

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 8 December 2024

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Psalm: 147B O Praise the LORD, for It Is Good (1-3)

Confession of Sin

Almighty God, Who are rich in mercy to all those who call upon You; Hear us as we humbly come to You confessing our sins; And imploring Your mercy and forgiveness. We have broken Your holy laws by our deeds and by our words; And by the sinful affections of our hearts. We confess before You our disobedience and ingratitude, our pride and willfulness; And all our failures and shortcomings toward You and toward fellow men. Have mercy upon us, Most merciful Father; And of Your great goodness grant that we may hereafter serve and please You in newness of life; Through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Luke 1:76-79

Psalm of Preparation: 147B O Praise the LORD, for It Is Good (4-6)

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 147

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 23:37-39

Sermon Title: *O Jerusalem!*

Psalm of Response: 125 All Those Who Trust the LORD

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

PM Worship

320 As with Gladness Men of Old

321 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

382 How Great the Bright Angelic Host

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 8:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 2:5-9

Sermon Title: *The Exaltation of the Humble Son*

Fellowship Lunch – Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 49 – Nathan Kreider leading

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 (12/2) Read and discuss Matthew 23:37–39

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

Jesus’ time in Jerusalem is almost over – until He chooses again to enter and move toward His arrest, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection. Jesus’ words here in 23:37-39 do offer glimpses of grace and hope for those who hate and oppose him – but only glimpses. For these verses are rightly called Jesus’ lament, and He is lamenting because, despite the threat of judgment, His opponents and the city have shown no inclination to repent and believe in Him as rightful King, David’s Lord, and the Son of God.

The first glimpse is seen in the wonderful and terrible parallelism in Jesus’ words in 23:37. Various English translations more or less successfully reflect the parallelism. In Greek, it is pretty obvious:

How often I wanted to gather your children, ...
But you did not want [to be gathered].

What Jesus *wanted* to do so often they did *not want*. Jerusalem’s unwillingness to be gathered is really the main point of the entire chapter; the scribes and Pharisees, the city herself, and finally her children are all included in the effects of Jesus’ denunciations. The note of grace emerges despite the hatred and opposition thrown up in Jesus’ face at every turn; *still* He so often wanted to gather them in the way that the God of Israel had wanted to gather His own beloved but rebellious people in the centuries before.

Read or sing Psalm 147B O Praise the LORD, for It Is Good (1-3)

Tuesday (12/3) Read and discuss Read 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)

Michael Wilkins writes:

Jesus’ seventh woe reproaches the religious leaders for perpetuating godless establishments. They are like murderers throughout Israel’s history that put to death the prophets, even though they built monuments to them. Jesus’ leaders must choose carefully the traditions we represent. There are many voices out there, but our calling is to listen to the voice of God and those who represent them.

Jesus’ final invective against the religious leadership calls them into accountability. ... Those who are the most privileged to lead God’s people have the stricter condemnation. This recalls for us as leaders James’s equally chilling warning: “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

We leaders must listen to God’s message through His other messengers and be careful when we see ourselves stifling every voice with which we disagree. Jesus rebukes the religious leaders because they are muffling God’s righteous voice so that their own can be heard. God will avenge those who have lived righteously and have been abused by powerful leaders. There are other people out there who speak for God, we are not the only ones. We must examine those voices, but we will be wiser, more balanced, and better equipped when we learn from others and join with them in advancing the kingdom of God.

