

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 9 June 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 251 All Things Bright and Beautiful

Confession of Sin

Most holy and merciful Father; We acknowledge and confess before You; Our sinful nature prone to evil and slothful in good; And all our shortcomings and offenses. You alone know how often we have sinned; In wandering from Your ways; In wasting Your gifts; In forgetting Your love. But You, O Lord, have pity upon us; Who are ashamed and sorry for all wherein we have displeased You. Teach us to hate our errors; Cleanse us from our secret faults; And forgive our sins for the sake of Your dear Son. And O most holy and loving Father; Help us we beseech You; To live in Your light and walk in Your ways; According to the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Titus 3:4-7

Hymn of Preparation: 453 Just as I am, without One Plea

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 1

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 18:1-4

Sermon: *True Greatness*

Hymn of Response: 454 I Lay My Sins on Jesus

Confession of Faith: Q/A 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 1A That Man Is Blest

PM Worship

47A O Clap Your Hands

491 Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee

281 Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 17:1-14

New Covenant Reading: Philippians 3:1-3

Sermon Title: Joy Worth Defending

Adult Sunday School: Lord's Day 38

**Q. What is God's will for you
in the fourth commandment?**

A. First,

that the gospel ministry and schools for it be maintained,
and that, especially on the festive day of rest,
I diligently attend the assembly of God's people
to learn what God's Word teaches,
to participate in the sacraments,
to pray to the Lord publicly,
and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.

Second,

that every day of my life

I rest from my evil ways,
let the Lord work in me through his Spirit,
and so begin in this life
the eternal Sabbath.

Suggested Preparations

Monday (6/3) Read and discuss Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

The kingdom of heaven is not like earthly kingdoms. In earthly kingdoms military might or earthly wealth is what counts. It is the ability to overthrow others or to outsmart them or to outbid them that matters. The person who asserts himself is the one who gets on. But Jesus’ kingdom is quite different. Paradoxically it is the person who is like the little child who is the greatest. Being in the kingdom does not mean entering a competition for the supreme place, but engaging in lowly service. True greatness consists not in receiving service but in giving it. The genuinely humble person is the one that really counts in that kingdom. The humble person is the greatest.

We should not overlook the fact that this implies reliance on the love and the grace of God. Jesus does not emphasize these qualities at this point, but they are implied. The little child can do nothing to bring about his status; all that the child is and has comes from someone else. Jesus’ followers are not great achievers who carve out for themselves a niche in the kingdom of heaven. For all that they have and all that they are they depend on the heavenly Father.

Professor Morris is right in what he says, but what makes humility a bit more complicated than he suggests is that sometimes *being genuinely humble* means allowing other people to serve you. We need to examine our own hearts to see whether or not our unwillingness to let others graciously meet needs in our lives is an expression of prideful self-sufficiency ... and perhaps an expression of pride that is hindering other people from tangibly loving us.

Read or sing Hymn 251 All Things Bright and Beautiful

Tuesday (6/4) Read and discuss Read and discuss Matthew 17:22-27

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.” (ESV)

Why did Jesus choose to pay a tax that He did not owe? In the ordinary course of life ... we understandably and rightly only pay the taxes that we should; so why does Jesus surrender His rights in this particular instance?

Jesus Himself gives us the answer: He pays the “tax” in order to not give unnecessary offense to those asking for it. That is, Jesus doesn’t want “standing upon His rights” to become the one thing that these tax-collectors and those around them think about – whenever they think about Jesus. He doesn’t want to save half a shekel at the cost of other people never grasping the good news about who He is and what He has come to do.

Or as the Apostle Paul would later put it:

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love **serve one another**. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

What about you? Do you put your rights ahead of genuinely loving other people or do you willingly lay aside your rights, just as Jesus did, for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of the lost?

Here is a simple test. Just ask yourself one question before you stand upon your rights: “If I do this, can I turn around and immediately tell this person the good news about how Jesus gave His life for us?”

If the answer is “no” ... why would you do it?

