

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 2 March 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Psalm: 66A O Shout to God with Joy (1-3)

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: Titus 2:11-14

Hymn of Preparation: 374 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 92

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 26:6-13

Sermon Title: *The Surpassing Value of Jesus*

Psalm of Response: 92B It Is Good to Sing Your Praises

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

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 66A O Shout to God with Joy (4-5)

PM Worship

145D God, My King, Thy Might Confessing

290 Consider Well

110A The LORD Said to My Lord

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 110:1-7

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 5:1-10

Sermon Title: *The Source of Eternal Salvation*

Adult Sunday School: Inaugurated Eschatology I: The Kingdom of God

Suggested Preparations

Monday (2/17) Read and discuss Matthew 26:6–13

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to

you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

The structure of 26:6-13 may be laid out in three sections, and the structure also lays bare the central proclamation of this unit, namely, the contrast between the disciples’ continuing obtuseness and Jesus’ steadfast focus on the goal of His ministry. First, the unit begins by establishing a physical setting and describing briefly the action of the unnamed woman. Second, the front end of the contrast emerges in the disciples’ angry reaction; their words illustrate that they utterly lack any awareness of what is now beginning to transpire in relation to their Master. Third, Jesus’ words occupy the remainder - more than half - of the unit. He rebukes His disciples, explains why He does so, and further grounds His rebuke by highlighting His coming travail and by showing how the woman’s act reveals why they will not always have Jesus with them. The final amen statement (“truly”) returns to the woman’s act, affirming that because it is what Jesus says it is, everywhere the Gospel is preached people will also remember this woman.

Read or sing Psalm 66A O Shout to God with Joy (1-3)

Tuesday (2/18) Read and discuss Matthew 26:1-5

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

In this Gospel that offers so much of Jesus’ public teaching, the unique concluding formula to the Eschatological Discourse signals a change: “and when Jesus completed *all* these words” (26:1). The great discourses are over. Jesus will say important things as He moves toward His betrayal, suffering, and death. Nevertheless, the Lord’s voice will diminish until His final cry of dereliction and His last great shout.

From the promise of His glorious *Parousia* as Judge of all, then, 26:1-5 turns the readers’ attention back to the unfinished business at hand. Near to Jerusalem, Jesus bluntly reveals to His disciples what will take place shortly. In two days, the day of the Passover sacrifice and meal will happen; that much they know already. There is more, however: it will be on that day that Jesus will be betrayed, handed over just as He has already said to them

on more than one occasion Now they know – or at least have heard – that it will happen on the Passover.

Read or sing Hymn 374 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!

Wednesday (2/19) Read and discuss Psalm 92

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

How great are your works, O LORD!
Your thoughts are very deep!
The stupid man cannot know;
the fool cannot understand this:
that though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they are doomed to destruction forever;
but you, O LORD, are on high forever.
For behold, your enemies, O LORD,
for behold, your enemies shall perish;
all evildoers shall be scattered.

But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;
you have poured over me fresh oil.
My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies;
my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the LORD;
they flourish in the courts of our God.
They still bear fruit in old age;
they are ever full of sap and green,
to declare that the LORD is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (ESV)

Allen P. Ross writes:

Psalm 92 is filled with praise for the mighty works of God, which the world in its foolishness fails to understand. The goodness of God preserves and blesses the lives of believers in many amazing ways. Unbelievers may flourish for a while, but it is not the same. Ultimately the righteousness of God will judge them and give eternal victory to His faithful people. The exposition of the psalm could be summarized in different ways, but this wording captures the theology: *Almighty God blesses and preserves the righteous so that they will praise him for His powerful and righteous works, which include the destruction of the wicked and the exaltation of the righteous.* We find this same emphasis in the New Testament. Paul tells us that God has redeemed us in order that we might be for the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:12). Specifically, He has extended saving grace to us in Christ Jesus in order to show the riches of His grace (Eph 2:7). The exhibition of the grace of God necessarily includes the reason for the grace – sin. Without the grace of God, we all would stand condemned awaiting the justice of God.

The obvious application for the Psalm, then, would be to praise and acknowledge the LORD for His mighty works so that the world will hear. In praising God's glory and grace, as Paul would phrase it, we would be proclaiming the goodness of God to a world that is unwittingly facing the judgment of the righteous God. The good news is that they can enter into the blessing of God as we have done and enjoy His eternal blessings.

Read or sing Psalm 92B It Is Good to Sing Your Praises

Thursday (2/20) 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:

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David prophesies about a person of infinite greatness who will be his descendant according to His humanity but his Lord in virtue of His divinity. This greater David will be both king and priest, conquering the world with and for His people. ...