Read or sing Psalm 147B O Praise the LORD, for It Is Good (4-6)

Wednesday (12/4) Read and discuss Psalm 147

Praise the LORD!
For it is good to sing praises to our God;

for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.
The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
 he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
He heals the brokenhearted
 and binds up their wounds.
He determines the number of the stars;
 he gives to all of them their names.
Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
 his understanding is beyond measure.
The LORD lifts up the humble;
 he casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
 make melody to our God on the lyre!
He covers the heavens with clouds;
 he prepares rain for the earth;
 he makes grass grow on the hills.
He gives to the beasts their food,
 and to the young ravens that cry.
His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
 nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,
but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
 in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!
 Praise your God, O Zion!
For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
 he blesses your children within you.
He makes peace in your borders;
 he fills you with the finest of the wheat.
He sends out his command to the earth;
 his word runs swiftly.
He gives snow like wool;
 he scatters frost like ashes.
He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs;
 who can stand before his cold?
He sends out his word, and melts them;
 he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.
He declares his word to Jacob,
 his statutes and rules to Israel.
He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
 they do not know his rules.
Praise the LORD! (ESV)

Allen P. Ross writes:

God is to be praised for His powerful word, by which He created and sustains all life, redeems and cares for those who trust in Him, and reveals His will to His covenant people. Because the LORD is the sovereign and eternal God, there should be no end to praise.

Jaki points out that “The perspective of seeing God at work everywhere is even more needed if one is to absorb and savor the message of the second half of the psalm.” Meditation on the great works of the LORD, creation and redemption, are foundational to our praise; He created and sustains everything by His powerful word, and He also redeems people by His word. His redemption does not find completion in the act of deliverance, for He provides all the needs of His people. But with His redemption He entrusts His word to His covenant people, and not to the nations of the world. All of us who have been redeemed are entrusted with the word of God. This is not only a reason for praise, but a solemn responsibility to carry the message of God to people who remain alienated from Him. Knowing what God has done with His word should expand our vision of what He can do through our ministry of His word.

Read or sing Psalm 125 All Those Who Trust the LORD

Thursday (12/5) Read and discuss Psalm 8

O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
 Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
 to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
 and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
 and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth! (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

The universe reveals God's glory. Aren't humans just specks of dust in this vastness? Physically, yes; yet we fill the mind of God (verse 4). The astonishment of the psalmist should be ours: Why should God care about us? Because He made us in His image and has given us the world He created to care for as His agents. Living with care for the land, sea, and air and all who live there, and doing justice for every human being stamped with His image, brings God glory. As a human race we are not doing this very well! But Jesus has come, and eventually the world will be under His feet (verse 6; Hebrews 2:5-9) and then everything will be made right.

Friday (12/6) Read and discuss Hebrews 2:5–9

For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere,

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?
You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,
putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

We learn from this text that human beings are magnificent. As Francis Schaeffer said, “Human beings are wonderful because they are made in God's image.” In a world where human life is cheap and is often discarded casually or destroyed brutally, the author of Hebrews reminds us that human beings are the crown of creation. They were made to rule the world for God. Still the world has gone awry. More precisely, human beings have strayed from their calling. They were meant to rule the world and even to rule over angels, but sin and death have intervened. The world is not marked by peace, order, and harmony but by chaos and massive evil. The solution to the evil that has broken in the world comes from one man since Jesus Christ has tasted death for everyone. Through His death He now reigns at God's right hand, showing that death has been dethroned.

Read or sing Hymn 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Saturday (12/7) Read and discuss Matthew 23:37–39

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

What do Jesus’ words to Jerusalem and her children in 23:37 imply about Jesus Himself? Both the adverb “how often?” and the image of a hen gathering her chicks give rise to this question. To take up the second point first, it is striking at the least that Jesus claims for Himself the image of a bird sheltering young chicks under its wings. The image occurs, in various forms, in at least Deut 32:11; Pss 17:8; Ps 36:7; 91:4; Ruth 2:12. Ps 91:4 deserves to be cited here with some of its context:

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to Yahweh, “My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”
For He will save you from the snare of the fowler,
from the pestilence of destruction.
He will cover you with His pinions,
and under His wings, you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

Matthew gives us no reaction on the part of anyone present when Jesus spoke these words. In my mind, however, I can hear a response in imitation of Mt. 9:3: “This man is blaspheming!” When Jesus claims this image of “the Most High,” “The Almighty,” and “Yahweh” in Ps 91:1-2 for Himself, He is implicitly placing Himself in the role of Israel’s God.

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