

Sunday Worship on February 23, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Robert Kennedy)

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 368 Let Christian faith and hope dispel
- Prayer for Worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 373 Jesus loves me this I know

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Genesis 45:3–11, 15
- Second reading: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 6:27-38
- Sermon: The Golden Rule
- Hymn BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 79) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 349 My hope is built on nothing less

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Take delight in the Lord;

All: For God will give us the desires of our hearts.

One: Trust in the Lord;

All: For God will give us security and strength.

One: Come, let us commit our ways to the Lord.

All: Let us worship the One who is our refuge in any time of trouble.

Praise song – BOP 368 Let Christian faith and hope dispel

Prayer of Adoration

Faithful God, you have gathered your people in faithfulness throughout many generations. You have offered your blessing to us through their examples, and led your Church through many changes and challenges by your Holy Spirit. Draw near to us this day to guide us in these uncertain times. Root our faithfulness in the compassion and courage we meet in Jesus. Renew us through your steadfast love so that we may dare to trust our future to your hands. All praise and honour are yours, O God, our Source, Saviour and Spirit of Life.

You are with us, even in our failings. Hear us as we confess our sins so that we might be able to begin again with you.

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

Gracious God, you test the mind and search the heart, so you know the thoughts and intentions we keep hidden. Trusting in your wisdom and mercy, we confess the ways we have failed to love one another, the times we looked the other way when someone needed help, and the ways our actions betrayed your goodness. Forgive us for missing opportunities to share your love, and carrying grudges that keep us from offering the forgiveness we hope for. Renew us with your mercy to become more merciful to others we meet, in the example of Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Hear and believe the good news: anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

The old life is gone, and new life has begun. Trust that you are forgiven by God's generous love, And the Holy Spirit gives you the courage and power to forgive one another for Christ's sake.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 373 Jesus loves me this I know

Prayer for Children

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

- First reading: Genesis 45:3–11, 15
- Second reading: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 6:27-38

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

SERMON: The Golden Rule

Good morning, how was your week? Last week, to attend a seminar, I was in Houston, Texas. I had a wonderful time experiencing a thriving church and learning the true meaning of church and the purpose of it. Slowly, as I reflect and have a deeper understanding from the experience, I will share and teach the true meaning of being church and the ways to live a fulfilling life. Thank you for providing the great opportunity.

By the way, I arrived on the same day as the flipped plane. I was few hours earlier than that. I saw a lot of snow mountains on airstrip. I am thankful that everyone is safe.

So, Today's passage is The Golden Rule.

Who is this for? Why did Jesus give this Gold Rule to his people?

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Great. So, is Jesus teaching us to make peace within each other? In one sense, YES. But, is this all that we can take after reading this section? Jesus also talks about the reward in heaven. So, if we have good relationships with each other and love one another, then our reward is big? Yes. But, with who? With families? With the one who can easily love BUT neglect the ones who are out of circle of our relationships?

When you look at the subtitles of paragraphs, our passage is titled **“Love for Enemies.”**

Do to others as you would have them do to you? With enemies?

Who are the enemies? The Bible teaches us, in **V27, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”**

These are the enemies.

V29, “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.”

Same verse in Matthew, **Matthew 5:39, “But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.”**

Generally speaking, right-handed people are about 85-90% and left-handed are about 10-15%. We can safely say that vast majority of people are right-handed.

To strike other person's cheek, we should face each other. This means, 85-90% of the time, the attacker used his or hers left hand, to slap victim's right cheek. This implies that it's not a violent fighting situation. They would use fist, instead of slapping. So, this is an insulting situation. The abuser is not slapping the victim with 100% full swing, but more like, insulting, disrespecting, demeaning, and humiliating the victim.

Any experience like this? If you were ignored or neglected, what would be your feeling? Bad. But, Jesus is telling us what? Turn the other cheek. The Bible says, this is how we love our enemies.

And he continues, **“from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.”**

And then, v31, here comes the famous Golden Rule, **“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”**

In school situation, there was a guy who calls me when he needs my help. Other times, he barely said hi. He took advantage of me. He took all my class notes. Of course, I didn't like him. But, still, I gave.

Another example. You know Cobs Bread? They are great. They donate day's leftover to community. Every two weeks, I am able to get some bread from them. I shared this great news with the church I am seeing as an interim moderator. One lady asked me to share some bread. But, she does not have a car, so I have to drive all the way down about 30 minutes to give bread to her. I've been doing it for few months now. Sometimes, she doesn't even come out and her son comes out. Of course, I am helping with good intention, but I feel like weird. I am doing something for her, but she doesn't even come out? At the same time, I am thinking, maybe she's busy to take care of her other children. Every two weeks, close to the date I am getting the bread, she texts me. Well.. I feel like she's taking advantage of me. She texted me again on Friday. But, this Bible teaches us to give. Give to who? Give to everyone who begs from you.

