

Sunday Worship on June 30, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 637 Take my life and let it be consecrated
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo (Friends of the Lord)
- Prayer for children

We Listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Lamentations 3:22-33
- Second reading: Psalm 130 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15
- Sermon: Life together
- Hymn – BOP 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 474 The love of God comes close

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Out of the depths we cry to the Lord.

We will wait upon the Lord.

Hope in the Lord!

For with God there is steadfast love;

With God there is great power to redeem.

So we offer prayers and praise to God in whom we trust.

Praise song – BOP 637 Take my life and let it be consecrated

Prayer of Adoration

Great and gracious God, your glory speaks in the beauty of creation, your majesty stretches to the depths of space. You are the wellspring of hope and the fountain of healing mercy. We marvel at your love that overflows in our lives and into the world you have made. We worship you in gratitude, offering you our trust because you have come to us in Christ Jesus. Receive our love and loyalty, offered to you each day as the Spirit prays within us.

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

Great and merciful God, We confess we sometimes lose trust in you. When we feel desperate, we wonder where you are. In the face of tragedy or disaster, we ask how you could let such things happen. We forget to reach out to you. Forgive us, O God, when we give up on your love. Reassure us that your love in Christ Jesus will never let us go.

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

Jesus said, Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Friends, trust that peace and forgiveness are God's gift to you this day. Be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit that moves with you into each new day. **May the Peace of the Lord be with you.**

Praise song – BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo (Friends of the Lord)

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Lamentations 3:22-33
- Second reading: Psalm 130 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

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

SERMON: Life together

Last week, we talked about the wind and waves, difficult times in our lives. Jesus Christ, our rescuer, calmed the sea and comforted his disciples that he was with them. I hoped and prayed that you, just like the disciples, have walked with Jesus Christ through the week, in your joy and in your sorrow and challenges.

There is a great hymn made with Lamentations 3, **“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning, new every morning; great is your faithfulness O Lord, great is your faithfulness.”**

May this precious truth of God be in your hearts and God's steadfast love and never ending mercy be with you all the days of your life. Some mornings are harder than others. At those times, may this come to your hearts and give you smile and comfort in your hearts. Trust in God's goodness both when everything goes well and when we encounter challenging times.

As Palms 130 states, **“O Israel, hope in the Lord!”** The reason WHY? **“For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.”** Like the praise song from Lamentations 3, faithful God, with his steadfast love takes care of us.

Also, Psalm 130 writes, **“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.”**

Who waits for the morning? And why? In what kinds of situations would that person be? If you can imagine a small boat in the middle of the sea in the strong wind and waves, and almost gets swamped and sinks. When the disciples of Jesus were in the storm, they felt fear and desperation. This Psalm 130 speaks from that situation. They are in the night. Even though they are in the night, in dark situation, in desperate and helpless situation, the psalmist says that they place the hope in the Lord and they wait for the Lord. When the morning comes, they have light, they have warmth from the sun. New energy and new possibility. They put their new hope in the Lord because of the steadfast love and unending mercy of the Lord.

If you can think of the time that you experienced restoration, reconciliation, or rejuvenation, how did it happen? Someone was always there with us and for us.

The influence of mass media is great. And influencers sometimes experiment interesting things. For example, I watched it from Instagram. One gentleman asks one of the flight attendants that he's so hungry and to find someone who can help him. The flight attendant asks few people and many answers no. But one man opens his wallet and says to the flight attendant that he knows what it feels like hungry and desperate. He was there and now he can help. So, the hungry gentleman was fed well. After landing, the gentleman stands beside the exit and greets the man who helped him. He said, “I am the owner of this airline. And I'd like to know how you could help me when no one was helping me.” The man who helped answered, “I know the feeling of desperation. I was there and now I am in better situation and I was able to help. So, I help the people in need.” The owner of airline presented great amount of gift to the man.

Today's 2 Corinthians passage is talking about being excellent in what we do. To me, being excellent is like the ultimate goal. I try and I aim being good, but I think human beings are far from being excellent or being perfect. There's a saying, **“Practice makes perfect.”** It is widely accepted. But, I am saying, **“Practice makes better.”** That's what I think. So, how I see today's passage about urging God's people to be excellent is to aim high and practice being good consistently to become better every day. The goal is to make outcome better daily.

V13, **“I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance.”**

It is general knowledge that we have enough food for every single person in the whole earth. But, there are 25,000 people are dying in starvation daily. This includes 10,000 children. In North America, most of us worry about having too much food. Some other parts of the world agonizes and grieves for the starvation of their loved ones and worry about tomorrow's food.

Recently, I met a family from Nigeria when I went some other church. When we had fellowship time over sandwich and juice, she did not eat anything. So, I offered some, but she said that she preferred to bring some leftover sandwich home for the children who were waiting for her. In our abundance, as well as in our blindness, there was a person in need.

