



INTRODUCTION

Pacific Conference of Churches wished to acknowledge a hard working of our sisters and brothers from Etaretia Porotetani Maohi Protestant Church – EPM in French Polynesia/ Tahiti for developing the liturgy for the Pacific Day of Prayer 2024. Same token goes to Dr Fransina Yoteni from Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (Gereja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua) – GKI in West Papua for the Text and Bible study.

May the spirit of Ecumenism be in our midst as we worship our God together...

Call to worship

Lord Tumu Nui (God)

Creator of the heavens and earth

We humbly ask for your presence

Anoint us with your Mēhoi (Spirit of God)

Here your people

We are gathering to praise your name

Oh! Come Lord, and honor our worship with your mighty presence

Hymn

The word of God dwells in my heart

Lord God, you bestowed us your creative word

You did not place your word in the heavens

As we may say, who will go in the heavens to acquire it

So that we may hear it

You did not hide your word on the other side of the ocean

As we may say, who will sail on the ocean to acquire it

So that we may hear it

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Yet you say, “my word is in your voice as it is in your heart, that you may dwell on it”

Great is your name Lord God

Leader: Oh! Father Tumu Nui, Lord of all things

Congregation: We are your beloved

Leader: You made us as man and woman

Congregation: You created us from our mother land

Leader: Despite your good deeds, we acknowledge our flaws

Congregation: Your love lasts ever more

Leader: You recommend that we honor our mother land, we love our neighbours and help those in need

Leader: Tumu Nui, you are the source of all things, and we are your beloved

Congregation: Make that your people remains free from all evil

Hymn

God's love is boundless

Leader: Tumu Nui our saviour, the threatening consequences of climate change is drowning our land

Congregation: Yet your love gives us strength to overcome sea level rise

Leader: The legacy of nuclear wastes in the Pacific threatens our livelihood and those of our Grand children

Congregation: However, your love shapes us to become servants of truth and justice

Leader: The imperial powers of great nations are over exploiting the resources of small Island Nations

Congregation: However, your love fills us with the wisdom of the sacredness of your creation

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Leader: The spirit of colonialism persists in our customs, damaging the land, the ocean, the heaven, and the people

Congregation: Tumu Nui our creator, your love is boundless, help us be resilient

Hymn

Profession of faith

Let us confess our faith

We believe in Tumu Nui (God) the Metua (life giver) of all things

Tumu Nui gave birth to the heavens, the earth, and all things of the world

We believe in Christ, the offspring of Tumu Nui. Christ liberates all offspring (The sky, the land, the ocean, and human beings) of the world from massive exploitations, and destructive behaviours.

We believe in the Mēhoi (Spirit of God) of Tumu Nui. It endows life, wisdom, and faith to all living beings.

We believe that the ocean, the land, and the heavens are sacred.

God endowed them with wholeness, multidimensional relatedness, and resilience.

Their sacredness makes them as life giving beings.

We believe in the written word, and the living word of God that empower small Island Nations of the world.

We believe in the church, birthed out from the word and the land. The church is endowed with the life giving power of Tumu Nui's creation to liberate the small ones.

Hymn

Prayer

Oh! Tumu Nui, you are the truth and righteous one, enlighten us with your living word. Amen.

Scripture reading: JOB 9:1-3

Prayer

We praise your name Lord for your guidance, feed our faith with love and humbleness. Amen.

Hymn

Sermon / Reflection/Bible Study

Introduction

Generally, the Book of Job was categorized as a literature of the Israelites' wisdom. It is typical of poetry that digs into problems that are close to the heart of every person who has suffered. The prologue provides an intriguing glimpse into the backstory, explaining why God let Satan inflict such suffering and turmoil on Job. Then, in one series of three-part dialogues and monologues, human wisdom seeks to explain the inexplicable, until finally God Himself speaks.

In chapter 9 contain Job's response to Bildad.

9:1-3: He asserts God's strict justice, which is such that no man can be just in his eyes, not being able to answer to one charge, or for one sin, of a thousand that he is guilty;

9:4: that such are his wisdom and power that even the most daring man cannot expect to succeed in an opposition to him;

9:5-10: examples of His power in the works of nature;

9:11,12: notice is taken of the imperceptibility of his actions and motions, and of his sovereignty in all his ways;

9:13-21: His fierce wrath and anger, which compels even the most proud of men to stoop before him; and thus Job chose not to contend with him in a judicial way, but would entreat him in a suppliant way because his hand was so heavy upon him;

9:22-24: In direct opposition to Bildad and his friends, he affirms and insists that God afflicts both the righteous and the wicked; indeed, he gives the earth to the latter when he slays the former;

9:25-28: he then laments the shortness of his days and complains of his heavy afflictions;

9:29-35: concludes that it was futile for him to expect his cause to be heard before the Lord since there was no daysman between them; and wishes that the dread of the Divine Majesty might be removed from him so that he may speak freely and without fear.

Interpretation

Then Job answered and said

He builds the argument without regard for Bildad's harsh expressions and severe censures, or his unfriendliness toward him; he grants some things, refutes others, and defends himself and his conduct.

I know [it is] true

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That God is just and does not pervert justice and judgment, as Bildad observed (Job 8:3). Job was a man of great natural parts and capacity; he had a large share of natural, civil, and moral knowledge. And he was a good man, in whom the true light of grace shone; and being enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in divine things, he knew much of God, of his being and perfections, and of the methods of his grace, especially in the justification of men, as various passages in this chapter show; He knew that God was just and holy in all his ways and works, whether of providence or grace; and this he kept in mind amidst all his afflictions, he knew this as "of a truth"; He was as knowledgeable Bildad or any of his friends; did he need to be sent to the ancients, to the search to acquire the knowledge of this, as Bildad had advised; yet, despite the fact that this was such a clear point, there was no room for further debate;

How should man be just with God?

