

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 25 August 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Psalm: 146 Praise the LORD! My Soul, O Praise Him!

Confession of Sin

O eternal God and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before your great majesty, against which we have frequently and grievously sinned. We acknowledge that we deserve nothing less than eternal death, that we are unclean before you and children of wrath. We continually transgress your commandments, failing to do what you have commanded, and doing that which you have expressly forbidden. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We are not worthy to be called your children, nor to lift up our eyes heavenward to you in prayer. Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that your mercy toward those who turn to you is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon you, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Forgive all our sins for Christ's sake. Cover us with his innocence and righteousness, for the glory of your name. Deliver our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all willfulness and rebellion, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Assurance of Pardon: Hebrews 10:19-22

Hymn of Preparation: 249 For the Beauty of the Earth

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 146:1-10

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 20:29-34

Sermon Title: *That We May See*

Hymn of Response: 291 O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 433 Amazing Grace!

PM Worship

163 Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

409 Blest Be the Tie That Binds

448 Union with Thee

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 61:1-11

New Covenant Reading: Philippians 4:21-23

Sermon Title: *The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*

No Sunday School: Extended Time of Fellowship

Suggested Preparations

Monday (8/119) Read and discuss Matthew 20:29-34

And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" And

stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him. (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

In the end [the blind men] were successful [in getting our Lord’s attention]; Jesus halted His progress and called them. He asked them what they wanted and received the answer, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.” The greatest thing that could be done for them was that they be given sight. And Jesus responded. He was moved with compassion; the crowd had been ready to silence these men and keep them out of the way, but Jesus was too compassionate for such harsh treatment of people in need. He has just been teaching His followers the importance of lowly service, and He now gives an example of it. For a moment He ignores the great crowds of people thronging around him and concentrates on two insignificant men in need. He touched their eyes, as He had touched people in His healings a number of times. Thus Matthew reports Him as touching a leper (8:3); Peter’s mother-in-law (8:15), and the eyes of blind men (9:29), in each case with healing following. Sometimes people touched His clothes and received a healing (9:20-21; 14:36). On this occasion the immediate sequel to the touch was that the men received sight. Matthew also records that they followed Him. This may mean no more than that they joined the crowd behind Jesus as He journeyed on, but it is more likely that Matthew uses the term here of a more meaningful following; he sees the two as becoming disciples. Schweizer considers this so important that he heads his discussion of the whole story, not “Two Blind Men Receive Sight” but “Two Blind Men Follow Jesus.” He expressly understands *they followed Him* to mean “the men joined Jesus as disciples.

Read or sing Hymn 146 Praise the LORD! My Soul, O Praise Him!

Tuesday (8/20) Read and discuss 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)

As was His custom, Jesus refers to Himself as the “Son of Man.” It is likely that Jesus is drawing a contrast between Daniel’s exalted vision of the Son of Man with what is about to happen to Him in Jerusalem.

Daniel writes:

“I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a Son of Man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
And to him ... was given dominion
and glory ... and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion ... is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom ... one
that shall not ... be destroyed.

To understand our Lord’s crucifixion, we must hold together His horrible humiliation with the fact that Jesus was about to be enthroned over the universe and given an everlasting dominion which will never pass away.

In fact, Jesus is drawing these two realities together for us by announcing that on the third day He is going to be raised from the dead.

The Disciples seem to have thought that they needed to choose between humiliation and glory and so they defaulted in favor of glory. Many Christians throughout history have likewise wrongly treated these poles as alternatives so they have either emphasize Jesus as the Suffering Servant or as the Conquering King. Yet, the entire rest of the New Testament repeatedly makes abundantly clear that Jesus ... is both!

Read or sing Hymn 249 For the Beauty of the Earth

Wednesday (8/21) Read and discuss Psalm 146

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
The LORD watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the LORD! (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

The final five psalms are all praise and joy. This teaches us that “the Psalms are a miniature of our story as a whole, which will end in unbroken blessing and delight (William Billings).” It also teaches us that all true prayer “pursued far enough, becomes praise (Derek Kidner).” It may take a long time or a lifetime, but all prayer that engages God and the world as they truly are will eventually end in praise. This particular psalm praises God because he guarantees justice. He cares for the poor, hungry, prisoner, physically impaired, soul weary, immigrant, and single parent (verses 7-9). He cared so much He became a helpless baby born to poor parents.

