



# CHUNG DONG FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, ENGLISH MINISTRY

## ONLINE FAMILY WORSHIP

MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

Dear Chungdong Family

Welcome to our second online worship service. Due to the spread of the COVID-19, Chungdong First Methodist Church, English Ministry will continue worshipping online until further notice. We hope and pray that things will get back to normal soon. In the meantime, please join us with your family and friend for the online worship. You can follow the liturgy here along with the video sermon. We will keep you updated with regards to services during the following weeks. Please remember to pray for the country, the leaders and those affected by this crisis.

This week's preacher is Rev. SeHyoung Lee, EM's senior pastor.

### Home Worship

#### Welcome

Blessings to you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Here at Chungdong First Methodist Church, English Ministry, we seek to live out our calling as the Body of Christ, as a people chosen, known, loved and sent out by our Living Lord. Here, we are a family of faith – not always perfect, but always bound together by something greater than we are. Centered on God's Word, and empowered by His Holy Spirit, together we seek to be the kind of congregation our Lord has called us to be. We would love to welcome you in worship. Therefore: The Lord Jesus Christ is with us today.

#### Opening prayer:

Dear God, You call us,  
Wanderer of seashores and sidewalks,  
inviting us to sail out of our smug harbors  
into the uncharted waters of faith  
to wander off from our predictable paths to follow You  
into the unpredictable footsteps of the kingdom;  
to leave the comfort of our homes and accompany  
You into the uncomfortable places we usually avoid.

As we wait,  
in our simple, sometimes crazy,  
constantly uncertain lives,  
speak to us, Spirit of Grace:  
of that hope which is our anchor;  
of that peace which is our rock;  
of that grace which is our refuge.

In this time of Lent, we pray for our nation and the world. We pray for hope and courage. We pray for a vaccine for the Coronavirus and that You will intervene. Give wisdom to those in power and healing to those affected. Give us a spirit of love and faith to endure and to encourage. In the Name of Jesus we pray.  
Amen

### **Worship Song**

And can it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBiu5eyzarg&list=PLS4jQgASCDFKKnsrST9YQVft3DxlbteyA>

### **Confession of Faith**

We believe in God, the Creator of all that we see and all that we do not see.  
We believe in Jesus Christ, God becomes flesh; in death the Forgiver of sinners, in rising the Healer of the broken.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, God within us, Comforter, Strengthener and Friend.  
Amen

### **Prayer for illumination:**

Prepare our hearts, o Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your won; that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## Old Testament Reading

Psalm 32 (NIRV)

*A maskil of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the person whose lawless acts are forgiven.

Their sins have been taken away.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the person whose sin the LORD never counts against them.

That person doesn't want to cheat anyone.

<sup>3</sup> When I kept silent about my sin,

my body became weak

because I groaned all day long.

<sup>4</sup> Day and night

you punished me.

I became weaker and weaker

as I do in the heat of summer.

<sup>5</sup> Then I admitted my sin to you.

I didn't cover up the wrong I had done.

I said, "I will admit my lawless acts to the LORD."

And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> Let everyone who is faithful pray to you

while they can still look to you.

When troubles come like a flood,

they certainly won't reach those who are faithful.

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding place.

You will keep me safe from trouble.

You will surround me with songs sung by those who praise you

because you save your people.

<sup>8</sup> I will guide you and teach you the way you should go.

I will give you good advice and watch over you with love.

<sup>9</sup> Don't be like a horse or a mule.

They can't understand anything.

They have to be controlled by bits and bridles.

If they aren't, they won't come to you.

<sup>10</sup> Sinful people have all kinds of trouble.

But the LORD's faithful love  
is all around those who trust in him.  
<sup>11</sup> Be glad because of what the LORD has done for you.  
Be joyful, you who do what is right!  
Sing, all you whose hearts are honest!

### **New Testament Reading**

James 5:7-11 New International Reader's Version (NIRV)

<sup>7</sup> Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient the farmer is for the fall and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too must be patient. You must remain strong. The Lord will soon come back. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, don't find fault with one another. If you do, you will be judged. And the Judge is standing at the door!  
<sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, think about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. They are an example of how to be patient when you suffer. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we think that people who don't give up are blessed. You have heard that Job was patient. And you have seen what the Lord finally did for him. The Lord is full of tender mercy and loving concern.

### **Sermon**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ImZOLLKhas&t=1s>

Live out the Lenten Wilderness Road in Grace

Psalm 32, James 5:7-11

The season of Lent is here. It is a time of deeply reflecting upon the Lord's suffering and looking over our own lives. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), we find ourselves in difficult times unable to even gather in the church to collectively meet and worship together. Of course, there are those neighbors with the actual virus who are suffering more than us, but it seems the entire global community including Korea is suffering in all aspects of our lives as well. Times of suffering, times of disaster, times of hardship; for us in such times, there is no other way. To suffer is to endure, and live each day in grace.

Lent is the time where we remember the 40 days of the Lord's suffering leading up to the resurrection, as well as reflecting upon ourselves. The number 40 is rather significant in Christian history. Therein lies the meaning of waiting, but also the meaning of preparing. If we say the average human lives up to 80 years today, this boils down to 29,200 days we potentially have on this earth. If we can offer up 40 of these 29,200 days to God and renew our life journey, I believe there to be no other thing as meaningful and fulfilling as this. I am currently unable to meet each and every one of you, face-to-face, but I seek to spend these 40 days as a meaningful time spent in the grace given to us by our Lord.