Jesus directly quotes “The LORD said to my Lord” to demonstrate that the Christ is greater than David. Jesus’s argument depends on the belief (which He shares) that Psalm 110 is written by David, who speaks by inspiration about the Messiah. C.S. Lewis writes that when Jesus asked this question, He “clearly identified Christ and therefor Himself, with the ‘my Lord’ of Psalm 110 – [He] was in fact hinting at the mystery of the Incarnation by pointing out a difficulty which only it could solve.”

Friday (2/21) Read and discuss Hebrews 5:1–10

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

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

as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (ESV)

Sometimes Protestants stumble over the fact that Jesus “became the source of eternal salvation to all who **obey Him**.” Isn’t salvation a gift received by faith? What does this have to do with obedience? The misunderstanding comes from reducing faith to mere assent. As though receiving the grace of God happens when we raise our hand ... and say, “Sure, I’ll have some of that salvation stuff.” Yet, when the Bible talks of genuine faith ... it is talking about trusting the LORD. This *necessarily* changes our lives. When the Bible speaks of the necessity of obedience, it is not speaking of adding something to faith. It is simply describing what trusting the LORD looks like.

That is helpful, but we might still end up struggling with the fact that my obedience is nowhere close to what it should be. The author of Hebrews understands this and he is saying: “Certainly, but you have a Great High Priest who both fully sympathizes with you and who is able to effectually deal with your sin problem.”

Amy Peeler puts it like this:

Those who are obedient to Him just as He practiced obedience will join Him. As they do, He becomes the cause of eternal salvation for them. Those who follow His path into the dwelling place of God will enter the space where salvation is enjoyed forever. In other words, He both makes salvation (dwelling with God) possible and provides the template for how to arrive at that end. He made the way possible because He agreed to make an offering to purify sins forever (1:3). He fulfilled the call to the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. The author will soon explicate the majesty of this order, but in this section he has focused on the process by which the Son of God is able to serve in it – namely, His suffering and learning. To be a priest in this order is to be sympathetic to the ones the priest represents. If the author is aiming to keep his listeners faithfully enduring while they are in the wilderness, he has shown that Jesus, in become priest, has gone through His own wilderness of temptation. Unlike the generation freed from Egypt, He in every instance, even in the face of death, chose to trust the God who had the power of life over death. The author has been showing that Jesus does what priests do – make offerings and pray to God – and even more that He fulfills His distinct priesthood in a completely effective and distinctively compassionate way.

This means, that instead of this passage leading us towards doubt ... it ought to lead us to assurance. Because, in Christ, we have such a High Priest!

Read or sing Psalm 66A O Shout to God with Joy (4-5)

Saturday (2/22) Read and discuss Matthew 26:6–13

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this

waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

After somewhat neutrally narrating the woman’s centrally important act, Matthew turns his focus to the disciples. They are not reticent, nor are they restrained in how they assess what the woman has done. They react the way the Ten reacted when James and John tried to weasel their way into the two places of glory with Jesus. The disciples respond to the woman’s action the way the chief priests and scribes objected to Jesus. Marvels in the temple precinct and to the children’s acclamation of Him as rightful King in Jerusalem. The disciples become indignant at what this woman has done to (and for) Jesus, and they interpret her deed as an utter waste since the considerable sum that the ointment and jar would have fetched could have been given to help the poor.

Apart from their angry response (hardly praiseworthy when one considers Jesus’ teaching in 5:22-25), the disciples show the depths of their misunderstanding by thinking in terms of ordinary, normal life, rather than in terms of the unique events that are unfolding before their very eyes. To be specific, the disciples react as if Jesus had never said 26:2 or any other predication of His suffering in Jerusalem. Even granting that their concern for the poor is the genuine (for Matthew has given no indication otherwise), their frame of reference is stunningly askew. To be sure, we know exceedingly more than they do. As Jesus’ rebuke and explanation in the unit’s next section will show, however, their objection to what the woman has done is utterly invalid precisely because of the uniqueness of the time as Jesus moves toward death and resurrection.

What this means for the interpretation of this text, then, is that the time-honored discussion about whether showing devotion to Jesus is in some way better than caring for the poor is off target; that question is not Matthew’s concern here. Matthew is not offering his readers a chance to compare and contrast the relative merits of caring for Jesus and caring for the poor, all other things being equal. No, His concern is this: *at this crucial moment in the progress of Jesus’ ministry, what significance adheres to what the woman has done?* The disciples have revealed their scornful, negative interpretation. Jesus now offers His own rebuke and explanation.

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