

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 6 October 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 440 Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Wretched

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: Romans 4:20-25

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

Old Covenant Reading: Hosea 2:14-23

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

Sermon: *A Royal Wedding Feast*

Hymn of Response: 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 444 Come to the Waters

PM Worship

377 Join All the Glorious Names

506 Weary of Earth, and Laden with My Sin

459 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 19:1-25

New Covenant Reading: Jude 5-7

Sermon Title: *Learning to Fear the LORD*

Adult Sunday School: **Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 42**

**Q. What does God forbid
in the eighth commandment?**

A. He forbids not only outright theft and robbery,
which governing authorities punish,
but in God's sight theft also includes
all evil tricks and schemes
designed to get our neighbor's goods for ourselves,
whether by force or means that appear legitimate,
such as
inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;

fraudulent merchandising;
counterfeit money;
excessive interest;
or any other means forbidden by God.
In addition God forbids all greed
and pointless squandering of his gifts.

**Q. What does God require of you
in this commandment?**

A. That I do whatever I can and may
for my neighbor's good,
that I treat others
as I would like them to treat me,
and that I work faithfully
so that I may help the needy in their hardship.

Suggested Preparations

Monday (9/30) Read and discuss Matthew 22:1-14

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen." (ESV)

Terry Johnson writes:

The Kingdom of God, says Jesus, may be compared or likened to a rich, sumptuous feast. It is not just a feast, but a wedding feast. It is a wedding feast thrown not by a pauper but by a King. It is a wedding feast thrown by a king not for a friend but for a Son, which means that it is an especially

significant royal occasion. The eating and drinking, the celebrating and rejoicing, the laughter, the singing and dancing would go on for days. The King would likely provide a magnificent banquet. The people would covet invitations and would be honored to be there. The Kingdom of God is likened not to a *desert*, not to a *fast*, but a *feast*. It is a place of abundance, of richness, of satisfied and satiated spiritual appetites. The banquet symbolizes the blessings of God's salvation. 'There is in the Gospel,' says Ryle, 'a complete provision for all the wants of man's soul: there is a supply of everything that can be required to relieve spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst.' A feast is an apt metaphor for what believers enjoy now as well as what they will enjoy in eternity. Present feasting anticipates the great feast to come, the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. 19:7-9). [The new heavens and new earth] will be a place of feasting.

Read or sing Hymn 440 Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Wretched

Tuesday (10/1) Read and discuss Matthew 21:33-46

"Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

There is no need to try to peel away the layers of allegory in this parable in an attempt to get back to the original parable uttered by Jesus, as many interpreters have tried to do. This parable is a transparent indictment of the leaders in Jerusalem for their malfeasance and perversion of their office. They belong to the ruling class, who became wealthy from their large land holdings. They lived well off the peasants, who leased the land from them. Consequently, they would have naturally sympathized with the dilemma of a landowner who must cope with deadbeat, rebellious tenants. The parable, however, places them in the role of murderous tenants who reneged on their debts and abused the ones sent to collect payment. ...

The logic behind the tenants' thinking – if they kill the heir, the vineyard would become theirs – should not be interpreted as a realistic hope. Theologically, the parable paints a vivid picture of human willful rebellion against God. The tenants have rejected the reality that they are creatures of God who simply live in God's vineyard. They want to be the lords of the vineyard. God stands in the way of their plans, and so they brutalize or kill any of God's messengers who remind them of the reality. They recognize the heir "but rejected him because they were unwilling to relinquish control over the vineyard to its rightful owner (Talber)."

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

Wednesday (10/2) Read and discuss Hosea 2:14-23

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.
And there I will give her her vineyards
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

"And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

"And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD,
I will answer the heavens,
and they shall answer the earth,
and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and they shall answer Jezreel,
and I will sow her for myself in the land.

And I will have mercy on No Mercy,
and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people';
and he shall say, 'You are my God.'" (ESV)

G. Herbert Livingston writes:

Following the pattern of interweaving judgment and promise, the LORD stresses the benefits of faithfully following His ways. He is going to allure Israel as in the exodus. She will be taken into the desert where the LORD will speak tenderly, provide vineyards, transform trouble into a door of hope, and make them into a singing people.

The LORD will also change the way they talk. The word *Baal* (which means "my master") will be an unacceptable word; rather, the marriage word *husband* will take its place. As in the garden of Eden where Adam lived in peace with all animals, a renewal of covenant will include the beasts. It will also abolish violence, creating safety. The important feature of this covenant will be the introduction of marriage as a way to understand what covenant should mean. The LORD will betroth Israel as His eternal bride.

