

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 1 December 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Psalm: 93 The LORD Reigns over All

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 53:4-5

Hymn of Preparation: 294 Song of Zechariah

Old Covenant Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:1-16

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 23:25-36

Sermon Title: *Woe - Part 2*

Psalm of Response: 138B With Grateful Heart My Thanks I Bring

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 278 Nothing but the Blood

PM Worship

119F Let Your Mercy and Love

242 Father, Long before Creation

117C Praise Jehovah, All Ye Nations

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 119:41-48

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 2:1-4

Sermon Title: *Listen up!*

Fellowship Lunch – Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 48

Lord's Day 48

Q. What does the second petition mean?

A. “Your kingdom come” means:

Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.

Preserve and increase your church.

Destroy the devil's work;

destroy every force which revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your holy Word.

Do all this until your kingdom fully comes,
when you will be
all in all.

Suggested Preparations

Monday (11/25) Read and discuss Matthew 23:25–36

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (ESV)

Knox Chamblin writes:

By denouncing the way of the teachers of the law and Pharisees, Jesus holds up for His disciples a model to be avoided. He also presents to them a model to be followed.

The Jewish leaders are human-centered and self-centered. By contrast, disciples are to focus on God the Father and God the Son. [Earlier in the chapter, in verses 8-10, Jesus] strongly affirms the Father’s sovereignty and the Son’s lordship over the whole church, leaders included. [Jesus] does not exclude teachers from the church, but [He] does warn them against lording it over those under their care and against trying to use authority independent of Jesus’ lordship over them.

A God-centered outlook is the surest way to combat pride and hypocrisy, and to cultivate humility. Unlike the hypocrite, the humble person is marked by integrity and loyalty to God. It is this very person whom God exalts – the person least intent on being exalted.

Read or sing Psalm 93 “The LORD Reigns over All”

Tuesday (11/26) Read and discuss Read Matthew 23:13-24

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

As the Lord’s teaching to His disciples has already made clear (5:33-37), there is little room for the casuistry by which oaths and swearing were being understood in the Judaism of Jesus’ day. Far better, teaches the Messiah, to eschew all distinctions and let one’s word simply count for yes or no. Such simplicity befits human creatures, who are, in fact, very small and very simple in the greater plan of God’s reign on the earth.

Here in chapter 23, Jesus pronounces this woe on those who teach a certain way about the taking of oaths, but in so doing, He is not canceling or contradicting His earlier instruction. Jesus sets His sights on how the thinking of the scribes and Pharisees has degenerated into distinctions that ignore the greater underlying realities. Anyone who swears any oath invokes eternal, divine realities – there is no escaping this truth. Anyone who thus inflates himself and his words has, in reality, forgotten just how important are the words that come out of the mouth.

Notice that Jesus here calls the scribes and Pharisees “blind *guides*.” This reminds us that He has in mind their role as teachers and interpreters of the Scriptures. They had tried to spar with Jesus over Scripture before, in the controversy over what defiles a person (15:1-20). Jesus had called them at

the time “blind guides of the blind” (15:14). Refusing to debate the topic of washing hands, Jesus attacked them on a much more important matter, namely, the teaching about the Korban oath by which they ended up nullifying the Fourth Commandment and care for one’s parents. Notice the connections between that controversy and the present text. In both, the taking of an oath or a vow is in view. In both, the Pharisees and scribes fail to guide the people properly. In both, at stake is the proper interpretation of the Scriptures.

Read or sing Hymn 294 “Song of Zechariah”

Wednesday (11/27) Read and discuss 2 Chronicles 36:1–16

The people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and made him king in his father’s place in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. Then the king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and laid on the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him to Egypt.

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem.

The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy. (ESV)

Andrew Bowling writes:

The years from the death of Josiah (609 B.C.) to the final deportation were bad from every perspective. Politically, the disappearance of Assyria meant that the Hebrews became a prize for the Babylonians and Egyptians. The continued military invasions, plundering, and conquests ultimately impoverished and depopulated not just Judah, but the entire region. There were no more revivals. Nor were there any more good kings.

