

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 17 November 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 283 Fairest Lord Jesus

Confession of Sin

Most merciful God, Who are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and hast promised forgiveness to all those who confess and forsake their sins; We come before You with a humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold transgressions of Your righteous laws. But, O gracious Father, Who desires not the death of a sinner, look upon us, we beseech You, in mercy, and forgive us all our transgressions. Make us deeply sensible of the great evil of them; And work in us a hearty contrition; That we may obtain forgiveness at Your hands, Who are ever ready to receive humble and penitent sinners; for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, our only Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Ephesians 2:13-16

Psalm of Preparation: 53 The Fool Speaks in His Heart

Old Covenant Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 23:1-12

Sermon Title: *Bad Examples*

Hymn of Response: 239 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Diaconal Offering

Closing Psalm: 121A I Lift My Eyes Up to the Hills

PM Worship

280 Wondrous King, All-Glorious

170 God, in the Gospel of His Son

110B The LORD Has Spoken to My Lord

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 110

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4

Sermon Title: *God Speaks through His Son*

Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School

Suggested Preparations

Monday (11/11) Read and discuss Matthew 23:1–12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you

are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

Throughout His teaching Jesus insists that His followers must be lowly. He set the example Himself, for in His whole life He forsook the corridors of power and was content to be a lowly teacher, mostly in the remote rural areas of the province in which He lived. He has earlier taught plainly that His followers must tread the lowly path, and He has linked their service with His own, going on to say that He would give His life a ransom for many. The theme of lowliness is now resumed as part of the contrast with the Pharisees that must mark the lives of the servants of Jesus. If they are seeking to be great, they are not look for the kind of prominence that Jesus has denounced in this discourse. For them to be great is to take the place of a servant. It is in giving service, not in receiving adulation, that true greatness consists.

Jesus explains that there will be some reversals of what people have thought they have achieved. The person who *will exalt himself will be humbled*. It is important to be clear on this because the disciples were accustomed to a society in which people like the Pharisees who exalted themselves were thought certain to be accepted by God as the truly exalted ones. But God does not see them as they see themselves, and in the end such people will *be humbled*. The other side of that coin is that the person who takes the lowly way here and now will in due course *be exalted*. ... Jesus is looking for genuine lowliness, the attitude of the person who is not seeking personal gain of any sort, but simply the opportunity of doing service.

Read or sing Hymn 283 Fairest Lord Jesus

Tuesday (11/12) Read and discuss Read Matthew 22:41-46

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

"The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet"?"

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

This is one of the climatic points of Matthean Christology. Jesus is now uncovering the “messianic secret” in a public setting and going beyond the triumphal entry by showing that He transcends His earthly role as descendent of David and embraces His heavenly role as Son of God and “Lord,” stated clearly in the early creed of Romans 1:3-4, “Who as to His earthly life was a descendent of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead.” Critical scholars at times have hesitated to ascribe deity to this passage, for there is separation between LORD/Yahweh and Lord/Messiah in the Ps 110:1 passage. However, Bruner rightly quotes Luther on this:

‘Sit,’ says God to Him, not at My feet, not over My head, but next to Me, as high as I sit. ... [But] sitting next to God, what else is that than also being God? For God is so jealous for His honor that as He said Himself, in Isaiah 42:8, He will give it to no other. ... And yet here, says the Psalmist, sits one who is like Him. From this it follows that He must be God.

The problem today is slightly different. It is not so much in our churches that members deny the deity of Christ as that they ignore it in their lives. One of the sad results of the denigration of theology in the popular church is the tendency to lower Jesus to the status of friend and companion rather than of cosmic Lord and “very God of very God” (the Christology of the Nicene Creed). It is time to worship Jesus as Lord with a new depth.

Read or sing Psalm 53 The Fool Speaks in His Heart

Wednesday (11/13) Read and discuss Deuteronomy 6:1–9

“Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (ESV)

David Strain comments:

The commands of God (just summed up previously in chapter 5 in the Ten Commandments) ... are not offered here as the condition upon which the Israelites will inherit the land. If they keep the commands, then they may enter the Promised Land – no. Remember, we read later in verses 10 through 15 of how God was going to lavish upon them cities and vineyards and houses and homes and cisterns that they did not build and did not construct for themselves; they did not plant those fields or grow those vines. They were all given to them freely and not by the work of their hands. In other words, entering the Promised Land was a gift of free, extravagant grace. And having received such grace, they are now being called to live a life of grateful obedience expressing their thanksgiving to the Lord.

And as they obey, the Lord promises them yet further blessing. And so the blessings of grace are to result in a life of obedience that will in turn receive yet more of the blessings of grace. And so verse 2, “These are the LORD’s commands,” Moses says, “so that,” verse 2, “you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.” And so grace brings them into the land and propels them into obedience which in turn becomes the [occasion] of yet further blessedness and grace.

The blessing of free grace is the context for their obedience and their obedience becomes the condition of still more grace. If they obeyed, it would go well with them. They would multiply, they would enjoy a land flowing with milk and honey. That is the pattern of discipleship that we need to get clear. We do not obey our way into the kingdom of God, rather, grace brings us there freely. The Lord Jesus taught us ... in John chapter 3, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Entry into the realm of God’s dominion is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. He gives us new hearts by His grace. Just like entry into the Promised Land for Israel was a gift of unearned, free grace. “By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.”

