

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 18 August 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Hymn: 157 When Morning Gilds the Skies

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: Isaiah 55:7-9

Hymn of Preparation: 337 Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 20:17-28

Sermon: *Passion and Glory*

Hymn of Response: 341 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 380 Crown Him with Many Crowns

PM Worship

165 To Your Temple I Repair

246 Though Troubles Assail Us

502 All for Jesus!

Old Covenant Reading: Leviticus 2:1-16

New Covenant Reading: Philippians 4:15-20

Sermon Title: *Sacrificial Giving*

No Sunday School: Fellowship Lunch

Suggested Preparations

Monday (8/12) Read and discuss Matthew 20:17-28

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

That the Son of Man gave His life is the foundation of everything for His followers. He paid the price that no one else could pay, and He has made His disciples free. The foundation must now also set the course for our dealings with one another, whether those are the interactions of one Christian with another or, even more importantly, those of Christian pastors and leaders with the people entrusted to their care. Here there is a great and grave error that always presents itself to the church and specifically to her clergy. It is the same mistake that was besetting the apostles in 20:20-28 and to which they succumbed: to forget that spiritual authority and greatness are manifested in service and self-sacrifice, and in no other way.

Whenever Christians, who in this life remain sinners as well as saints, have any office of divine or human origin – by which they can give direction, set policy, lead a group, or occupy a pulpit (bully or otherwise) – this danger exists. In our day, I fear that the church in North America is subject to a particularly pernicious form of this danger, a form that comes from adopting prominent business models and “successful principles” of leadership. To be sure, one of the reasons why a particular business model or a set of principles has proven to be effective in the business world may be that there is real natural truth or human wisdom in such things. Moreover, since the Christian congregation does have the outward form of a human organization, there are certainly ways in which the best of “worldly wisdom” (if I may use that phrase without any pejorative meaning) must be applied to leading the organization of the church.

I am suggesting, however, that there is always a danger in the use of such wisdom and such techniques – there is *always* a danger. This doesn’t mean that the church won’t put programs and insights to good use; she surely will. When we do that, however, we must guard against the temptation to carry out our relationships among disciples – whether pastor to laity or laity to

pastor or Christian to Christian – in terms of power and ruling rather than service and self-sacrifice. These temptations will not always appear in obvious forms. Rather, the danger will be disguised under implicit values such as efficiency, measurable success, and the like, and will be driven by “vision statements” that can only be, at best, tentative planning on the part of flawed and mostly blind sinners. The community of disciples can begin to act as if they have forgotten that the center of everything they have and everything they do is God’s strange reign in Jesus, which manifests itself in giving up one’s right and laying down one’s life for the good of another believer.

Read or sing Hymn 157 When Morning Gilds the Skies

Tuesday (8/13) Read and discuss Read and discuss Matthew 20:1–16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.” (ESV)

Who exactly are these people whom our Lord is identifying as “the first”? Last week, we saw that there was a connection between “the first” and the rich young ruler. The rich young ruler was “first” in terms of preeminence. He was wealthy – which was generally seen as a sign of God’s blessing. He had a position of authority in Israel, and at least outwardly, he was a keeper of the Law. Furthermore, he actually was focused on heavenly things. This rich young ruler had come to Jesus precisely so that Jesus would help him understand what else he needed to do in order to have eternal life.

If the Disciples could have drafted players for their “team” this rich young ruler would have been their first pick in the first round of the draft. Yet, tragically, instead of enjoying his status and wealth as a gift from the LORD the rich young ruler was possessed by them. So, he turned away from following the Incarnate Son of God because he could not part from the things of this world.

I do suspect that this sort of preeminence is still in view when Jesus speaks of “the first” in this morning’s passage. By we should also take seriously that they were *the first* to go out into the field. Jesus is talking about the danger of being those who have been apparently laboring in the LORD’s vineyard for many years and who therefore tend to become part of the religious establishment.

Please don’t imagine that this could not happen to you. Indeed, one of the tragic temptations that has assaulted Christians in all generations is to imagine that you entered the Kingdom of God entirely through the LORD’s amazing grace but after you have been in the Church for a while you start to think that the LORD is responding to you based upon your good works. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. We never relate to the LORD on the basis of our work and wages but always upon the basis of His free grace which we receive in Jesus Christ.

Read or sing Hymn 337 Ah, Holy Jesus, How Hast Thou Offended

Wednesday (8/14) Read and discuss Isaiah 42:1–9

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.

Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;

I will give you as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.
Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you of them.” (ESV)

Commenting on Verse 3, R. Reed Lessing writes:

The breaking of reeds and snuffing out of wicks is imagery of warfare and death on a national scale. In the past Yahweh recruited Israel to engage in holy war to defeat the Egyptians and wipe out the native Canaanites. He also employed armies of other nations to execute His judgment.

This Servant is called to a completely different kind of ministry. When He encounters oppressed people, He is not to oppress them further, but rather help them get back on their feet. He is to wield His God-given authority to care for those living on the margins of society. That said, idolatry disqualified Israel from serving with compassion. The more the Israelites worshiped violent and lustful gods, the more they reflected this life of hatred and abuse. Yahweh looked for justice, and instead He saw bloodshed (Is 5:7).

Replacing the apostate nation, the Second Servant takes up this ministry of tenderness and love. In the Third Servant Song, the faithful Servant says, “The Lord Yahweh gave to me a tongue of one being taught, to know how to assist the weary with a word” (50:4). That Servant’s mercy and grace reaches its climax in the Fourth Song: “Our sicknesses He Himself bore, and our sufferings – He carried them” (53:4). “God’s answer to the oppressors of the world is not more oppression, nor is His answer to arrogance more arrogance; rather, in quietness, humility, and simplicity, He will take all of the evil into Himself and return only grace. That is power (Oswalt).”

