

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 30 March 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Psalm: 145D God, My King, Thy Might Confessing

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: Psalm 103:11-13

Hymn of Preparation: 465 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Old Covenant Reading: Zechariah 13:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 26:30-35

Sermon Title: *Struck and Scattered*

Hymn of Response: 466 My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 204 A Parting Hymn We Sing

PM Worship

110B The LORD Has Spoken to My Lord

451 Approach, My Soul, the Mercy Seat

377 Join All the Glorious Names

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 110:1-7

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 6:16-20

Sermon Title: *The Anchor*

Adult Sunday School: Inaugurated Eschatology – the Kingdom of God: Part III

Suggested Preparations

Monday (3/17) Read and discuss Matthew 26:30–35

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster

crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

To be handed over to be crucified is bad enough, for death brings an end to all of one’s work in this created world that matters so much to God. To be handed over into divine judgment is far worse, for God is the one who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. Even though Jesus stands in for Israel as God’s Son and takes the divine judgment into Himself, if He were to remain dead, then God’s people and God’s world would be the losers. Death is part of the problem in God’s world; it is not, in itself and by itself, a solution in any way. This is why the hope that the OT promises entail resurrection from the dead.

Jesus’ prediction of His being crushed and the disciples’ apostasy is not, however, the only thing He said to them. His earlier predictions were never only “passion predictions,” but consistently passion and *resurrection* predictions. Now Jesus promises again that there will be vindication and salvation after the darkness comes upon them and upon Him. “But after I am raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” They will fall, but He will be raised up by God the Father to complete His course of enacting the reign of God through His ministry in this world. The disciples will be utter failures; He will be an utter success. Meeting Him in Galilee, they will be able to be restored, and they will be. This is the plan; this is what is coming. This prediction and this promise are given for them to believe. But they do not believe it now, as Matthew continues with the interaction between Peter and Jesus that displays the spiritual blindness of all of the disciples.

Read or sing Psalm 145D God, My King, Thy Might Confessing

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 465 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Wednesday (3/19) Read and discuss Zechariah 13

"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

"And on that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies.

"On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.' And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who stands next to me,"
declares the LORD of hosts.

"Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be
scattered; I will turn my hand against the little

ones. In the whole land, declares the LORD,
 two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one
 third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into
 the fire, and refine them as one refines silver,
 and test them as gold is tested. They will call
 upon my name, and I will answer them.
 I will say, 'They are my people';
 and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

When our heart is crushed, the temptation is to turn away from God. The temptation is to go as far from God as we can. "God, if that's the way life is, then no thanks, God!" We're appalled, we're angry, we're shocked, we're heart broken. So we run. We run from God. All of this is understandable – it is very understandable. However, it doesn't help.

We need God's help to accept His refining fire. Usually, when you communicate really bad news to someone, they'll start shouting: "No. No! It can't be true. I don't believe it. It can't be. It is impossible. It's not real!" God helps us accept the pain. He helps us surrender our will to His. We do not surrender as a victim of cruelty. Neither do we surrender with a grudge or a hard heart. We surrender in faith.

This is what Peter teaches. "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials. The Christian life does not exempt us from fiery trials. Christ does, however, give us the strength and wisdom not to be destroyed by them. Zechariah states the divine goal: "He himself will call on My name, and I Myself will answer him. I said: 'he is My people.' And he himself will say: 'Yahweh is my God'" (Zech 13:9).

Jesus, after His fiery ordeal on Good Friday, was raised to live on Easter Sunday. Beauty came from ashes. The God who was pierced is revealed to be the King of the universe. We can endure our present circumstances in hope that they are not the end. Sadness, sorrow, sickness, and suffering will never be the last word. *Ever!*

Read or sing Hymn 466 My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Thursday (3/20) 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)

Allen P. Ross writes:

This psalm takes an unexpected turn in the fourth verse to announce that Yahweh has ordained that this future King be a High Priest as well. The text says,

“Yahweh has sworn, and will not relent:
You are a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek”

“Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness.” In the Bible Melchizedek was the Jebusite priest of “the Most High God” who ruled over the ancient city of Salem, generally believed to Jerusalem in the days of Abram. This person appears on the scene rather mysteriously to bless Abram after the battle; and Abram, recognizing him as a spiritual authority pays tithes to him. Because he was both a king and a priest, and because he was reigning in old Jerusalem, he made the perfect prophetic type of the Messiah, whom the prophets declared with be a king and a priest (see Zech. 3 and 6).

In Israel there could be only one order of High Priest (or priests), and in biblical times that was the order of Aaron, in the line of Levi. The Davidic kings from the line of Judah, and any function they had in the sacrificial ritual would have been under the authority of the priesthood. The only way

that a descendant of David could become the official priest was for the order of Aaron to come to an end, which happened at the death of Christ according to New Testament teaching. The saints now have a new High Priest and King. And God declared with a solemn oath that this King would be a priest forever, a Royal Priest – making His loyal subjects a kingdom of priests.

Friday (3/21) Read and discuss Hebrews 6:16–20

For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

We are not promised that there won't be any storms; indeed, the provision of a secure anchor implies that there will be. What we are promised is that we will be kept safe.

This is the promise which lies underneath the appeal of the last two sections, the appeal to stand firm and hold on patiently. The rest of our present passage, leading to this climatic statement, explores the way in which Abraham, the classic biblical example of faithful patience, hung on to God's promises through thick and thin. And it explains, in particular, why Abraham knew – and why we should know – that God means what He says, and that the promises are as solid and unbreakable as they could possibly be. When God made the promises, he swore that he would keep them, not by anyone else, but by His own self.

Read or sing Hymn 204 A Parting Hymn We Sing

Saturday (3/22) Read and discuss Matthew 26:30–35

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

Peter tried to distinguish himself. He failed on two levels. On one level, he will be caused to stumble, like all of the rest. On another level, Matthew ends the unit by relating that although Peter alone had this conversation with Jesus and although Peter alone will deny Jesus thrice before rooster sounds, all of the other disciples were in the same place of ignorance and bluster: “likewise also spoke *all* the disciples.

The narrative continues, and the lesson is the same. Jesus alone will be faithful. The disciples will fall, but there is forgiveness awaiting any of them and all of them. Matthew’s readers/hearers can both shake their heads and humble their own hearts as they watch the disciples’ brazenness and failure. Matthew’s readers/hearers can marvel at Jesus’ powerful faithfulness as He advances toward the climax of God’s plan and as He trembles at what is going to come upon Him.

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