

Sunday Worship on August 24, 2025

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

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 688 As water to the thirsty

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Isaiah 58:9b-14
- Second reading: Psalm 103:1-8 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 12:10-17
- Sermon: **From bent to blessed**
- Hymn BOP 356 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 457 Now thank we all our God) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

With all our hearts, let us praise God.

With all that we are, we will praise God's holy name!

With all our hearts, let us bless God.

We will never forget how kind God has been.

The Lord forgives our sins, heals our weakness, and gives us life everlasting.

Let us worship God who is merciful and patient, whose love never fails.

Praise song – BOP 374 Oh for a thousand tongues to sing

Prayer of Adoration

O God, our strength and refuge, we come together to worship you and praise your loving kindness. In your presence, we rest from what distracts us, to focus on your truth and goodness. You call us to live in relationship with you. Through the love of Jesus Christ, you repair our lives. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, you engage us to serve you in the world. Receive our prayers and our praise this day.

Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit, revive our hope and our energy and make us ready to answer your call.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

O God, our judge and our hope, we confess we often turn away from your truth, and ignore your call to do justice. Forgive us when we say one thing in worship but do another in the ways we live. Forgive us when we ignore how others are treated and think only of ourselves. Let your judgement awaken us and your mercy refresh us.

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

God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Believe the good news of the Gospel. In Jesus Christ, God has offered us mercy and love. Receive God's forgiveness this day and share it with each other 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 688 As water to the thirsty

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

- First reading: Isaiah 58:9b-14
- Second reading: Psalm 103:1-8 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 13:10-17

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

Sermon: From bent to blessed

When we carry a heavy backpack, it doesn't feel good. We all know this weighed down feeling either physically or emotionally.

Worry about our kids. Bills piling up. Health just won't cooperate. Regrets from choices we wish we could undo.

While we don't walk around bent down physically, many of us bent down in spirit. Shoulders slumped. Eyes looking down. Hope unimaginable.

Today's Luke passage gives us a story of a woman who walked into church bent down but walked out blessed. I believe that same Jesus is here with us. He's ready to take us from bent to blessed.

Luke tells us about a woman who had been bent over for 18 years. Two decades, she had to walk around bent down.

She couldn't look people in the eyes. She couldn't see the sky. She probably got used to hearing whispers about her and cold stares. She was a regular at the synagogue, but she came every week bent over.

Some of us know how that feels. Maybe not in the spirit, but in the soul. Bent over by anxiety. Bent down by disappointment. Bent down by the weight of "what ifs."

What has bent you down these days?

V12 is a turning point. **"When Jesus saw her, he called her over."**

No one really noticed her. She was just part of the background. But Jesus SAW her. Jesus sees what others ignore. Jesus sees what you hide. Jesus sees you when you feel invisible.

Jesus calls her forward. Can you imagine the risk she felt? Everyone is staring at her. Everyone is wondering. She shuffles forward, still bent down, not knowing what will happen.

Jesus does something unthinkable. He spoke, **"Woman, you are set free."** And he placed his hand upon her. And immediately, she straightens up. The first thing she does was praising God. This is the power of Jesus' touch.

One word, one touch, and eighteen years of bent-over pain is gone.

At this joyous moment, somebody was not happy. The synagogue leader gets upset. **"Hey, you've got 6 days to heal people. Don't do it on the Sabbath."**

Imagine this. Someone just got healed after 18 years of pain, and the pastor is upset because it messed with his order of service.

Jesus said to the hypocrisy, **v15-16, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?'**

Religion without compassion is bondage. Jesus shows that God's heart is full of mercy and grace and love. He came not to load us with more rules, but to free us from every chain. We need to discern the work of the Holy Spirit.

Today's passage ends with beautiful images.

The woman is standing tall.

She is praising God.

The crowd is rejoicing.

Jesus is still working in us. This is what Jesus does. He takes bent-down people and makes them blessed people. Jesus lifts our heads. Jesus restores our dignity. Jesus turns our shame into testimony.

So, what does this mean for us? How do we live out this “from bent to blessed” story today?

What has bent you down? Stress? Health? Family conflict? Regret?