I am so grateful for Welcoming Arms. It is an organization with the association of churches in Aurora. The mission of Welcoming Arms is to love and serve those in need in Aurora. Under the umbrella of Welcoming Arms, there are Welcome Table, great dinner on Wednesday, and Martha's Table, amazing lunch on Thursday. And there are other ways to help the need. It is the

obedience of today's 2 Corinthians 8 passage. Overflowing abundance to the people in need. The ideal picture and the ultimate goal is this. V15, **"The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."**

How could this happen? By sharing our resources with our siblings in Christ. Paul starts chapter 8 like this. **2 Corinthians 8:1, "We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means."**

Paul shares the news to the brothers and sisters in Corinth that other brothers and sisters in Christ in Macedonia province are helping each other with what they have. Paul is not ordering. He wants to give a boost by bringing in the Macedonians' enthusiasm as a stimulus to their love. He wants to bring the best out of the brothers and sisters in Corinth.

It is changing the perspective. Some people have a lot, but the other people are in need. Is it natural for the rich to help the poor? Maybe yes, maybe no. We could have a long discussion. But, only if the people who could see the need of others can help. It is the change of perspective. In the airplane, when people were asked to help, many cannot see the desperation of the hungry. One person who has a broader perspective and wider range of experiences understood the feeling of hunger and desperation. Normal people focus on our own selves.

Do you know race horses? They have **funny masks covering their eyes(PIC)**. Why do they have it? I learned as I prepared this sermon, one of the reasons is to prevent flies and insects bother horse. Also, the mask helps to reduce the sight of horses to get rid of other options but to see where they are running to. Like racehorses, we focus on us. Paul, by giving an example of Christians in other region, tries to expand our perspective. Before we are told, we might not be able to see what we need to do. We might need to be told what we have abundantly, so that we can help with.

Christians call each other brothers and sisters. Why? It's because all Christians are children of God. In this perspective, imagine, if you have a sibling, if your sibling suffers in need of help, would you be willing to help? Of course, yes.

Expand your perspective and treat other believers as you treat your own family to live together. One of the most important themes of Christianity is to **overflow. (pour water in a cup to show)**

We are this cup. Know that the blessing of God is overflowing in our life. We are blessed to bless. We are in abundance in something for reason. Let us examine our lives and find out what kinds of blessings we have. We are called to share what we have abundantly. Overflowing is life together.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 635 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Prayer for the people

Heavenly Father, thank you for calling us to your side. Thank you for making us your children. Thank you for pouring out your blessings and love upon us. Thank you for the gifts we have in you. Help us recognize what we have and help us see the people in need around us, so that we can share what we have abundantly to the people in need. Give us wisdom and new perspective

to know what we have and what we need to do, and give us courage to spread out our hands and actually do what we realize.

We want to remember those in need this time. There are severe lack of food in Gaza area because of war. They live in danger, fear, starvation. Open up our hearts. What can we do for them? How could we stop this violence? What can we do here in our lives? What kinds of blessings can we share with them? Expand our life. Give us wisdom and courage, so that we can realize what we can do and help us obey. Send us Lord and provide their needs through us. There are wars in other places, countries in violence and persecution, and culture of selfishness. Help us remember the steadfast love of God and unending mercy of God. And help us remember how we are blessed and what we have much. Help us remember God the Father and other Christians brothers and sisters.

We pray for brothers and sisters in our church. They have physical sickness. Embrace them. Love them. Shower them down with your grace and mercy. Heal them. There are people with loneliness. Embrace them with your love. Embrace them through us. Let us be your arms of love. There are people with sadness and desperation. Fill their hearts with you. Teach them your love and let them know how you are crying together with them. You understand their pains. Also, there are brokenness in our hearts. There are distortedness in our relationships. Restore us. Fill us with your peace and love. Let your joy be overflowing in us. Whenever we worship you, may your presence be overflowing and help us live overflowing life in you and because of you. In all we do, be glorified and be pleased. We love you and we worship you. In Jesus' precious and wonderful and powerful and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

The stories of Scriptures remind us how much we need God's healing love and mercy in times of loss and loneliness. Our gifts to God support ministries of care and compassion through our congregation and in the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Consider your gift as an outreach to those in deepest need. Let us praise God and glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Offering prayer:

Compassionate God, we offer you our gifts with grateful hearts, glad to know you keep reaching out to the world you love. Bless what we bring, and use us and our gifts to touch the world with your healing grace through Christ, our Saviour and friend. Let your blessings be overflowing in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 474 The love of God comes close

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. We are called to bless. We are called to serve. We are called to share the love of God. The love of God is in you so that you can embrace others and recognize the people in need. **“The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”** Let us live and flourish together in the steadfast love of God and unending mercy of God.

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.