So, back to the question, **who is this golden rule for?**

Who's the audience of Jesus' teaching today? Various people. Disciples, spectators, who want to take something from them.

Then, more important question, **who's receiving this teaching?**

Are we receiving this message from Jesus?

Quick summary of v32-34, If you love those who love you, there is NO credit to you. Sinners do so. It's not hard to do. Easy things are done; why you get credit for?

But, if you listen to me and challenge yourself to love your enemies, then there's heavenly reward. **V35, But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High.**

When you give, it's not just for the sake of other people, yes it's for them, they benefit from you. But eventually, it's for your own reward in heaven from God. Jesus is teaching us how to live to receive reward from God.

This is called **"The Golden Rule."** It's called golden because it is considered a valuable, universal, and morally superior principle. It even highlights the importance of ethical guideline. BUT, think about it. Really? What good comes being taken advantage by others? What good is it to be patient when others humiliate you? To this life, nothing. Who's going to credit you when you lose your coat and shirt at the same time? No one in this world.

But, there is one person looking at you. God is watching you and counting what you are doing, a you give, even though you suffer and you are being humiliated. This is how we prepares our reward in heaven. This is GOLDEN RULE because it teaches us how to receive reward in heaven.

When we try to love our enemies, it is not going to be easy. Remember **this image.**

This is a giant hornet. It is dangerous because of its sting. Imagine, someone removed the sting. Yes, even though there is no sting, it's still scary, it's still nasty, it's still bothersome. But, there is no sting.

1 Corinthians 15:55, "Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'"

Death has been removed by Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. We are saved from the power of death. What in the world is the most scary thing!? Isn't it death? We are people of life. We received life from God. The sting of death had been removed completely.

Think about Psalm 23, God anointed David in front of David's enemies. This means, God protects David. God takes care of David. The enemies still look ugly, scary, but at the end of the day, they cannot do any harm on you. They cannot do anything about your eternity, your true hope, and true life.

Therefore, hope in the Lord. Have the mindset of heavenly citizen. This world we live is like a vapour, according to the Bible. So, whether our enemies do good or not, let us live in the way what we are supposed to do for the heavenly reward. We are still to treat them with kindness. We are still to be patient for them. We are still to help them. We are still to love them.

In this way, we are not helping them, we are not benefitting them only, we are not trying to earn the love or reward from them, **BUT we are storing up our reward in heaven.** This is what this teaching of Jesus makes it the Golden Rule. Jesus said, **V35, “Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High;”**

Let us follow the steps of Jesus’ teaching and hope in the Lord and the reward God is preparing for us.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Praise song – BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower

Prayer for the people

God, our heavenly Father, thank you for this challenging message. This is challenging. But, because of your love, and because of your example, we try to learn from you and try to digest your teaching today. Help us spend time with this and slowly take steps toward your heavenly reward. We are yours and we want to live according to your teaching. Give us courage and give us power, so we can endure the people who are hard to love. This world is not our eternal home. Help us put our hope in the Lord and in the eternity.

Gracious God, this year, there’s a lot of snow. And it’s cold also. Protect our people. Keep us safe. Also, these days, many are feeling that it’s a very difficult time. Let the political leaders of the world fear the Lord and help them listen to your wisdom. Even though people make plans, but God is the only one who determines the steps. Lead and guide this world with your ways. In your ways and in your timing, protect the weak and watch over the marginalized. Help us contribute to your works in our own circumstances. Open our eyes and ears and give us loving hearts and hope for your reward.

We pray for our church. Help us be connected to you and to each other. Help us love each other according to your teachings. Help us function as your church. We want to share your life to our surroundings. Direct our focus to the lost and share this precious news with them.

For your gospel works, give us good health, give us peace, and help us with our struggles. You are our God, and we will follow you. Show your glory to this world through us. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

God is the source of all goodness. Through our offering, we express our thanks for every good thing we enjoy, and we share good things with those in need. Be generous, as God is generous, so that the world may know that God is good. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #79, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

God of generous love, we bring our gifts with grateful hearts, for we have received so much through your kindness. Bless our gifts, and use them to touch lives in situations we cannot even imagine with your love. Make us a blessing in our community for the sake of Christ, our Friend and Saviour. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 349 My hope is built on nothing less

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Love the enemy. Do good to them. Give more to them. There will be suffering, difficulties, humiliation. Jesus went through the same path. People hated him. People shouted to crucify him. But, Jesus still loved us to the point of his death. Jesus is our foundation and life principle of the fullness of life. Let us ponder upon this teaching of Jesus through the week and may God stir our hearts and bring changes. May God mold us into his likeness slowly, but surely, day by day.

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.