Do not hide it from Jesus. Bring it to Jesus. He already sees it.

Jesus is calling your name. This woman did not run away when Jesus called her. She stepped forward.

Sometimes, the first step of faith is simply showing up. This is answering his call even when you don't know what's going to happen.

In his presence, trust the touch of Jesus Christ. Healing may not always be immediate or physical. But his presence always restores. His Holy Spirit always lifts. His love always strengthens. One touch of Jesus can change how you walk all through your life.

From bent to blessed, this is our calling. God wants us to live our lives pointing upward. God wants us to show the world what God can do through our lives.

Remember Camino de Santiago?

If you are carrying too much, it will make you bent down. **Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”**

If you are like a flower weighed down by rain? Maybe you are drooped down to the ground. But, once the sun shines again, it lifts back up. This is what God does to us.

One of my friends came to me crying. She felt she's not worthy because of her past mistakes and regrets. She was bent down because of guilty feeling. I told her the love of God.

“God loves you. God become your shepherd. You are God's precious daughter. God will restore you. God will never let you go. You are purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.”

I told her the love of Jesus. She accepted the good news and she was blessed and straightened her spirit on that day. She still lives in the presence of God maintaining the promises of God in her life. This is my testimony that God used me; and this is her testimony that God's love changed her life. From bent to blessed.

Jesus is inviting you today. He wants to show you his healing power. Are you bent down by worry? He can lift you up. Are you bent down by regret? He can forgive you. Are you bent down

by fear? He can give you courage. Just answer to his calling. Just come to the presence of Jesus Christ.

With what kind of testimonies do you want to fill your life?

Remember that Jesus sees you, Jesus calls you, and Jesus heals you.

This is the message of the Lord

Praise song – BOP 357 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

Prayer for the people:

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you see us when no one else does. You see the burdens that bend us down, the worries that weigh on us, the fears that keep us looking at the ground. And yet you call us, you touch us, and you set us free.

Today, we believe that your grace is greater than our shame, your power is stronger than our weakness, and your love is deeper than our sorrow. Help us stand tall in faith, to walk in hope, and to lift our voices in praise.

May we go from this place not bent down but blessed, living witnesses of your healing, freeing love.

Gracious and merciful God, this morning we come before you as people who know what it is to be bent down. Bent down by grief, by worry, by regret, by burdens we cannot carry alone. But we also come as people who have seen your mercy, and who trust that you will not leave us where we are.

We pray for those among us who are struggling with illness. Grant them healing and peace. We pray for those weighed down by financial pressures or job worries, provide for them in your kindness. We pray for those who are lonely or grieving. Surround them with your comfort and presence.

We lift up our children and families. Lord, keep them in your care, and give us wisdom and patience as parents, grandparents, and friends. We pray for our church. Strengthen us to be a community where the bent down are lifted up, and where the weary find rest. We pray for our city and our world, so often filled with division and conflict. Pour out your peace, justice, and compassion.

Lord, for all of us here, we ask. Straighten our hearts where they are crooked, lift our spirits where they are weary, and remind us that in Christ, we are not forsaken but deeply loved. Send us, from this worship today, standing tall in faith, praising you with thankful hearts, and ready to share your love in word and in deed.

In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen

Invitation to the offering:

With gratitude for the healing and hope that Jesus offers, let us present our offering to God. May our gifts help to share that healing and hope throughout God's world in Christ's name.

As we give our offerings, let us glorify him.
(BOP #457, *Now thank we all our God Vs. 1*)

Offering prayer:

O God, we place our hope and trust in your loving kindness. Because we want to praise you with more than words, we offer our gifts to support Christ's mission in the world. Bless these gifts and our lives, so that all the world will know your loving kindness. Help them bring the things make them bent down, so that, in your presence, they may experience your healing power and forgiving love. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling

Now, it is our time to be sent to the world where God called us to be.
Do you have anything to bring to Jesus? This week, think about what to bring to Jesus. In your body, in your soul, in your spirit, in your emotion, in your relationships... Jesus sees you and Jesus is waiting for you. To the invitation of Jesus Christ, answer him with courage.

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.