Pastor Rick Warren, author of 『The Purpose Driven Life』, wrote in the book's preface about changes people of God experienced: "Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain. Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai. The Spies were transformed by 40 days in the promised land. David was transformed by Goliath's 40-day challenge. Elijah was transformed when God gave him 40 days of strength from a single meal. The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days of to change. Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness. The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after his resurrection." Dearly beloved, what kind of change do you wish to experience during the 40 days of Lent this year?

As I enter into the season of Lent, I thought of how I should live in terms of my relationship to God, my neighbors, and with myself.

First, I thought of a deep relationship with God. During this season, I seek to wake up early every morn to read the bible. Currently, I began reading the NIV from Genesis 15 chapters daily. Rather than getting lost in deep meditation or theological ponderings, I aim to purely read the word out loud. I expect to finish around half the bible by the time the season of Lent comes to a close. By then, I feel this will become a habit, which I hope to keep going. After reading the word, I seek to pray deeply over specific verses that resonated from my reading with the Lord. Not a prayer with some goal or intention in mind, but purely a passive prayer as the Lord leads me. During the past 10 days, God gave me the inspiration to pray for the Korean church, particularly guiding me to offer up a repenting prayer for the Korean Church. Also, this repenting prayer for the church naturally led to a repenting prayer for my own life and ministry, and enabled me to encounter God's grace in a deeper way.

Second, I thought of how to live for my neighbors. During this time of Lent, I seek to personally meet 5 people every week for counseling. Rather than trying to teach my neighbor, the best thing I can do for my neighbor is to offer ears to listen and a heart to empathize with and accompany their walk through their suffering so that they can see the image of God within themselves, become empowered and stand strong by their own volition. At the same time, I would like to

invite my neighbor to pray for me during this Lenten season, therefore building up intercessory prayer. Praying for congregation members, praying for my students, praying for the leaders and public servants and nurses and workers of this nation, pray for those working for the economy, and pray for those suffering neighbors.

Third, I seek to practice reducing things for my own personal life's sake. I enjoy drinking coffee. I decided to quite coffee during this time. I decided to both preserve my health and reduce my fossil footprint by walking instead of driving short distances. I seek to reduce my consumption of carbohydrates and consume the appropriate servings that will hopefully help lower my weight. By reducing things, I will gain the grace of recovering an orderly and healthy lifestyle. Also, during the final week of Lent, I seek to spend it fasting while thinking about the Lord's suffering.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) many startups are suffering, educational institutions are changing their schedules, while supermarkets, restaurant owners and people in the tourism industry are facing bankruptcy. Churches too are facing crisis in their ministry. We cannot predict what the future may bring. All we can determine is that the present is a time of suffering, a time of walking through the wilderness.

Times of suffering are not geared towards success, but rather times for us to endure by relying on and becoming empowered by the grace of God. Jewish Rabbi Harold Kushner proposed in his book 『When Bad Things Happen to Good People』 to ask the question of “How?” instead of “Why?” when facing times of suffering. The question of Why? Is important in our lives. To question why we are living is an important question seeking to find the meaning of life. However, when we face difficulty, the road to help becomes blocked when we ask “Why?” to God, our neighbors, and ourselves. Rather than ‘Why?’, when we ask ‘How?’, then we can pray to God ‘help us in our suffering.’ We can seek help from our neighbor. We can console ourselves lost in our circumstance.

Suffering brings about solidarity. When the Lord walked through the wilderness, he did not resist nor abandon, but quietly took in every bit of suffering with his body. He accepted each bit of scorn, contempt, insult, the cross, suffering and death directly and came to complete salvation. In this season of Lent, we require the grace of endurance. Just as it is written in today's scripture from James, may we remember the suffering of Job.

All life exists due to having endured through wind and rain, cold and hardship. Trees grow stronger as they plant their roots deeper despite the wind. In life we also encounter much suffering in the form of unemployment, sickness, poverty, pain and failure, but by passing

through such suffering do we become stronger. The people who waited and endured were able to enter the land of Canaan. The one who endured till the end gained salvation. Those who endure through the dark night see the new morning.

Moses spent 40 years stuck in the wilderness without a name for himself and in times of suffering. He had retreated to tending to his father-in-law's sheep and withdrawn to the wilderness. After enduring through those 40 years, God called him to use him for 40 more years. He was used for as much of the time spent in the wilderness. Dearly beloved, during this Lenten season, you who are worshipping from home due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), you who are facing suffering in all forms such as economical, life failures, illness, and others, I pray for the blessing of God that allows us to acknowledge that while suffering is painful, we who endure and pass through the wilderness will be able to enter the promised lands. For the upcoming week or two, we may be forced to worship from our homes, but I await in eager anticipation to meet you all at church once more, as I bless you with the grace of the Lord to be with you in these times in the wilderness. May the grace of the wilderness, the grace of endurance, the grace of salvation overflow with you, and you, and all of you. Amen.

## **Meditation**

Give me Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmR0z4EWUjw>

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Therefore we pray as Jesus taught His disciples:  
Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

## **Closing song**

Come live in the Light

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DCzqHV-Xns>

## **Closing Prayer**

Gracious Father, we have come to the end of this worship, and we want to thank you. We thank you God for...

Every prayer we have prayed  
Every song we have sung  
All the things we have learned.

Thank you for all the joy you bring.  
May we walk with you in the week to come.

May we rest in you, believe in you and hope in you.  
This day and forever

Amen.