

## **Sunday Worship on September 22, 2024**

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

### **Sunday Order of worship**

#### **We Gather**

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 650 He leadeth me

#### **We Listen**

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Proverbs 31:10-31
- Second reading: Psalm 54 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
- Sermon: Wisdom and Courage
- Hymn – BOP 675 Precious Lord, take my hand
- Prayer for the people

#### **We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory

#### **We Serve**

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

---

### **Responsive Call to Worship**

From sunrise to sunset, / **Let us praise God's holy name.**

With the wisdom of the aged and the energy of the young,

**Let us praise God's holy name.**

In our work, in our homes, and in all we do, / **Let us praise God's holy name.**

Let us praise the Lord with all our hearts!

**We will worship God now and always.**

### **Praise song – BOP 434 For the beauty of the earth**

#### **Prayer of Adoration**

God of all creation, you have opened the world around us and filled it with beauty and purpose. Each creature declares your praise – the mountain states your majesty; the ripened field, your generosity. Birds flying aloft sing of your freedom; the tiny ant works with your persistence. We pray that all our work will honour your perfect plan, justice, mercy, and grace. May all our relationships speak of your compassion. So may we praise you, O God, not just in this hour of worship but in all the hours you grant us, as we follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and our Friend.

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

**God of all creation, you opened the world around us and filled it with wonder, yet we confess we look away from its harsher realities. Our ears can be deaf to cries of need. Our minds ignore opinions which differ from our own. Forgive us when we seek greatness instead of goodness, and miss the wisdom you intend us to embrace.**

**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 of us three things: to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. To all who truly repent and seek reconciliation with God and neighbour in kindness and humility, God offers forgiveness and peace.

**May the Peace of the Lord be with you.**

**Praise song – BOP 650 He leadeth me**

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

- First reading: Proverbs 31:10-31
- Second reading: Psalm 54 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

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

### **SERMON: Wisdom and Courage**

Reading books is good. But, does everyone read books? Why not? They have the wisdom of the good way of developing their intellectual ability, but they do not act accordingly because they are too lazy or they have no courage to try new things.

Exercising helps become healthy. We all have wisdom, but not all exercise. Why not? We are overwhelmed by our laziness or tiredness. What we need is the courage.

What if one person is so enthusiastic and is full of passion, but do not have the right wisdom, what will happen? For example, There is a 16 year old boy, who desperately wants to drive, but what if he does not know how to drive? If he drives, then he might cause a huge problem. One the other hand, if a 50 year old grown man knows how to drive, but too scared of driving on the road, his knowledge and wisdom of driving become useless.

There should be appropriate wisdom and courage for a life aligned with one's value and passion.

In my daily prayer, I never skip praying for wisdom and courage. These two values are the foundational for us to live align with God's plan.

First, we have to ask for wisdom in order to discern what God wants from us. Second, we need to pray for courage in order to act upon what we learned from God.

In our James passage, he starts with a question. **V13, “Who is wise and understanding among you?”**

This question is not to point out some specific people. Look around your neighbours or think about the people you know. Are there someone who is standing out for their wisdom? There could be some. But, this is more like James is asking to think about what true wisdom is. **V13, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.”**

James writes that wisdom bears fruit. He distinguishes earthly wisdom and the wisdom from above. Earthly wisdom is unspiritual and devilish, he states. **V14, “But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.”** This earthly wisdom causes disorder and wickedness. On the other hand, **V17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.”** This teaches us that the wisdom from above is not selfish. The people with the wisdom from above embraces the whole situation, not ego-driven.

We all have experienced conflicts and disputes that both parties say that they are right. In this, there needs honest hearts to encounter themselves. The root of this conflict is desiring what another has. New Testament professor, Kathy Dawson writes that **“James sees [desiring what another has] as a sin that feeds on itself, craving ever more, asking for the wrong things, escalating in violence until the taking ends in death.” 4:2, “You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.”**

### **Why desire something another has?**

Simple answer is because we do not have it. Then, why does it matter that we don't have something other people have. **It matters because we do not know what we have.** What is the standard of measuring each person's value? How do we measure our own value? OR can we even measure our own value? We have heard and experienced and have been exposed to the culture of measuring our values by our achievement. Our salary, which projects you finished? What company you work for? How big is your house? What kind of car are you driving? We can name so many.

Are these the true value we want? If we drive Lamborghini, then we are more valuable than others? If we have more money, then are we more valuable? More precious? More important? But, the funny thing is.. in our hearts, we answer kind of yes.

This worldly standard is rooted deeply inside our thoughts and lives already.

Because we are used to this way of thinking, it functions as the filter as we perceive the teachings from the scripture. Like wearing sunglasses. When we wear green sunglasses, everything looks greener.