Read or sing Hymn 341 Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Thursday (8/15) Read and discuss Leviticus 2:1-16

“When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it and bring it to Aaron’s sons the

priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's food offerings.

“When you bring a grain offering baked in the oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil or unleavened wafers smeared with oil. And if your offering is a grain offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mixed with oil. You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. And if your offering is a grain offering cooked in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And you shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD, and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. And the priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's food offerings.

“No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as a food offering to the LORD. As an offering of firstfruits you may bring them to the LORD, but they shall not be offered on the altar for a pleasing aroma. You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

“If you offer a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits fresh ears, roasted with fire, crushed new grain. And you shall put oil on it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering. And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of the crushed grain and some of the oil with all of its frankincense; it is a food offering to the LORD. (ESV)

Today's passage includes the requirement that the Israelites include “the salt of the covenant with their God” in all of their grain offerings. What in the world is “the salt of the covenant”?

Jay Sklar writes:

The Salt of the covenant reminded the Israelites of their covenant obligations to the LORD and His promise of covenant faithfulness to them.

The Israelites were required to add to their grain offerings the “salt of the covenant” (2:13). This phrase refers to the perpetual nature of a covenant relationship. Because it is described as the “salt of the covenant of your God,” it served to remind the Israelites of the ongoing covenant they had just entered into with the LORD at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20-24). It did so in two ways:

First, it reminded the Israelites of their covenant obligations. The LORD had chosen them to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus

19:6), and they were to follow the laws He had given them so they might show the nations the LORD's righteousness, wisdom, and holiness. Our Lord picks upon the same principle in the Sermon on the Mount when He tells His disciples, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). As believers are faithful to the Lord's commands, they demonstrate His character for all the world to see.

Second, the salt reminded the Israelites their God was faithful to His covenant promises. The LORD had already begun demonstrating this by delivering them from slavery in Egypt and leading them toward the Promised Land (Exodus 1-19). And because He had done so with great power, the Israelites could trust Him fully to keep all His promises. This also meant they could obey Him fully, even when asked to do what was humanly impossible: marching into the Promised Land and defeating nations far greater and more powerful than they (cf. Numbers 13:28-33). Impossible odds do not matter if the all-powerful covenant keeping King is with you.

It is no different for believers today. Jesus commands us to make disciples of all nations (an impossible task), yet He reminds us He is the all-powerful King who is with us always, "to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). His presence gives us courage and hope, even when trying the impossible, knowing that nothing is too difficult for Him.

Friday (8/16) Read and discuss Philippians 4:15–20

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

F.B. Meyer writes:

Whenever, therefore, we feel impelled to make provision for others, let us do it as unto God, not simply out of human pity, but from a deep sense of obligation to our Heavenly Father, let us do it gladly, freely, generously. 'God loveth a cheerful giver.' Three things will happen – (1) We shall send a thrill of gratitude into some weary and fainting soul, encouraging it to hope in God because it has found that its hope in man has not been misplaced. (2) The odor of the act will be fragrant as it steals upward to mingle with the adoration and service of Heaven. There is no longer need to offer propitiatory sacrifices, for they have been done away in view of the

sacrifice made by our Lord when He once offered Himself without sin unto God, but there is room in the Christian dispensation for the sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15), for the living sacrifice of ourselves (Rom. 12:1), and for the acceptable sacrifices of Christian beneficence which, as this paragraph tells us, are well-pleasing to God. We may also reckon that He will fill to the brim the measure with which we have meted out for others and take it as a certainty that He shall fulfil every need according to His riches. If our measure was filled with sand grains, He will return it filled with gold dust; if it was filled with pebbles, He will hand it back replete with diamonds; if it contained necessities for the physical life, He will restore it brimming over with spiritual riches.

Read or sing Hymn 380 Crown Him with Many Crowns

Saturday (8/17) Read and discuss Matthew 20:17-28

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

For all their confidence in Jesus [the Disciples] were on the wrong track. ... The mother had asked the question, but the sons were more nearly concerned, and it is to them that [Jesus] addresses His answer. He goes on to say, “You do not know what you are asking.” They were clearly viewing the kingdom in terms of the contemporary understanding of splendor; Jesus would reign, they thought, over a realm much like that of the Romans, only more glorious. Despite all the teaching Jesus had given, they had still not realized that the kingdom meant lowliness, sacrifice, and rejection in this world. Who would ask for places of honor in such a kingdom? Who *could*

ask for places of honor in it? To ask the question is to show that one has not understood what the kingdom is; it is impossible to seek greatness for oneself in it.

Jesus goes on to ask, “Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?” He does not explain what this means, but the cup is used in the Old Testament with associations of suffering and sometimes of the wrath of God (e.g., Ps 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15-16). All four Gospels use the term when they are recording what Jesus said of His sufferings in Gethsemane and at the time of His arrest. It is clear that the term was often used for suffering and the like, but it is not so clear why the sons of Zebedee were so ready to express their willingness and their capacity to endure it. “We can,” they said, without hesitation, without understanding, and without seeking clarification of exactly what the cup involved. That they claimed too much was made plain when they ran away in Gethsemane. And yet – in due course they did drink the cup, James by martyrdom (Acts 12:1-2) and John by exile to Patmos.

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