

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 2 August 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 411 Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns

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: Psalm 86:12-15

Hymn of Preparation: 513 Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Old Covenant Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 19:27-30

Sermon: *Count it All Joy*

Hymn of Response: 471 The Sands of Time Are Sinking

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

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 403 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

PM Worship

281 Rejoice, the Lord Is King

520 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

476 It Is Well with My Soul

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 14:10-29

New Covenant Reading: Philippians 4:2-9

Sermon Title: *Joy and Peace*

No Sunday School: Extended Time of Fellowship

Suggested Preparations

Monday (7/29) Read and discuss Matthew 19:27-30

Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (ESV)

Grant Osborne:

While we do not serve the Lord for the reward we will get, Jesus wants us to know that God will indeed reward us for our life of piety. We do not want to fall into Peter's error of asking, "What's in it for us?" That is a veneer of piety turned into self-interest. Yet at the same time Jesus wants us to know that God will vindicate us for our sacrifices and suffering. In fact, "reward" occurs seven times in 6:1-18 and is a central theme of the entire Sermon on the Mount. The key is our motivation and priorities – earthly or heavenly. Do we live for the glory of God or for self? Do we strive for the things of this world or the things of God? That will determine our true destiny.

Read or sing Hymn 411 Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns

Tuesday (7/30) Read and discuss Read and discuss Romans 16:1-16

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. (ESV)

What is the most valuable thing that you possess? That's an interesting question: "What is the most valuable thing that you possess?" You might be thinking of your home or your investments for retirement, but interestingly, when disasters like fires and floods strike, the vast majority of people grab onto something personal rather than something of great monetary value. I'm confident that if we could have visited Paul as he finished writing Romans, and if we asked him about the most valuable thing that he possessed at the moment; that Paul would almost certainly have told us that his most important possession was the gospel which had been entrusted to him – and concretely, the most valuable thing that he could hold in his hands was the letter to the Romans which he was about to send on its way. Paul took the thing that was most important to him in the entire world at that moment – his letter to the Romans – and he entrusted it to Phoebe. That is a remarkable testimony to the high esteem in which Paul held her. More broadly, Paul's commendation of Phoebe along with his commendation of Prisca and Aquila remind us just how important

women and laypeople were and are in the life of the church. Let's bear in mind that less than 3% of our congregation is made up of Ruling Elders. God's plan for the church is not that they would do all of the work. We are all being called into the great adventure of the Christian life – and we are being called to undertake this adventure ... *together*.

Read or sing Hymn 513 Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Wednesday (7/31) Read and discuss Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. [16] This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. (ESV)

Douglas Sean O'Donnell writes:

The first point in this passage is that the love of money is a sad investment; it cannot bring ultimate satisfaction. Money cannot buy joy any more than it can buy love. Or, as Pastor Solomon summarizes: "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money" (verse 10). This theme is found in 5:8-12 and 6:7-9. Starting with the end of our text, we read:

All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind. (Eccl. 6:7-9).

We all have an appetite for food and work to get it. When we do get it, we consume it. Yet we soon discover that a particular meal did not permanently satisfy our basic craving, because a few hours later the same cycle recurs. So also is the appetite for wealth. Whether we are rich or poor, smart or

dumb, we can feed our money-loving appetite all we want, but we will always want more. As Horace said on this theme: "Greed is not decreased either by surplus or by shortage." Thus, it is better to see rightly and be content with our daily bread than to be blind to the law of diminishing returns and keep biting into *hevel* [vanity] helping after *hevel* [vanity] helping, hoping to find eternal sustenance.

Sing or Read Hymn 471 The Sands of Time Are Sinking

Thursday (8/1) Read and discuss Exodus 14:10–29

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into

the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. (ESV)

Friday (8/2) Read and discuss Philippians 4:2-9

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (ESV)

In light of what Christ has done for us, how then should we *think*? Because believing the right things is so important, we naturally want to emphasize that we should think in such a way as to embrace the truth and to shun errors and lies. That is where Paul begins but it is not where he ends. Consider what you think about in a typical day and compare that to what Paul calls us to meditate on: "...whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **commendable**, if there is any **excellence**, if there is anything **worthy of praise**, think about these things." If we take this seriously we will realize that there are many things which are true that we should *avoid* filling our minds with. A significant portion of the modern news industry is designed to entice us to watch/see commercials for things we don't need by telling us *true* but often degrading stories that offer nothing of value to our lives. This is frequently the case with social media as well. The problem is that we become what we think about. If we fill our minds with defiling and dishonorable images we will fail to become the type of people who lift others up. Paul is not calling Christians to stick our heads in the sand. Because we have glimpsed the holiness of God, Christians should be more aware of the wretchedness of a fallen world than anyone else. Yet, it is one thing to recognize filth it is another thing altogether to roll around in it. Here is the hard part: Modern American culture promotes filling your mind with things that are worthy of shame. We cannot respond rightly to Paul's admonition unless we do so self-consciously. Take a few minutes to think about the shows you watch, the news and web pages you regularly read, and the music you listen to. Then compare what you are now filling your mind with to what God wants you to fill your mind with. If you need to make some changes (we all do!) – why not start today?

Read or sing Hymn 403 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

Saturday (8/3) Read and discuss Matthew 19:27-30

Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (ESV)

William Hendriksen writes:

It is clear that this promise is for all true followers of the Lord [“everyone who has left ...”]. It is not a promise for The Twelve alone. It is for all who have chosen Christ above all else, even above their dearest relatives and most cherished possessions. They have made a sacrifice, says Jesus, “for My sake and for the gospel’s sake,” meaning: they were motivated by love for Me and for My message of salvation.

These loyal followers of the Lord are promised “a hundredfold,” [Mark 10:29], that is, they will be reimbursed “many times over.” ... Even in the present day, that is, before the great day of judgment, and for each believer before his death, these loyal followers receive the blessings indicated. ... In spite of the persecutions which they will have to endure, they will even be able to enjoy their material possessions far more than the ungodly enjoy theirs. ... “For the sake of Christ and His gospel has it become necessary to forsake close relatives? New “relatives” will now be theirs, relatives that belong to “the household of faith” (Ga. 6:10), “the Father’s family” (Eph. 2:19; 3:15).

In the age to come believers are going to receive life everlasting. In principle they have it here and now, but in a far more abundant and ever-increasing measure they will have it in the hereafter. It should be borne in mind that the concept “life everlasting” is both quantitative and qualitative, with emphasis on the latter. It is the holiness, knowledge, fellowship, peace, joy, *etc.* pertaining to the life of all those who are in Christ, and as such a life that will last on and on and on forever and ever.

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