Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 28 April 2024

AM Worship
Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3
Opening Hymn: 536 Jesus Calls Us
Confession of Sin
O great and everlasting God, Who dwells in unapproachable light, Who searches and knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart; We confess that we have not loved You with all our heart, nor with all our soul, nor with all our mind, nor with all our strength; Nor our neighbors as ourselves. We have loved what we ought not to have loved; We have coveted what is not ours; We have not been content with Your provisions for us. We have complained in our hearts about our family, about our friends, about our health, about our occupations, about Your church, and about our trials. We have sought our security in those things which perish, rather than in You, the Everlasting God. Chasten, cleanse, and forgive us, through Jesus Christ, who is able for all time to save us who approach You through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us. Amen.
Assurance of Pardon: John 1:29
Hymn of Preparation: 523 O God, My Faithful God
Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 34:11-22
New Covenant Reading: Matthew 16:21-28
Sermon: *Imitating the Christ*
Hymn of Response: 511 Take Up Your Cross
Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments
Doxology (Hymn 568)
Closing Hymn: 408 For All the Saints

PM Worship
151 Lord of the Sabbath, Hear Us Pray
81A Sing Aloud to God Our Strength
479 Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting
Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 81
New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 4:1-13
Sermon Title: Would You But Listen

Adult Sunday School: Lord's Day 34

Q. What is God's law?

A. God spoke all these words:
THE FIRST COMMANDMENT
I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery; you shall
have no other gods before me.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT
You shall not make for yourself an idol,
whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above,
or that is on the earth beneath, or that
is in the water under the earth.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for
I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing
children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and
fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing
love to the thousandth generation of those who love
me and keep my commandments.
THE THIRD COMMANDMENT
You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.
THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT
Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the
seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God;
you shall not do any work— you, your
son or your daughter, your male or female
servant, your livestock, or the alien
resident in your towns. For in six days the
Lord made the heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them, but rested the
seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed
the Sabbath day and consecrated it.
THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT
Honor your father and your mother, so that your
days may be long in the land that the Lord your
God is giving to you.
THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT
You shall not murder.
THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT
You shall not commit adultery.
THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT
You shall not steal.
THE NINTH COMMANDMENT
You shall not bear false witness against
your neighbor.
THE TENTH COMMANDMENT
You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,
or male or female servant, or ox, or
donkey, or anything that belongs to your
neighbor.

Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two tables.
The first has four commandments, teaching us how we should live in relation to God. The second has six commandments, teaching us what we owe our neighbor.

Q. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

A. That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry, sorcery, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or to other creatures. That I rightly know the only true God, trust him alone, and look to God for every good thing humbly and patiently, and love, fear, and honor him with all my heart. In short, that I renounce all created things rather than go against God's will in any way. **Q. What is idolatry?**

A. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in his Word.

Suggested Preparations

Monday (4/22) Read and discuss Matthew 16:21-28

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

> Characteristically it is Peter who initiates the disciples' reaction, probably all the more so since he has just received Jesus' commendation and his promise of an important role in the future. He took him aside, which indicates a friendly attitude. That he further began to remonstrate with Him carries on with the superior attitude. Peter is now assuming that he knows better than Jesus does what the Master should do. He does not accept what Jesus has said and presumes to criticize him for saying it. "Lord" is a respectful form of address, but "God forbid" is a strong repudiation of what Jesus has just prophesied. Peter has just given expression to the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah and has been praised by Jesus for this. He has seen something of Jesus' greatness, and because he has seen that greatness it is inconceivable to him that Jesus would undergo the humiliation of which he has just spoken. For Peter it is unthinkable that the one he has just pronounced "the Messiah, the son of the living God" should be rejected and killed. How could the Jewish nation reject the Jewish Messiah? So he says forthrightly, "this will never happen to you"; his double negative is very emphatic.

Read or sing Hymn 536 Jesus Calls Us

Tuesday (4/23) Read and discuss Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (ESV)

Who or what is the "rock?" A large number of options have been put forward by committed and competent scholars. Let's look at the three that are almost certainly the most popular.