So, here, as we are coming to God, let us ask God for his wisdom and his courage.

Who remembers the first line of the Bible?

**Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (NIV).”**

Who knows the beginning of the world? Who knows God? Who knows what create means? Who knows the whole heavens and the earth? We do not know this first line of this book. We cannot understand the Bible, the teaching of God from the first line.

This means that we do not have the wisdom to know God. With our own wisdom, we cannot know the wisdom from above. It only comes from God.

- **James 1:5, “If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.”**
- **Psalm 145:8-9, “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”**
- **1 Timothy 1:16, “Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.”**

What can we learn about God? We can come to God, repeatedly, again and again. Jesus is so patient that he would make us the good example of believers, so that others can come to God seeing our lives. Thinking of this verse, **making me an example**, and looking at my own life.. What do I feel? There is a big gap. I can never fill this gap. But, God is patient and he will do it. I don't know how long it will take. But, with his patience, he will do it. That is God's promise for us. So, let us not rely upon our own wisdom, but rely upon the promise of God. God will give us his wisdom.

For courage, can we come to God with our own desire and want and courage? From time to time, when I ask people to come to church, they say this. “I am too shy to meet new people. I cannot handle that awkwardness.” To try a new thing, we need courage. These are the examples of God promising us courage comforting us and encouraging us.

- **Psalm 27:1, “The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is my stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?”**
- **Isaiah 43:1-2, “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and they flame shall not consume you.**
- **Isaiah 41:10, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**
- **Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”**
- **Joshua 1:9, (when Joshua became the leader of Israel), “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and be courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**

Do more? God's promises of courage is so many. This is our God. God is patient and God is holding us with love and care.

**John 10:10, “I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.”**

In order to know who we truly are, we need to ask God wisdom. “God, help us to know you. Teach us your love. Tell us that how much you love me! I am loved. I am yours. I am with you, you are with me! I can come to God because you love me and you are patient with me.”

This is the wisdom we are establishing our lives upon. This is the foundation of our lives.

On this foundation, we can live out God's love and our own values with the courage from God.

Our amazing God is inviting all of us to come to him and accept his love, so we have our life to the full. So, we can glorify God and enjoy him forever.

In this light of God's wisdom and courage, we will be able to learn who we truly are and what kinds of gifts God has placed in us. It is more fun and satisfying to look into ourselves looking for what God has hidden in our being than looking around and being envious of what another people have.

Pray for wisdom and courage. Let us live our life to the fullest. God is waiting for you. May you open your hearts and come to God asking his wisdom and his courage.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

### **Praise song – BOP 675 Precious Lord, take my hand**

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

God of wisdom and courage, thank you for your promises. You are patient and you are caring. Upon these promises, we rely on you. Give us ears to listen, so we can have faith in your promises. Help us know that you are waiting for us to turn back to you. Precious Lord, take our hands and lead and guide us. Walk with us.

“For where two or three gather in my name there I am with them.” This is the promise of Jesus for God's people. When we come to you, hear us. Grant us our prayers.

We pray for the churches of today. We pray that God's glory be displayed in every church. Gospel, good news, the stream of life be overflowing every church where your words are preached and shared. In every heart, may the Holy Spirit pour out wisdom and courage. May the people listen to your words stand up and shine their own light in their own life, so the love of God may be witnessed to the world.

We pray for youth especially. How often do we see youth at church? God, give us wisdom how to reach out to them with your love and your grace. Help us try out new things with your courage so that the youth can have meaningful experiences in your presence. We need our next generation for you. Raise them up. Help us see what we need and give us strength to act upon.

There are some desperate hearts coming before your presence in prayer. Search our hearts, teach us our need, and help us be open to you. Help us listen to your promises and give us courage to have faith in you. Help us come to you with our prayers. Build personal relationships with each person.

Precious God, caring God, loving God, merciful God, patient God, humorous God, give us experience personally, so we can name you according to our own experiences. You are the tree and we are the branches. We are yours. In Jesus' precious name, we pray Amen.

#### **Invitation to the offering:**

Through this offering, let us come to God relying upon God's love and grace and patience. The gifts we offer to God support others come to him through various ministries from all God's churches. Let us rely upon God's wisdom and courage as we give God what we have. As we praise and worship God with our gifts, let us glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

#### **Offering prayer:**

Wise and faithful God, we offer our gifts to you in thanksgiving for your gifts to us in Christ and in creation. Bless these gifts and the good works they will support, so that the world may know

your wisdom and faithfulness. Make our life a pleasing offering for you. We are yours. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

**Song for the Journey – BOP 490 God of grace and God of glory**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. To face our every day, we need God's wisdom and courage. Let us come to God who is patient and loving and gives generously. So, we can have true life. Let us live up to our fullest with God.

**Benediction:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.