

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 3 November 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 238 Lord, with Glowing Heart I'd Praise Thee

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: Hebrews 2:17-18

Psalm of Preparation: 133A How Excellent a Thing It Is

Old Covenant Reading: Leviticus 19:1-18

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 22:34-40

Sermon Title: *The Heart of God's Law*

Hymn of Response: 393 Spirit of God, Dwell Thou within My Heart

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 499 If I Speak a Foreign Tongue

PM Worship

400 Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me

36B Transgression Speaks to Wicked Man (1-5)

36B Transgression Speaks to Wicked Man (6-10)

Old Covenant Reading: Deuteronomy 31:1-8

New Covenant Reading: Jude 17-21

Sermon Title: *Warned, Loved, Transformed*

Adult Sunday School: Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 45

Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

A. Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us.

And also because God will give his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who continually and with heartfelt longing ask God for these gifts and thank him for them.

Q. How does God want us to pray so that he will listen to us?

A. First, we must pray from the heart
to no other than the one true God,
who has revealed himself to us in his Word,
asking for everything he has commanded us to ask of him.
Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery,
so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.
Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:
even though we do not deserve it,
God will surely listen to our prayer
because of Christ our Lord,
as he has promised us in his Word.

Q. What has God commanded us to ask of him?

A. Everything we need, spiritually and physically,
as embraced in the prayer
Christ our Lord himself taught us.

Q. What is this prayer?

A. Our Father who is in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom
and the power
and the glory, forever.
Amen.

Suggested Preparations

Monday (10/28) Read and discuss Matthew 22:34-40

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

We cannot pretend that we love God if we harbor prejudice, bitterness, or resentment in our hearts toward others. The vertical love for God must be acted out in the horizontal love for others. As Bruner says, “whenever we are asked the main responsibility of the church, Christians should usually give two answers. The spiritual and the social cannot be separated.” This means social concerns for the poor friendship for all around, as well as community love for fellow Christians. The latter two are represented well in Galatians 6:10: “Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Luz traces the development of this idea in Jewish interpretation. In the context of Leviticus “neighbor” meant the Jewish people, then with Israel in the land it was expanded to include the aliens living in Canaan. Then it was applied to proselytes, but only in Jesus is it used for love of one’s enemies (Matt 5:43-48) and for all humanity. This is why we can say that all ethics flows out of this command.

Read or sing Hymn 238 Lord, with Glowing Heart I’d Praise Thee

Tuesday (10/29) Read and discuss Read Romans 1:8-15.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. (ESV)

The language of obligation or debt may be puzzling to you at first. How could Paul be in debt to all these people whom he has never even met? And we can’t answer this question simply by inserting that His debt was to God. For, in verse 14, Paul clearly tells us that his debt is to “the Greeks and to the barbarians, ... to the wise and to the foolish.” So, how could Paul be in debt to all these people whom he has never even met? Well, there are two ways that I can have an obligation to give you \$100. The first way is for me to borrow \$100 from you. If I do that, I have the obligation to pay you back. The second way is for someone to entrust \$100 to me that I am supposed to give you on their behalf. That is the obligation that Paul is talking about here. None of these strangers had lent anything to Paul that Paul needed to pay back. But the LORD had entrusted Paul with the gospel, not simply for his own benefit and pleasure, but so that he would preach it to others. Paul was therefore constrained to fulfill this ministry. That didn’t turn Paul’s work into a miserable grind. He was excited to be part of God’s plan to reconcile the world to Himself in Jesus Christ. Paul understood, that he had been blessed by God in order to be a blessing to others. Indeed,

being called to be a blessing to others – in a mission that cannot fail – was itself one of the greatest blessings that Paul experienced.

Read or sing Psalm 133A How Excellent a Thing It Is

Wednesday (10/30) Read and discuss Leviticus 19:1-18

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the LORD your God.

“When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people.

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Jay Sklar writes:

We face constant temptation to minimize the implications of holiness. Sometimes we do this by thinking holiness applies mainly to a small list of activities we call religious, such as reading our Bibles, attending church, and praying. Other times we do this by thinking holiness applies mainly to

a small list of rules, such as “Don’t lie,” “Don’t steal,” and so forth. And still other times we do this by thinking holiness applies mainly to a small list of people, such as pastors, priests, or missionaries. In all these ways, we make holiness small.

In this chapter, the LORD makes clear that holiness is big: it applies in every situation and to all people. The LORD has created us to reflect His image into the world, and He calls us to do this in every aspect of our lives, from our families, to our worship, to our business practices, to how we treat the poor and the disadvantaged, to our systems of law. In all of these things, we are to embody his mercy, goodness, justice, and love. Not surprisingly, when Peter quotes Lev 19:2, he applies it to everything we do: “But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” All of life is to be a stage on which we act out the LORD’s holy values.