The people's choice for king, Jehoahaz (609 B.C.), last only three months when Neco replaces him with his older brother, who is given the throne name Jehoiakim (609-597 B.C.). Jehoiakim represents a relatively pro-Egyptian voice. The Chronicler passes a negative judgment on him though no specific details are given.

Jehoiakim's position is hopeless. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar wins control of Palestine at the Battle of Carchemish. This leads to the first of three deportations to Babylon. Apparently Nebuchadnezzar binds Jehoiakim for captivity, but then changes his mind. The Babylonians temporarily withdraw from Palestine, but in 597, Nebuchadnezzar returns and captures Jerusalem just after the death of Jehoiakim. Jehoiachin (597 B.C.), Jehoiakim's son and successor, goes into Babylonian captivity and seems to have been regarded as the legal heir by the orthodox Hebrew cult.

Zedekiah rebels against Babylon, and his rule as well as the history of Judah ends with the capture of Jerusalem in July 586. This is the occasion of the third and last deportation.

Read or sing Psalm 138B "With Grateful Heart My Thanks I Bring"

Thursday (11/28) Read and discuss Psalm 119:41–48

Let your steadfast love come to me, O LORD,
your salvation according to your promise;
then shall I have an answer for him who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.
And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
for my hope is in your rules.
I will keep your law continually,
forever and ever,
and I shall walk in a wide place,
for I have sought your precepts.
I will also speak of your testimonies before kings
and shall not be put to shame,
for I find my delight in your commandments,
which I love.
I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love,

and I will meditate on your statutes. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

The more the psalmist seeks to obey God, the more he “walk[s] about in freedom” (verse 45). If God is not ruling us, something else is: sin and habit (verse 133), need for love and approval (verse 42), anxiety, or desire for money and success (verse 36). But when God is in charge, these things lose their inordinate power over us. Not even kings are feared (verse 46). Also, with God comes the freedom of “the mind stretching encounter with a greater wisdom and vision than one’s own. Verse 45 literally means ‘at large.’ Moffatt’s paraphrase of the verse is ... ‘thou dost open up my life.’” Being near creative people frees you to think new thoughts. How much more an encounter with the living God and His word.

Friday (11/29) Read and discuss Hebrews 2:1–4

Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

The picture Hebrews uses in the first verse, indeed, may be echoing the idea of a dangerous sea: ‘in case we drift away from’ what we heard. Imagine being in a little motorboat, some way out from shore, needing to find your way along the coast to the right harbor. You need to keep the engine running and a firm hand on the tiller. If you don’t, there is no guarantee that you will drift in the right direction, and every probability that you will drift in the wrong one – perhaps onto a rocky shore, or out to the wild ocean where you can’t see land anymore. This is a warning many Christians need, perhaps especially those who have grown up in a Christian family or as part of a regular church community. It’s all too easy to suppose that we can take the pressure off, and allow other people to do the praying, the thinking, the serious business; we’ll go along for the ride, we’ll stop putting so much effort into it, we’ll go with the flow. The problem is that if we haven’t got our own motor running, and our own hand on our own tiller, we may drift further and further away without realizing it.

Read or sing Hymn 278 “Nothing but the Blood”

Saturday (11/30) Read and discuss Matthew 23:25–36

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

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Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

The scribes and Pharisees have taught and lived in such a way as to attend to external things with great care, all the while being ignorant of more profound realities that make a person inwardly clean or unclean. They have a great need to repent; their blind eyes need to be opened. Then each one of them will see that the inner purity that Jesus bestows will suffice to render their whole being pure and acceptable and able, finally, to see God on the Last Day (5:8). That purity of heart given by Jesus consists in the first place of the knowledge of and worship of the true God of Israel in the person of His Son. That same purity of heart then issues forth in deeds of justice, mercy, and faithfulness (23:23).

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