Read or sing Hymn 291 O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Thursday (8/22) Read and discuss Isaiah 61

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks;
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;
but you shall be called the priests of the LORD;
they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God;
you shall eat the wealth of the nations,
and in their glory you shall boast.
Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion;
instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot;
therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
they shall have everlasting joy.

For I the LORD love justice;
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations. (ESV)

Alec Motyer writes:

How blithely we read ‘for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross ...’ (Heb 12:2), and many have been heard to say that the ‘joy’ in question was the crown that awaited him. [Perhaps], but Isaiah says it was the joy of saving us. We think of the intended humiliation and actual pain of the crown of thorns, but to the Lord Jesus it was a bridegroom’s priestly head-dress (61:10). We picture the bedraggled and bloodstained seamless robe that he wore to Calvary, but to him it was a wedding garment! His Calvary-joy was wedding-day joy. He was winning his bride. ... This is how much we mean to him. His wedding garments were ‘salvation’ and ‘righteousness,’ says Isaiah (61:10). In the Bible, clothing speaks of capacity and commitment. When the LORD showed himself to Joshua as an armed man (Joshua 5:13), it was to display his warrior might and his commitment to win the LORD’s wars. Jesus was dressed in ‘salvation’ because he alone has power to save (Acts 4:12), and because he is personally committed to the work of saving us. He wore the robe of righteousness, first because he is the perfectly righteous Jesus who knew no sin, did no sin, and in whom there was no sin. Only the sinless can bear the sins of others. Secondly, he was omitted to doing the righteousness – the righteous will – of God, to ‘fulfill all righteousness’ (Matthew 3:15). And thirdly, the salvation he has accomplished is itself a righteous work: the whole law of God is totally satisfied in the price paid, the penalty accepted and endured. Righteousness without salvation would mean our eternal condemnation; salvation without righteousness would not be acceptable to the inviolable holiness of God. Jesus is all-perfect, all-sufficient, all-loving.

Friday (8/23) Read and discuss Philippians 4:21-23

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (ESV)

F.B. Meyer writes:

The Epistle begins with grace and with grace it ends. It is impossible to define all that is meant by this comprehensive prayer. Illumination for the soul, love for the heart, strength for the mind, purity for the character, help in every time of need, direction in all perplexity and difficulty – all these

are included in the word grace. It was impossible for the apostle to know in detail all that his friends might be passing through amid the temptations and perils of Philippi, but he wished that always and everywhere, they might be conscious that the grace of the Lord Jesus beset them behind and before, encompassed their going out and coming in, enwrapped them in their lying down and rising up, canopied them with skies opening Godward, and was their shield and their exceeding great reward.

Read or sing Hymn 433 Amazing Grace!

Saturday (8/17) Read and discuss Matthew 20:29-34

And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him. (ESV)

Jeffery Gibbs writes:

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Matthew intends a contrast between the spiritual blindness of the disciples on the one hand and the physical and spiritual sight of the two blind men on the other. As the disciples follow Jesus in the way that leads to Jerusalem and the cross, they still seem largely oblivious to what lies ahead, despite his three passion predictions, and to its implications for their own lives. As so often in Matthew’s narrative, it is the insignificant people, the blind and the [little children] (11:25), who show that they have seen and heard – that is, believed – the divine revelation of Jesus’ identity and His mission.

The second difference to note between Matthew’s two accounts in 9:27-31 and 20:29-34 is that after the first healing, the evangelist records that the Lord, who is the Son of David, sternly warns the men whom He had healed not to tell anyone about the miracle. To be sure, they did not heed Jesus’ warning, but rather, “they went out and spread the news about Him in that whole land” (9:31). While we cannot be certain as to why Jesus commanded the men to be silent, the common guess seems likely to be correct: the title “Son of David” was a loaded term, theologically and politically. Since the blind men had acclaimed Jesus as the promised heir to the throne of David, Jesus commanded them to keep quiet, lest their testimony be misunderstood and/or seized upon by others, with the result that Jesus’ ministry would be hindered.

The situation is different here in chapter 20. At this point in Jesus’ ministry, the time for caution and reserve is over. The crowds attempted to silence

the blind men's cry, "have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David." Jesus, however, gives no such command to silence as He did in chapter 9. The Son of David is near Jericho, on the way to Jerusalem to carry out what God's plan had deemed necessary.

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