First, we might think that Peter is the rock. After all, that is what Peter's name means and this is the dominant understanding in the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church teaches, that in some sense, the Church is built upon Peter and his successors - the Bishops of Rome.

While this understanding has a certain plausibility to it there are a number of problems. For one thing, everyone who reads Greek realizes that Jesus uses a feminine gender for the rock the church is going to be built upon while Peter's name, for obvious reasons, is masculine. The difference between "*petra*" and "*petros*" might not sound that big to you but they at least caution us against rushing to assume that Jesus is talking about Peter.

A more substantive reason flows out of my favorite hermeneutical principle: "Just keep reading." Just a few sentences down, in verse 23, Jesus will sharply rebuke Peter by saying:

> Get Thee behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

As R.C. Sproul used to say, "So much for the first pope!" To put the matter mildly, if we simply focus on Peter in his own person he hardly seems like the solid foundation that Jesus is committed to building His Church upon.

What strikes me as particularly persuasive, against the idea that Peter in his own person is the rock that Jesus is going to build His Church upon, is that we never read anything of this in the rest of the New Testament. In the Apostolic letters, when individuals are described as the foundation of the Church it is either Christ by Himself or all of the Apostles collectively with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

The second and third major suggestions are that the rock is the person of Jesus Christ or it is the revelation of God about Jesus Christ. Both of these options can make good sense theologically, but they don't seem to fit the immediate context particularly well.

In the very next verse, Jesus says:

> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Here, Jesus is clearly talking about the authority that He is going to give to Peter … an astonishing authority … where Peter will serve as God's judge on earth. It seems strange, then, to depersonalize what Jesus means by "rock" in this passage by making it about the revelation that God gives. It just fits better to see that Jesus is talking about the same person or people in verse 19 that He was talking about in verse 18!

So, how do we bring all of this evidence together. Here is my tentative answer in just three points:

1. First, Jesus is identifying Peter with the solid foundation of the church, but He is doing so not in Peter's person but in Peter's Apostolic office.

2. Second, Jesus is identifying Peter with the solid foundation of the church, not in distinction from the other Apostles but as a representative of the other Apostles. It is true the Jesus gives Peter a leadership role among the Apostles elsewhere in the New Testament, but He does not give Peter a distinct office. The Apostles, collectively, will exercise the keys of the Kingdom; and the Apostles collectively will be described as the foundation of the Church with Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief Cornerstone.
3. Third, the Apostles do not function as the solid foundation for the church in their own persons but in their Apostolic offices, as they are filled by the Holy Spirit and united with Jesus Christ who is building His Church.

Read or sing Hymn 523 O God, My Faithful God

Wednesday (4/24) Read and discuss Psalm 34:11-22

Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
What man is there who desires life
and loves many days, that he may see good?
Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.
The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.
When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.
He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.
Affliction will slay the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

To enjoy a good life (verse 12) you must live a good life (verses 13-14). This challenges the lie of the serpent in Eden that if we obey God fully we will be miserable, that rich living lies outside God's will, no within it. This lie has passed deeply into every human heart: that we would be happier if we, rather than God, were free to choose how our lives should be lived. But the ultimate good is knowing God personally, and the ultimate punishment is just as personal – to lose the face of God (verse 16), the only source of joy and love, to be "left utterly and absolutely *outside* – repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored (C.S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory")."

Verses 17 and 19 seem to promise believers exemption from troubles, but other psalms say God is with us *in* our troubles. Indeed, verse 18 says we can be broken and crushed by life. But these sufferings bring God's presence near in a way nothing else can. Afterward, sufferers come to realize that they could not have received their deeper joy in God any other way. Verse 22 says the LORD "will rescue His servants." Only the New Testament reveals what this promise cost God. On the cross Jesus secured "no condemnation" (Romans 8:1) for those who take refuge in Him – to a degree David could not have imagined.

Sing or Read Hymn 511 Take Up Your Cross

Thursday (4/25) Read and discuss Psalm 81

Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
Raise a song; sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day.

