

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 19 January 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 388 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

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: Romans 10:10-13

Hymn of Preparation: 529 Lead Me, Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 6:1-8

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 24:36-51

Sermon Title: No One Knows The Day

Hymn of Response: 496 My Jesus, I Love Thee

Confession of Faith:

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Diaconal Offering

Closing Hymn: 390 Christ Is Coming!

PM Worship

159 Abide with Me

532 Be Still, My Soul

272 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Old Covenant Reading: Leviticus 23:26-32

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 4:1-8

Sermon Title: The Necessity of Trusting the LORD

Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School

Suggested Preparations

Monday (1/13) Read and discuss Matthew 24:36–51

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on

what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

Jesus depicts the final judgment as separation. In these ... scenes, those who are being judged or rejected are always depicted as excluded, told to depart, or being cast out. Conceptually, this image of judgment corresponds much more readily with “taken away” and not “left behind.” Matthew’s theme of separation. At the judgment supports Merkle’s suggestion based on OT prophetic texts. This interpretation of 24:41 results in a consistent image of judgment as Jesus speaks first of the flood and then of sudden separation of individuals at the age’s consummation. Although the exegesis of this smaller point in 24:40-41 does not radically change the meaning of the passage, I side with those who understand that “one will be taken” refers to the fate of unbelievers at Christ’s return and that “one will be left” refers to the salvation of believers at the Lord’s *Parousia*.

The main point of Jesus’ teaching is the suddenness and unknowability of that day. This is why this unit concludes as it does. Because the day will come without sign or warning, therefore Jesus’ disciples are to keep watching. Jesus repeats the point explicitly: “because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (24:42). Jesus’ concluding words will recur in substance twice more in the Eschatological Discourse in 24:44 and 25:13. His repeated commands to “keep watching”; and “be ready” assume the truth that it is spiritually healthy and beneficial for Jesus’ disciples to be actively looking for his return and that it is spiritually dangerous for Jesus’ disciples to neglect such attentive expectation.

Please note: Living with an expectation of Christ’s Second Coming is not about looking for signs of the Second Coming or speculating on when Christ will come. It is about living in view of where history is going and of eternity when Christ consummates His kingdom ... rather than living for that which is passing away.

Read or sing Hymn 388 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Tuesday (1/14) Read and discuss Matthew 24:29-35

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

What is it, then, that will demonstrate that Jesus has been vindicated by God. Three things.

First, His resurrection and ascension. These great, dramatic, earth-shattering events will reverse the verdicts of the Jewish court and the pagan executioners. They will show that He is indeed ‘the son of man’ who has suffered at the hands of the ‘beasts’ or ‘monsters’ – who now, it seems, include the Temple and those who run it! – and is nevertheless then declared by God to be His true spokesman.

Second, the destruction of the Temple. Jesus, speaking as a prophet, predicted that it would fall, not as an arbitrary exercise of prophetic powers but because the Temple had come to symbolize all that was wrong with the Israel of His day. And He had predicted the terrible suffering that would precede it. That’s why, in verse 25, He underlines the fact that He has told them about it beforehand. They are to trust that He is a true prophet. They must not be deceived by the odd things that others may do to lead them astray. And when the Temple finally falls, that will be the sign that He was speaking the truth. That will be His real vindication. His exaltation over the world, and over the Temple, will be written in large letters into the pages of history; or, as they would put it, ‘they will see the sign of the son of man in heaven’ (verse 30).

Third, the news of His victory will spread rapidly throughout the world. What people will see is strange messengers, alone or in small groups, travelling around from country to country telling people that a recently executed Jewish prophet has been vindicated by God, that He is the Messiah and the Lord of the world. But that’s just the surface event. The deeper dimension of these happenings is that the one true God is announcing to His whole creation that Jesus is His appointed Lord of the world. Or, as they

would put it, “He will send of His messengers’ (or ‘angels’), ‘and collect His chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’

Read or sing Hymn 529 Lead Me, Lord, Lead Me in Thy Righteousness

Wednesday (1/15) Read and discuss Genesis 6:1–8

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (ESV)

Tremper Longman writes:

The flood story is a vivid picture of Paul’s statement that the “wages of sin is death.” In the generations before Noah, there were two groups of people, those who followed God (Gen 5) and those who did not (Gen 4:17-25). By the time of Noah, humanity had become pervasively and (almost) universally wicked (6:5). Thus God determined to judge all humanity by bringing a flood. The flood represents a reversal of creation, a return to the “formless and empty” condition of the earth before the six days of creation.

