepared for us. Because we have that hope in our hearts, let us be confident and let us live with the power of God.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 570 I have decided to follow Jesus

Prayer for the people

Day by day, and with each passing moment, strength I find to meet my trials here; trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He, whose heart is kind beyond all measure, gives unto each day what he deems best, lovingly its part of pain and pleasure, mingling toil with peace and rest.

God the Father, thank you for being mindful of us all the time. Thank you for the good times and challenging times in our daily lives. Thank you for the guidance and wisdom you are giving us. In all circumstances, help us come and follow your steps. Open our eyes and ears and all our senses, so that we may realize that you are always holding us and walking with us. Like the prayer of Saint Patrick, **“Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in every mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.”** Please help us know that God is with us.

Thank you for the General Assembly. Be with all your people in the churches and national office of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Let us be guided by your wisdom and fill our hearts with courage, so that we can boldly follow your steps.

We remember your people in our church. Heal those who are suffering with their physical pains. Reconcile when there is disharmony within your body. Fill each heart with your love. Make us humble before you and each other, so that we may treat them in the way we want to be treated. Also, challenge each heart, so we may stand up for you. Encourage and comfort each heart, so we may have peace and rest in you.

In all we do and say, we want to please your heart. Help us display your goodness through our lives. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: The growth around us in field and garden speak of God’s abundant love. What we offer to God this day spreads that abundance to those in need, for Christ’s sake. Let us praise God and glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Offering prayer:

God of growing gardens and growing hope, receive our gifts and our gratitude this day. Bless what we bring and what we do and what we are, so that we become expressions of your abundant love, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 637 Take my life, and let it be consecrated

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Please know that God's power is prepared for us and is given to us. God has promised us the unseen hope of heavenly building and house. Our source of power and hope does not come from us, clay jars, but from the treasure in our hearts, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Place your hope in Jesus.

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.