

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 23 March 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 196 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

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: John 3:6-17

Hymn of Preparation: 202 Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 12:1-28

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 26:26-29

Sermon Title: *The Lord's Supper*

Hymn of Response: 198 Let The Blood in Mercy Poured

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Diaconal Offering

Closing Hymn: 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

PM Worship

234 The God of Abraham Praise

485 Like a River Glorious

408 For All the Saints

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 22:1-19

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 6:9-15

Sermon Title: *Better Things*

Adult Sunday School: Inaugurated Eschatology: The Kingdom of God

Suggested Preparations

Monday (3/17) Read and discuss Matthew 26:26–29

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (ESV)

David Garland writes:

The emphasis in this [Luke's] account falls on the self-giving of Jesus that the disciples are to imitate. "Do this" does not refer simply to repeating the ritual or recalling the memory of Jesus, but making the same self-gift that Jesus made. Jesus' selfless act stands in stark contrast to the disciples' contest for honor and it is what needs to be repeated. The Christian Lord's Supper is based on Jesus' sacrificial death for others. The attitude that led Him to give His life in obedience to God should characterize the attitude of those who join with Him in this Supper.

Read or sing Hymn 196 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Tuesday (3/18) Read and discuss Matthew 26:26–29

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (ESV)

Grant Osborne writes:

The Last Supper launched the major sacramental event in corporate worship. As the church participates in this renewal event, it reenacts and remembers Jesus' sacrificial death and virtually becomes a "word-event."
...

The language of Matthew's telling of this story is transparent in its implications for the later church; each part of this passage is meant to be retold in the life of worship as every member of the church relives the meaning of the death of Christ in corporate communion. Wilkins speaks of the Lord's Supper as "not simply a religious exercise but a schematic for our lives" in the sense that it helps us to look "backward" to the finished act of salvation on the cross that provides an anchor for our lives, "forward" to our future in the consummation of history, "inward" as we examine our hearts and lives and confess our sins before God, "upward" as we realize He is bow at God's right hand, enabling us to "set [our] minds on things above" (Col 3:1-4), "around" as we realize the community that makes corporate worship possible, and "outward" as we "proclaim the Lord's death" to a world dying in sin.

Read or sing Hymn 202 Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face

Wednesday (3/19) Read and discuss Psalm 118:14-29.

The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.
Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,
the right hand of the LORD exalts,
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!”

I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
The LORD has disciplined me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.
I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.
The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This is the LORD’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we pray, O LORD!
O LORD, we pray, give us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!
We bless you from the house of the LORD.
The LORD is God,
and he has made his light to shine upon us.
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
up to the horns of the altar!

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God; I will extol you.
Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever! (ESV)

Commenting on “the stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” John Calvin writes:

David proceeds to repeat that it is erroneous to estimate the kingdom of Christ by the sentiments and opinions of men, because, in spite of the opposition of the world, it is erected in an astonishing manner by the invisible power of God. In the meantime, we ought to remember, that all that was accomplished in the person of Christ extends to the gradual development of his kingdom, even until the end of the world. When Christ dwelt on the earth, he was despised by the chief priests; and now, those who call themselves the successors of Peter and Paul, but who are truly Ananiases and Caiaphases, giant-like wage war against the Gospel and the Holy Ghost. Not that this furious rebellion ought to give us any uneasiness: let us rather humbly adore that wonderful power of God which reverses the perverse decisions of the world. If our limited understandings could comprehend the course which God follows for the protection and preservation of his Church, there would be no mention made of a miracle. From this we conclude that his mode of working is incomprehensible, baffling the understandings of men.