If not angels, then much less frail, feeble, mortal, sinful men, even the best of men, when they consider themselves righteousness: For to "be just" is not through an infusion of righteousness and holiness into men. But this is a legal term, and stands in opposition to condemnation, and denotes a man being condemned and pronounced righteous in a judiciary way; so a man cannot be adjudged, reckoned, or accounted by God on the basis of works of righteousness done by him; because his best works are imperfect, not answerable to the law, but very defective, and thus not justifying; are opposed to the grace of God, by which men are justified in an evangelic sense. These would encourage boasting, which is prohibited in God's way of justifying sinners; and if they were used to justify sinners, Christ's death would have been in vain, and there would have been no need for him and his justifying righteousness: It is unmistakable that a man can never be "just" or "justified with God" or through any righteousness wrought by him. That is, either he is not and cannot be just in comparison to God; for if the inhabitants of the heavens, the holy angels, are not pure in his eyes; or he is not and cannot be just in comparison to God. And if even in his best state, man was completely vanity, what must be sinful mortals be? if he marks their iniquities, enters into judgment with them, or brings an action against them, summons them before him to answer to charges he has to exhibit, they could not stand before him, or be discharged: for his judgment is based on truth; and in his sight he can never reckon that a perfect righteousness is an imperfect righteousness; for, while men may be just in comparison to others, and in the account of men, in a human court of judicature to whom they may appear outwardly righteous; but not in the sight of God, who sees all things, the heart and all in it, every action, and the spring of it (Psalms 143:2; Romans 3:20). In this sense, a man can only be just with God through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is entirely consistent with God's justice, because the law is fulfilled, magnified, and made honorable, and justice is satisfied; so that God is just, he is the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. (Romans 3:26).

If he agrees to compete with him

If God will contend with man, whether just or not, man will be unable to respond to the accusations he will make. or, why should man argue with God, a potsherd argue with its maker? He could never use such a procedure because the match is unbalanced and there is no judicial striving or contending with God:

The Parallel Situation in Our Household Oceania

Three questions for reflection

Job's unjust suffering raises the age-old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Job's response may or may not satisfy the reader. God allows pain for a reason, which He may or may not reveal.

1. *What are similar situations that manifest in the churches and church institutions within our household in Oceania?*



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2. *Why should a man from the Household of Oceania argue with God?*
3. *What learning experience we could have from the Bible Study today related to the need to reclaim peoples' identity in the household of Oceania?*

In summary

Job's unjust suffering raises the age-old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Job's response may or may not satisfy the reader. God allows pain for a reason, which He may or may not reveal.

Let's try to see two important actors in the story. First, Bildad is a friend of Job, a kind of person with knowledgeable capacity, maybe clever but unfriendliness, state harsh expressions and severe censures toward Job. He pointed out that Job suffered related to sin. Second, Job is a good man, in whom the true light of grace shone; and being enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in divine things, he knew much of God of his being and perfections, and of the methods of his grace, especially in the justification of men. At the moment Job is suffered under calamity.

Why is Job suffered? First argument comes from Bildad about Job suffered related to sin was denied because Job knew that God is just and does not pervert justice and judgment.

We are facing ongoing awful things that exist in the Oceania region such as the nuclear test, blue ocean strategy, rising sea level, liberation and self-determination, and many forms of oppression. Whole Households are facing tremendous changes settings in economic, social, cultural, and political. This leads us to do research into it. According to the passage that we study today, some people may interpret that maybe these happen because of our sins. Or the based works of righteousness done by us. But this is opposed to the grace of God, by which men are justified in an evangelic sense. A man can never be "justified with God" or through any righteousness wrought by him. That is, he cannot be just in comparison to God; We are stuck to ancient knowledge also science. At the moment we have to obey and bow ourselves to God. We have to believe, in Jesus' righteousness. God's just that is in Jesus Christ's sacrifice and His resurrection.

Hymn

Prayer of intercession

Oh! Tumu Nui, we pray for the women, and children who are suffering from abusive and destructive behaviours of their husbands and father. Make the peace in their heart to give room for love and warmth in their families.

We pray for our youth and parents subjected to drugs. As such addiction drives our people into violence, serious health problems, school drop-out, and even death. We pray that you open to us the wisdom to help the addict and help find ways to guide those who has not taken this path, become Metua (life giver) in our respective Island Nations.



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We pray for our young people who easily find suicide as the answer to their problems. Give us parents the faith that can speak to the heart of our children and have peace in their life.

We pray for our sacred ocean te moana nui a Hiva (The great ocean of Hiva) be protected from all destructive exploitations and behaviours, such as over fishing, deep sea-bed mining, plastics pollution of the ocean, and oil contamination of reefs.

We pray for our small Island Nations that faces sea level rise. Help us find ways to protect our Islands and people.

We pray, for the future of our people that are immediately affected by the radioactivity of nuclear wastes. We pray that you open to us the way to overcome the problem of radioactivity-induced illnesses, and the irradiation of the ocean.

Lord Tumu Nui we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our saviour, Amen.

Hymn

The Lord's prayer

Blessing

The prayer of our ancestors says:

Love each other

Love your family

Love your fenua (land)

Love Tumu Nui

And all is well