

## **Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 24 November 2024**

### **AM Worship**

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Psalm: 119H You, LORD, Are the Portion

Confession of Sin

Most holy and merciful Father; We acknowledge and confess before You; Our sinful nature prone to evil and slothful in good; And all our shortcomings and offenses. You alone know how often we have sinned; In wandering from Your ways; In wasting Your gifts; In forgetting Your love. But You, O Lord, have pity upon us; Who are ashamed and sorry for all wherein we have displeased You. Teach us to hate our errors; Cleanse us from our secret faults; And forgive our sins for the sake of Your dear Son. And O most holy and loving Father; Help us we beseech You; To live in Your light and walk in Your ways; According to the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Hebrews 10:19-22

Hymn of Preparation: 552 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 23:13-24

Sermon Title: *Woe! - Part 1*

Psalm of Response: 119O The Double-Minded I Abhor

Confession of Faith: Q/A 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 381 Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power

### **PM Worship**

104A Bless the LORD, My Soul! (1-5)

2A Why Do Heathen Nations Rage?

104A Bless the LORD, My Soul! (6-11)

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 2

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 1:5-14

Sermon Title: *God Speaks to His Son*

### **Fellowship Lunch – Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 47**

Q. What does the first petition mean?

A. "Hallowed be your name" means:  
Help us to truly know you,  
to honor, glorify, and praise you  
for all your works  
and for all that shines forth from them:  
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,  
justice, mercy, and truth.  
And it means,  
Help us to direct all our living—  
what we think, say, and do—

so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us  
but always honored and praised.

### **Suggested Preparations**

**Monday** (11/18) Read and discuss 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)

Leon Morris writes:

In the case of the Pharisees and their scribes there is the very serious accusation that they *shut up the kingdom of heaven before men*. They were in reality effectively shutting people out of God’s kingdom at the same time that they claimed they were helping them into it; in that lay their hypocrisy. The verb *shut up* indicates a firm closing. Jesus had been proclaiming the *kingdom of heaven* and has won disciples. It might have been thought that prominent among these would be people like the Pharisees because they had given so much time and energy to the study of Scripture. They should have been aware of the ways of God there made known to people and of the prophecies that were being fulfilled in the life of Jesus. But they shut their eyes to these things; they took no notice and thus declined to enter the kingdom. Worse, they did not *allow* others to go in. There were people in Galilee and Judea who heard Jesus gladly and were ready to respond to His teaching. But some of them had respect for the scribes and the Pharisees, the respected teachers of Israel, and when these revered leaders tried to discredit Jesus, they believed them. They had been in the process of entering, Jesus says, but the religious leaders stopped them.

Read or sing Psalm 119H You, LORD, Are the Portion

**Tuesday** (11/19) Read and discuss Read 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)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees because they had come to *love* places of honor at feasts, first seats in synagogues, (respectful) greetings in marketplaces, and to be called “rabbi” by other people. When fellow Christians speak to a pastor or a leader in these terms, the grave spiritual danger exists that the leader would come to *love* these titles and (if I can trust my own experience) to *expect* them. This is the road to deadly hypocrisy, and it is no good to pretend otherwise. This demon lurks in the heart of every Christian leader or pastor, and we ignore it to our own peril. How easy it is to demand a title of respect claiming that the demand is for the sake of “the office that I hold”! Theoretically, it could be done, just as it is theoretically possible to experience righteous anger. Yet how difficult it is for that actually to be true! IN a North American culture that loves to bestow celebrity status in every possible way (as if the opinion of many necessarily counted for anything in the reign of God!), Christians of all stations and Christian leaders especially should dislodge, deflect, and reject any attempts to elevate them above other believers. We are all brothers and sisters under the one Teacher who reveals and brings us near to the one heavenly Father. There is no distinction. Let the one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

There is, of course, a path of greatness in the company of Jesus’ disciples. It is the path marked out and trod by Jesus Himself – the path of service for the sake of others. This service is best enacted in secret whenever possible – for then only the Father, who can see in secret, will grant the reward, the blessing at the time and the manner of His own choosing. Finally, with His concluding aphorism, Jesus summarizes both the warning and the exhortation for those who have believed that He is the one Teacher and Instructor, the only Son of the heavenly Father, the Messiah: Whoever

exalts himself will, in fact, be humbled. Whoever humbles himself will ... be exalted. And God will do the humbling and exalting.

Read or sing Hymn 552 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

**Wednesday** (11/20) Read and discuss Isaiah 42:1-9

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.

Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people on it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:  
“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;  
I will give you as a covenant for the people,  
a light for the nations,  
to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.  
I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.  
Behold, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth  
I tell you of them.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Isaiah sets forth Yahweh’s coming intervention. This is all God’s doing, and He announces it through His “herald of good tidings.” However, in a manner consistent with the OT and NT, this turn of events will be enacted by human agency. Yahweh’s plan included Israel. But the nation worshiped other gods (cf. 42:8) and therefore fell short of its servant calling.