But having become a child of God by grace [alone] through faith alone in Christ alone, there is a life of discipleship. ... Our continued possession of our status and place in the family of God is not in any doubt. Once you are a child of God by grace you will always be a child of God by grace. But the sweetness and the blessedness of our lives as His children is very much contingent on our faithfulness to His commandments. ... The Lord Jesus taught us precisely this point. John 14 verse 15, “If you love Me, you will

keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.” And John 14:21, “Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” A fresh endowment of the Holy Spirit in your life is conditioned, Jesus says, upon our faithful determination to keep His commandments. A deepening fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, by His Word and Spirit, manifesting themselves to us by their grace is ours as we keep their commandments, as we obey and love them and do what they say. Do you see the pattern? The pattern of discipleship. The blessing of grace calls for obedience that brings yet more of the blessing of grace.

Read or sing Hymn 239 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Thursday (11/14) Read and discuss Psalm 110

The LORD says to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The LORD sends forth from Zion
your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your enemies!
Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day of your power,
in holy garments;
from the womb of the morning,
the dew of your youth will be yours.
The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
He will execute judgment among the nations,
filling them with corpses;
he will shatter chiefs
over the wide earth.
He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head. (ESV)

Christopher Ash writes:

Psalm 110:5-7 shows this priest-king conquering the world. The Lord is at His right hand, for just as in His rule He sits at the Father’s right hand, so in

His battles the Father is at His right hand giving Him the promised triumphs. The day of His wrath is when God's righteous anger is poured out either in an anticipatory historical judgment on God's enemies or in the last judgment. The verb "shatter" communicates the completeness of the victory. The word chiefs is literally "a head," where the singular when combined with "over the wide earth," may hint that all these kings "are ultimately figures of universal power of chaos that must be combatted and destroyed ... so that peace may be a reality for Israel and for the nations." This hints at the final victory over the serpent and his seed. Although the picture may be offensive to our modern sensibilities, it conveys in language readily understandable in any age the completeness of the victory, such that those thereby rescued need fear the enemy no more. Calvin writes:

As a shepherd is gentle toward his flock, but fierce and formidable towards wolves and thieves, in like manner, Christ is kind and gentle towards those who commit themselves to his care, while they who willfully and obstinately reject His yoke, shall feel with what awful and terrible power He is armed.

Friday (11/15) Read and discuss Hebrews 1:1–4

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (ESV)

Amy Peeler writes:

In the eloquent phrases of 1:2b-4 the Son is heir, creator, radiant image, sustainer, purifier, sovereign, and heir again. Both in their individual parts and in the grouping as a whole, the author conveys truth about this Son. He is divine communication, and so He is divine *revelation*. When one hears Son speech, one is listening to God. If this community, or any who read this work, are struggling with God's trustworthiness, they can look to the sovereign and eternal Son, who has now, in these days of the end, been made known. That faith-building listening begins with attending to the descriptions of the Son.

Out of a desire for clear theological organization, a temptation might arise to divide the seven phrases into the different natures of the Son. It is certainly the case that several of the phrases more fittingly point toward either His divine nature or His human nature, but from the viewpoint of Hebrews there is no separation between them since they are unified in one person. In the days after the Son has become incarnate, all humanity can k

now the divine – all God has said and done – through the lens of His human life. A unified understanding of the Son in this sentence is fitting both grammatically and theologically. The descriptions of the Son reveal that this one has a past, a present, and a future, but the subject, whether acting, being, or being acted on, is the same throughout. The Son has always been so intimately related to God and working with God as to be God’s mode of expression. It is only the last days, however, that have brought the ability of God’s people to perceive the divine communication through the eternal Son of God who willed to take on flesh.

That one title, Son, encompasses all the author wishes to affirm. It aptly communicates Israel’s royal tradition that He fulfills along with the unparalleled intimate relationship He has with God. Moreover, the Son discloses the character of God who chose to give divine revelation preeminently through a Son and therefore to be known as Father. Inviting his audience to view God as their Father is one of the author’s chief methods of encouraging their enduring trust.

Read or sing Psalm 121A I Lift My Eyes Up to the Hills

Saturday (11/16) Read and discuss Matthew 23:1–12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

Seek humility and servanthood, leaving the glory up to God. This is the message of the Philippians hymn (Phil 2:5-11), using the incarnation and life of Christ as a paradigm (2:5) for Christians; like Jesus we should seek a life of humility and let God glorify us in His own time. Therefore, Jesus is saying that we must refuse to go by titles that appeal to our pride or elevate anyone else to glorified status.

These things happen all too often in successful churches and ministries. Sadly, all too many well-known Christian leaders begin to believe the plaudits of others and become virtual demigods in their own fiefdom! This

is one of the most disobeyed and ignored passages of the Bible. As so often before true discipleship is defined not by human achievement but by service to God and His people, by taking the road of servanthood and living a life of humility. Those guilty of self-glory can expect no reward from God.

Again, this does not mean that one must eschew a fruitful ministry that results in becoming well known (Paul was certainly famous). Rather, it means that fame and attention must never be a goal. Our goal is not to create sacred listeners or readers who cannot wait to hear what we have to say but rather to create lovers of Jesus and the Word, who enjoy our exposition of God's truth. As Bruner says, this is not "a going down into a paralyzing self-negation or self-abasement but an active, free, and *con brio* [with vigor] decision for service. ... There is a joyful look to the future in this Gospel's 'law' of humility."

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