For it is a statute for Israel,
a rule of the God of Jacob.
He made it a decree in Joseph
when he went out over the land of Egypt.
I hear a language I had not known:
"I relieved your shoulder of the burden;
your hands were freed from the basket.
In distress you called, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah
Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
There shall be no strange god among you;

you shall not bow down to a foreign god.
I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

"But my people did not listen to my voice;
Israel would not submit to me.
So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts,
to follow their own counsels.
Oh, that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!
I would soon subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes.
Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him,
and their fate would last forever.
But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat,
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you." (ESV)

James Mays writes:

> The effect of the [Psalm] is to constitute the festival as a time of decision that is like the time Israel stood at the foot of Sinai to hear the voice of God and like the time beyond the Jordan when Israel listened to the preaching of Moses. The festival is a time to decide anew whether they will continue the story of their past recalcitrance or will listen to the LORD and walk in His ways. If they listen to the LORD, He will give them protection and [provision of food], the yet unrealized blessings of covenant faithfulness. Psalm 81 is thus a paradigm for what should happen in every religious festival. Festivals are times when the people of God consider the story of God's way with them and their way with God, times to face the appeal of the LORD, "O that My people would listen to Me."

Friday (4/26) Read and discuss Hebrews 4:1-13

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

"As I swore in my wrath,
'They shall not enter my rest,'"

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this passage he said,

"They shall not enter my rest."

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (ESV)

Commenting on verse 13, John Kleinig writes:

> At this point the depiction of God's work shifts from His surgical Word to His skill as the divine Surgeon who wields this most delicate scalpel. The power of God's Word is matched by the remarkable vision of God, vision that is far sharper than any MRI. God sees people in two ways. On the one hand, since He is their Creator and they are His creatures, they are not hidden from His sight: He alone knows how they are made and sees how they work. On the other hand, they lie "naked and helpless to the eyes of Him" who operates on them. They cannot cover up what is in them. Like a wrestler pinned on the floor and held down in a deadlock, they cannot save themselves but are at the mercy of their Surgeon. Since He clearly sees what needs to be done to heal them and revive them spiritually, He can safely perform His intricate, gracious microsurgery on them. They rest before Him and under His eyes as He speaks His life-giving, laser-like Word to them.
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> The description of the helpless and yet hopeful state of those who are addressed by God's Word in the Divine Service [i.e. corporate worship service] ends in what might seem to be an odd way. The teacher identifies himself with his hearers ("our") and adds that we best respond to God's 'Word' by 'our word' to Him in prayer and about Him in our confession of faith. Most take this as an assertion that they will be required to give a verbal account before God the Judge now and on the Last Day. But that interpretation is rather forced. Instead, this addition recalls what has been said in 4:2 about the Word the congregation has heard ("we too have had

> the Gospel preached"). It also anticipates the "we"/"us" references in the next unit (4:14-16) to their "confession" of faith (4:14) in response to what they heard, the Word by which they agreed with God's Word to His Son and about Him. By their confession of faith in Jesus as God's Son, they agree with what God says to and about His Son (1:5-13), as well as what Jesus says about them as His human brothers (2:11-13). God's Word achieves its purpose when our word corresponds with His Word, whether it bin our confession of faith (4:14) or in our prayer to Him (4:16).

Read or sing Hymn 408 For All the Saints

Saturday (4/27) Read and discuss Matthew 16:21-28

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

> Jesus could not be more clear on this. To follow the human rather than the divine way is antithetical to discipleship. God demands that we seek the things that are above, not the things on earth (Col. 3:1-2). This means a radical surrender and a radical abrogation of the world's ways and priorities. To "gain/find" the one, we must "lose/forfeit" the other. This involves living for the eternal future reality, not the temporary present desires. This distinctly involves wealth, possessions, and status ("gain the whole world"), a major concern of all three Synoptics but especially Luke. Every Christian must come to grips with worldly possessions vs. serving God.

Prayer: Please lift up tomorrow's morning and evening worship services.