The sin of idolatry is also prominent in the NT. Achtemeier writes: “Investigating the problem of idolatry in the NT is a bit like examining an iceberg. All that is visible is the tip – the vocabulary of idolatry is not all that prominent in the NT literature – yet underlying what is visible is a vast bulk.” One type of idolatry is Jewish traditionalism. In Mk 7:6-7, Jesus quotes from Is 29:13: “Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Vainly do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” The Jews of Jesus’ day were “far from” God because they abandoned the substance and spirit of the OT and replaced the God of Israel with the worship of their fabricated traditions.” In like manner, Paul’s comment “their god is their belly” (Phil 3:19) “is most probably a reference to their preoccupation with human-made traditions concerning all kinds of cleansings associated with eating (Greg Beale).” Judaism’s idol was not made out of wood and stone, but out of dead traditions.

Read or sing Psalm 119O The Double-Minded I Abhor

**Thursday** (11/21) Read and discuss Psalm 2

Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,  
“Let us burst their bonds apart  
and cast away their cords from us.”

He who sits in the heavens laughs;  
the Lord holds them in derision.  
Then he will speak to them in his wrath,  
and terrify them in his fury, saying,  
“As for me, I have set my King  
on Zion, my holy hill.”

I will tell of the decree:  
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;  
today I have begotten you.  
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.  
You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
Serve the LORD with fear,

and rejoice with trembling.  
Kiss the Son,  
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

Each day the media highlights new things to fear. The “powers that be” in society tell us that obedience to God shackles us, limiting our freedom. In reality, liberation comes only through serving the one who created us. Those people and forces that appear to rule the world are all under His lordship, and one day they will know it. God still reigns, and we can take refuge in Him from all our fears. So to be intimidated by the world is as spiritually fatal as being overly attracted to it.

God’s response to human pride and power is to install His “son” on Zion. This points beyond Israel’s king to Jesus, God’s true Son. One day He will put everything right; but He will do this by going first to Zion – to Jerusalem – to die for our sins. To “kiss His Son” is to rest in and live for Him. If we do this, we have assurance that no matter what happens to us, ultimately everything will be all right. If we don’t live for Him, we end up fighting God Himself. So “there is no refuge from Him – only *in* Him.”

**Friday (11/22)** Read and discuss Hebrews 1:5-14

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,  
and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

Of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,  
and his ministers a flame of fire.”

But of the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,  
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.  
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands;  
they will perish, but you remain;  
they will all wear out like a garment,  
like a robe you will roll them up,  
like a garment they will be changed.  
But you are the same,  
and your years will have no end.”

And to which of the angels has he ever said,

“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

The supremacy of Jesus as the Son is the theme of this section. Jesus’ sonship is tied to His being the Davidic king and the ruler over the world. The divinity and humanity of the Son are both central to the argument. He rules as the Davidic king and as one who is fully divine. The angels worshiped Him when He was raised from the dead and exalted, and as God He rules over all. Indeed, the Son is the eternal and unchanging Creator. By way of contrast angels are servants, carrying out God’s will. Since the Son is superior to angels, since His is divine and rules over all, why would the readers consider returning to a revelation (the Mosaic law) mediated by angels.

Read or sing Hymn 381 Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power

**Saturday** (11/23) Read and discuss 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.

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Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

When Jesus names these scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites,” he is not necessarily describing them as insincere. By all counts, their opposition to Jesus is genuine and deeply held. On one level, believers today (or in any time) should not look down on or despise these men for rejecting Jesus so long ago. Faith and discipleship, both then and now, happens only through the call of Jesus (4:18-22), only through the Father’s revelation to “babies.” ... It is deeply appropriate, then, that a disciple of Jesus respond to unbelief in another with “there but for the grace of God go I.”

Nevertheless, opposition to and rejection of Jesus leave a person culpable, subject to damnation. In these first two woes, moreover, Jesus denounces these men who oppose him because they seek out converts to their false way and thereby prevent others from entering into the sphere of end-time blessing that Jesus offers. The language is harsh to be sure. But it is not any harsher than Jesus’ warning to His own disciples – also accompanied by “woe!” – lest they cause “little ones” among them to stumble into despair, ruin, and unbelief.

The scribes and Pharisees claim to know and interpret the Scriptures for others. Modern application of 23:13 and 23:15 is not hard to find in the case of Christian pastors and teachers, who, like the scribes and Pharisees, occupy an office of explaining and expounding the Scriptures. Rather than only shake our heads at the errors of Jesus’ opponents long ago, we should sit up straight, give heed to Jesus’ warning, and remember the words of Jesus’ half-brother James: “let not many of you become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a greater judgment.”

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