Read or sing Hymn 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Thursday (20/3) Read and discuss Genesis 19:1–26

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, "My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the town square." But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For we are about to destroy this

place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.” But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. And as they brought them out, one said, “Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.” And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords. Behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!” He said to him, “Behold, I grant you this favor also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. (ESV)

Iain Duguid writes:

Over the course of the past few chapters, we’ve followed Lot’s “progress.” At first he was a rich nomad, too prosperous to dwell in the same place as Abraham. When they separated, he chose the most promising-looking place to life; however, it was just on the edge of the Promised Land, if not already outside it. What is more, he swiftly went from living “near Sodom” to living “in Sodom. As a result, he needed to be rescued by Abraham when a foreign army carried off the inhabitants of Sodom. But Lot still didn’t learn his lesson. He apparently assimilated even further, and gained a position of authority and standing in the community, for he sat in the gate, the place where community decisions were made. His daughters were engaged to be married to men from Sodom, and he owned a house there. He had come to regard the Sodomites as his “friends” (19:7). Lot had become a settled man of substance, yet compromises must have marked his rise in the community. You can’t live comfortably in a place of such wickedness as Sodom without compromise.

But even while he compromised, the spark of his faith was not utterly extinguished. He is still called “righteous” in the New Testament. Why? Because he grieved over the wickedness around him. The Apostle Peter describes Lot as “a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of

lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard).”

Lot never totally identified with the world in which he lived. Yet, at the same time, he was unwilling to leave it behind. He was, as Derek Kidner calls him, “the righteous man without the pilgrim spirit.” How many of us are like that? We’re Christians, yes. But we also want to have our part of the world. We must have our slice of action. We feel that we can’t possibly give it up completely: that would simply be too great a cost to bear. So like Lot, we seek instead to do our best in a hopelessly compromised situation, trying to maintain dual citizenship in the world and in heaven.

It doesn’t work. Look, for example, at Lot’s attempt to rescue the angels. He pressed them with more than usual vigor to accept his hospitality. The alarm that was evident in his voice shows that he knew what might happen to them otherwise. He knew that the streets of Sodom were not a safe place to spend the night. Yet even his best efforts were not enough to protect them. All the men of Sodom, both young and old, came to his house and demanded that he hand the men over to them to be abused. He found himself in an impossible situation. The only way he saw to fulfill one sacred obligation, to protect his guests, was to betray an even more sacred obligation, to protect his daughters. He was caught between a rock and a hard place, with no way out. How often does that happen to you? You find yourself in an impossible dilemma because of past compromises with sin. Sin has a way of doing that to you. It complicates everything and puts you into untenable situations. Too late, you say to yourself, “How on earth did I get myself into this – and how can I get myself out?”

The answer in Lot’s case was, “You can’t get yourself out.” Only the intervention [of the LORD through His] angels ... saved him from an awful fate.

Friday (10/4) Read and discuss Jude 5–7

Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

Israel was “saved” out of Egypt by virtue of the exodus. But after liberating them from bondage, Jesus later destroyed those who did not believe. ... Jude has in mind the events of Numbers 14, where the spies returned with their

disbelieving report (except for Caleb and Joshua), and the people disbelieved God's promises and were judged so that they were prevented from entering the land for forty years. Two words in particular link this verse to Numbers 14. Jude says that Israel "did not believe," and the same term is used to depict Israel's unbelief in Numbers 14:11. Jude also says that Jesus "destroyed" those who disbelieved, and the Lord threatens destruction in Numbers 14:12.

The main point Jude makes is clear. No person in the believing community can presume on God's grace, thinking that an initial decision to follow Christ or baptism ensures future salvation regardless of how one responds to false teachers. Israel's apostasy warns all those who think an initial commitment secures their future destiny without ongoing obedience. Those who are God's people demonstrate the genuineness of their salvation by persevering to the end. The warnings are one of the means by which God preserves His people until the end. Those who ignore such warnings neglect the means God has appointed for obtaining eschatological salvation. Nor should such a perspective be considered a form of works righteousness. Jude pinpoints the reason Israel was judged. They failed to "believe" in God. The call to perseverance is not a summons to something above and beyond faith. God summons His people to believe in His promises to the end of their lives. Christians never get beyond the need to believe and trust, and all apostasy stems from a failure to trust in God's saving promises in Christ, just as the wilderness generation disbelieved that God would truly bring them into the land of Canaan, thinking instead that he had maliciously doomed them to die in the wilderness.

Read or sing Psalm 118A O Thank the LORD for All His Goodness (5-8)

Saturday (10/5) Read and discuss Matthew 22:1-14

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."' But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and

cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.” (ESV)

James Montgomery Boice writes:

The unique element in the parable before us is the willful refusal of those who were invited. It is not that they could not come. Rather, they *would* not. The reason for their refusal is not spelled out, but it is suggested in the way the servants were treated. They “seized” the servants, “mistreated them and killed them” (v. 6). If the invited guests felt that way toward the servants, they obviously felt that way toward the king who had sent them and would have seized, mistreated, and killed him if they could have. In other words, they would not come because they actually despised the king and were hostile to him.

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