Read or sing Hymn 198 Let The Blood in Mercy Poured

Thursday (3/20) Read and discuss Genesis 22:1–19

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring

as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba. (ESV)

Iain Duguid writes:

What is your top priority in life? What is it that you must have to be happy? ... What, apart from God, do you have to have to make your life meaningful? What’s your idol? For Lot’s wife, it was the city she left behind, Sodom. For Lot’s daughters, it was children. For Abraham, in his encounter with Abimelech, his desire for security won out over obedience. In effect, he was saying, “God is not enough; I must have safety as well.” What is it in your life that you must have? Is obedience to God always your top priority, or is there some part of your life where you are not willing to say, as Job did, “Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him”?

This is not a decision you make once and then it’s over. It is a daily struggle. But we should be making progress, as Abraham was. He struggled over and over again with this question: “Am I willing to believe in God’s ability to do what He has promised, without any help?” Was God able to take care of Abraham and Sarah when famine came? Was God able to open Sarah’s womb?

In Genesis 21, we saw the challenge to Abraham to believe that God would fulfill His promise through Isaac, and to stake everything on that. The proof of Abraham’s faith was seen in his willingness to drive out Hagar and Ishmael, and thus abandon any hope that Ishmael provided a backup for the line of promise. Now, however, God put Abraham to the ultimate test. That supreme test was whether he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, should God demand it. Everything until now had been preparation for this moment. Originally, God had called him to leave his closest relative and go in faith to a land that God would show him. Now again God was calling him to go in faith to a place that God would show him. But this time the expected outcome of Abraham’s obedience was not blessing, but the cutting off by his own hand of the one through whom the blessing was to come. Probably none of us has ever had our faith put to such a severe test as was Abraham’s faith, nor would we wish it upon ourselves.

Friday (3/21) Read and discuss Hebrews 6:9–15

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

The author mixes together encouragement and rebuke in the letter. Believers need warnings and admonitions to remain faithful, but at the same time they also need encouragement. The readers are reminded that their obedience is not trivial or forgettable. God notices what they do in their everyday lives. He knows whether they truly love His name, and that love is expressed in service for the saints. All believers should continue such love and service to the end. The Christian life is a journey that requires patience and continued faith. The reward of eternal life will not be given to those who drop out of the race. Retribution will be meted out for those who cease loving God and fellow believers. Hence we need to be provoked to be diligent until the final day. We must not give into spiritual torpor. The flames of the spiritual life should be fanned by trusting the promises of God.

Read or sing Hymn 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Saturday (3/22) Read and discuss Matthew 26:26–29

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

When Jesus wanted to give His followers – then and now – a way of understanding what was about to happen to Him, He didn’t teach them a theory.

Theories about how Jesus’ death dealt with our sins have come and gone throughout church history. Many of them are profoundly moving, drawing together deep spiritual insight, remarkable theological understanding, and a commitment to bring God’s saving love to the needy world. Many of them have inspired Christian people with a new view of God’s grace and mercy. Theories have their proper place. But they weren’t the main thing that Jesus gave His followers.

He gave them an act to perform. Specifically, he gave them a meal to share. It is a meal that speaks more volumes than any theory. The best way of

finding out what it says is of course to do it, not to talk or write about it; but since this is a book, and my readers are not with me at the Lord's table, let me suggest some of the things that Jesus seems to have intended – and some of the things that Luke, in writing about it, seems to have wanted to draw out.

It was, first and foremost, a *Passover* meal. [The Gospel writers have] told us all along that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to “accomplish His Exodus” [e.g. Luke 9:31]. He has come to do for Israel and the whole world what God did through Moses and Aaron in the first Exodus. When the powers of evil that were enslaving God's people were at their worst, God acted to judge Egypt and save Israel. And the sign and means of both judgment and rescue was the Passover: the angel of death struck down the firstborn of all Egypt, but spared Israel as the firstborn of God, ‘passing over’ their houses because of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts (Exodus 12). Now the judgment that had hung over Israel and Jerusalem, the judgment Jesus had spoken of so often, was to be meted out; and Jesus would deliver His people *by taking its force upon Himself*. His own death would enable His people to escape.

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