Read or sing Hymn 453 Just as I am, without One Plea

Wednesday (6/5) Read and discuss Psalm 1

Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,

nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. (ESV)

Allen P. Ross writes:

By drawing a contrast between the righteous and the ungodly, the psalmist instructs believers not to live the way the world lives, not to take spiritual, moral, or ethical advice from unbelievers, and not to join them in their profane enterprises; rather, believers must study the word of God in order to live an untarnished and productive life for God, and that life will be evidence of a living faith that will see them through the judgment, when God judges the wicked. ...

For believers, the application is obvious; they must spend time meditating on God's word so that they may live a distinct and productive spiritual life for God, and in the process find assurance that God knows them and will preserve them through the judgment. To unbelievers the message is urgent: they must come to faith in the LORD, because if they live their lives without faith in Him or His word, not even their "good deeds" will count and they will not survive the judgment to come.

The New Testament also emphasizes these themes. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth" John 17:17. James stressed that by studying and doing the word of God people would be blessed in what they do (James 1:22-25). But Paul reflected more of the message of this psalm when he wrote, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

With all this in mind we see how the Psalm provides a fitting part of the introduction to the collection. Throughout the Psalter the reader will be confronted with the tension of living in a world that is not only alienated

from God but antagonistic to Him and His people. They must, therefore, find their direction and confidence in His word. And in so doing, they will also find their hope that someday the LORD will judge the world and vindicate them.

Sing or Read Hymn 454 I Lay My Sins on Jesus

Thursday (6/6) Read and discuss Genesis 17:1-14

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (ESV)

Dale Ralph Davies writes:

What is the significance of circumcision? If it is ‘a sign of the covenant’ what does it signify? Well, it’s hard to get away from the idea that it signifies promises. You note that Yahweh’s promises infect the whole context of the circumcision section. That is, verses 9-14 (circumcision) are surrounded with Yahweh’s promises (vv. 4-8 and 15-21), promises fore and aft, we might say. Alec Motyer said that whenever Abraham would look upon that sign in his body, he would say, ‘I am the man to whom God has made promises.’ That is true, and yet this circumcision is also Abraham’s response to the covenant promises and to Yahweh’s command and it would

also indicate that he is marked out *for* the God who made the promises – he is ‘branded’ as belonging to the God who makes promises. Perhaps it’s something like a husband’s wedding band. On the one hand, he can look at it and say, ‘I am the man to whom promises have been made’; on the other, he could say, ‘I am marked out as belonging to another.’ In this latter sense, Abraham might say, ‘I am not my own; I belong to another, for I am branded with the identity mark of the covenant God.’

Friday (6/7) Read and discuss Philippians 3:1-3

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. (ESV)

Commenting on the command, “rejoice in the Lord,” Peter O’Brien writes:

This is not an admonition to some kind of superficial cheerfulness that closes its eyes to the surrounding circumstances. Rather, the apostle is inculcating a positive Christian attitude of joy that finds outward expression in their lives and that realistically takes into account the adverse circumstances, trials, and pressures through which the Philippians were called to pass. It also recognizes God’s mighty working in and through those circumstances to fulfil His own gracious purposes in Christ. For Paul himself the preaching in Rome by a hostile segment of Christians who sought to add to a sense of frustration that he might well feel in his restricted situation was clearly calculated to rub salt into his wounds and so rob him of any joy. Yet Christ is proclaimed – even from wrong motives, Paul affirms – and because of this he rejoices (1:18).

Read or sing Psalm 1A That Man Is Blest

Saturday (6/8) Read and discuss Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

Humility is an attitude and a lifestyle that alone defines the true kingdom community. In 7:21-23 Jesus made it clear that mere affirmation will not be sufficient to enter God's kingdom; one must have "fruit" or the deeds that prove the confession was real. In Matthew, kingdom living is necessary in order to be kingdom people. Here that means a life of humility or gentle servitude toward others.

Paul defined this well in Phil 2:2-3, "in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." Some scholars separate Matthew and Paul here, arguing that Matthew was interested in the concept of lowly status. But in the rest of chapter 18 humility is defined in terms of action toward others and not just status in society.

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