...

According to the New Testament appropriation of the flood tradition, the flood is a preview of the final judgment. As Jesus speaks to His disciples about His eventual return and the final judgment, He draws the analogy when He says:

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

While today some teachers and preachers seem almost embarrassed about the Bible’s teaching about the last judgment, Jesus wants to warn His disciples, in the words of Paul, that “the wages of sin is death” in order to urge people to abandon their evil attitudes and behavior and thus avoid the judgment.

Peter too draws an analogy between the flood and the final judgment. According to Niehaus, “Of course, God will again come to wage war against His foes, only it will not be with water but with fire. That is why Peter can draw such a clear parallel between the Flood and the Lord’s eschatological return in judgment (2 Peter 3:5-7). The similarity is found in the suddenness and thoroughness of God’s judgment against evil. The intention of the analogy is to create a sense of urgency for people to drive people to God and His protection.

Read or sing Hymn 496 My Jesus, I Love Thee

Thursday (1/16) Read and discuss Leviticus 23:26–32

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.” (ESV)

John Kleinig writes:

The life and work of Jesus was profoundly shaped by the liturgical calendar that had been instituted by God in Leviticus 23. It was Jesus’ custom to attend the synagogue each Sabbath. Much of His ministry was connected with the observation of the Sabbath and attendance at the synagogue on that day. On the Sabbath He taught in the synagogues and at the temple and in houses where He was an honored guest for the festive banquets. On the Sabbath He also exorcised a man with an unclean spirit and healed people who were sick, disabled, and blind.

Jesus also belonged to a family that went up regularly each year on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover. When He was twelve He went with them and learned His Father’s business from the teachers at the temple. During His ministry He went up to Jerusalem for the festivals: the Passover, an unnamed feast (Jn 5:1), the Feast of Booths, and the Dedication of the Temple. But most significantly, He went up on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the last time to sacrifice Himself in connection with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He was crucified on the eve of the Passover, rested in the tomb on the following Sabbath, and rose on Sunday, the day of the first sheaf. In fact, the Synoptic Gospels envisage the ministry of

Jesus as an extended pilgrimage of Jesus with His disciples to Jerusalem for that climatic Passover.

By His observance of the times for worship that were fixed by the liturgical calendar, Jesus both fulfilled and transformed them. Everything that God had promised to grant to His people through their faithful participation in the divine service at the appointed times was given to them in full measure through His incarnate Son. Thus Paul claims that all the festivals and the Sabbaths prefigured Jesus' incarnation and exaltation. He fulfilled them and embodied their fulfillment.

Friday (1/17) Read and discuss Hebrews 4:1–8

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

“As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest,’”

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this passage he said,

“They shall not enter my rest.”

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

The Christian life is complex. Believers are called upon to love, but we see from these verses that we are also called upon to fear. God has promised heavenly rest to believers, but believers should fear missing out on what He has promised. The fear to which the readers are summoned is not disabling but rather is intended to stimulate them to action. Merely hearing the good news does not guarantee life, for the wilderness generation heard good news but failed to believe it. They did not enter the rest of the land of Canaan,

and believers will only enter the heavenly rest if they trust in God and obey Him.

Read or sing Hymn 390 Christ Is Coming!

Saturday (1/18) Read and discuss Matthew 24:36–51

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (ESV)

Commenting on verses 45 through 51, Grant Osborne writes:

Throughout the history of the church this parable was applied mainly to church leaders and teachers. But this is unlikely, for certainly Jesus meant it for all believers who are tempted to mistreat and lord themselves over others. There are three messages here. (1) Jesus is going to return, and that return will be unexpected. (2) Every believer is responsible to be ready at all times, for we will all be held accountable for the way we live. (3) There will be severe judgment for those who live for themselves and refuse to serve others. The abuse of others and hedonism are more a part of the parable than intended to be singled out, but both are viable illustrations of the self-centered living that is condemned here.

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