Read or sing Hymn 393 Spirit of God, Dwell Thou within My Heart

Thursday (10/31) Read and discuss Deuteronomy 31:1-8

So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. And he said to them, “I am 120 years old today. I am no longer able to go out and come in. The LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not go over this Jordan.’ The LORD your God himself will go over before you. He will destroy these nations before you, so that you shall dispossess them, and Joshua will go over at your head, as the LORD has spoken. And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. And the LORD will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to the whole commandment that I have commanded you. Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (ESV)

Adolph Harstad writes:

Moses will not be crossing the river, but Joshua will. More important for victory and blessing, Yahweh Himself will cross over and go before His people. In the end, it is not the sword or bow of Joshua and Israel that will destroy enemy nations and cause Israel to possess their land. That distinction belongs to Yahweh, as proven recently in the episode of Sihon and Og and the two and a half tribes of Israel that received their land. With eyes of faith on Yahweh and discarding thoughts of their own prowess (or fear because of their impotence), Israel can boldly fight new enemies over

the river. Yahweh is faithful and will not abandon His leader or His people. He will go before them like a fire (9:3). The encouragement and promises of 31:6-8 are much like those of Josh 1:5-9. Here in Deuteronomy 31:6, the verbs are plural because Moses is speaking to Israel. In Joshua, where Yahweh speaks to that man, the verbs are singular. Likewise, the verbs and pronouns are singular in the following verses (Deuteronomy 31:7-8), where Moses speaks to Joshua.

The emphasis of Moses in 31:6-8 is the same as that of Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18. The strength of God's people is the LORD Himself and the gifts with which He equips His people. Paul says: "Finally, be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in His mighty strength. Let yourselves be clothed with the full armor of God. Stand therefore, ... belted with truth ... and having ... the breastplate of righteousness ... the Gospel of peace ... the shield of faith ... the helmet of salvation ... and the sword of the Spirit." The writer of Hebrews applies to all baptized believers in Christ the promise of Deuteronomy 31:6 that Yahweh will never abandon nor forsake you.

Friday (11/1) Read and discuss Jude 17-21

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

The central command of the two verses now appears: "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (v. 21). Is Jude exhorting believers to maintain their love *for* God, an objective genitive? Or is he saying that they should keep themselves in the place where they experience God's love for them, a subjective genitive? A decision is difficult. Probably we are faced with a false alternative. Our love for God depends on His love for us. Thus, the two cannot and should not be rigidly separated. It is interesting to note that in v. 1 believers are said to be loved by God and kept by Christ. There God's love for believers receives the emphasis, the love by which He called us to be His people. But here Jude exhorts believers to keep themselves in God's love, focusing on human responsibility. They must keep themselves in God's love ... so as not to be corrupted by the opponents. We have already seen that being preserved in God's love will only be a reality if believers continue to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and if they regularly pray. Ultimately, believers, as I argued in v. 1, are kept by Jesus Christ. Or, as v. 24 says, God is the one "able to keep you from falling." Those who trust in Christ remain in the faith because of the preserving work of God the Father. Nevertheless, the promise that God will keep His own

does not nullify the responsibility of believers to persevere in the faith. God keeps His own, and yet believers must keep themselves in God's love. Jude represents well the biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God's love. We should also see that the command should not be interpreted individualistically only, though surely individuals are to heed the command here. Still, keeping ourselves in God's love is a community project; it becomes a reality as believers care for one another.

Read or sing Hymn 499 If I Speak a Foreign Tongue

Saturday (11/2) Read and discuss Matthew 22:34-40

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

As scholars have often noted, Jesus' answer in itself is not a controversial or unexpected one, and we must assume that His words initially caused neither controversy nor offense. Matthew does not narrate ... how any of Jesus' opponents react at first, but the *Shema* and its call for total allegiance to God alone (Deut 6:4-5) was well-known and well-loved. This call and demand is the greatest expression of God's will for Israel and for all His people: to be utterly devoted to God with one's whole being. One could say that this is what it means to be authentically human, fully to acknowledge one's existence as a creature made and known by the Creator. The possible valid reflections on the meaning of this, the first and greatest commandment in God's holy Law, are without number. ... For now, it is enough to note that Jesus' answer is one that likely would have been shared by many thoughtful teachers in Judaism of His day and even by (perhaps) most of the Pharisees who now have taken their stand against Him.

Jesus does not stop His answer by citing the first and greatest commandment in the Law. He goes on to add that another is like it, and He quotes Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:39). This part of His response is not particularly controversial either. It is, however, more than the lawyer requested. Perhaps one can see an implicit critique of his opponents in this, Jesus' additional response to His questioner. Love for the neighbor, defined so broadly as to include love for the enemy, has been a noteworthy theme in Jesus' teaching in Matthew. In a programmatic way in

the Sermon on the Mount, the call to love one's enemy (5:43-48) has placed love in the forefront and also linked it implicitly with God's own graciousness and giving. Love for enemies and for persecutors shows one's identity as a child of a heavenly Father, for God gives sun and rain to all, both to the righteous and the wicked. This is the expression of perfection, of mature discipleship: love for all. Reflected in the Golden Rule in 7:12 and repeated in Jesus' interaction with young man in 19:19, when this same citation summarizes the second table of the Decalogue. ... The Law does not have only one great commandment. It has two, and together they are the touchstone for everything else that Israel's God requires of His people. There can be no divorce between love for God and love for one's neighbor, between sacrifice and mercy. Everything else in God's will for His people hangs on these two commandments.

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