

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 20 April 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Psalm: 8B LORD, Our Lord, in All the Earth

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 1:29

Hymn of Preparation: 282 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 8

New Covenant Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Sermon Title: *Christ Has Been Raised!*

Hymn of Response: 360 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

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

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Diaconal Offering

Closing Hymn: 365 Thine Be the Glory

PM Worship

415 We Gather Together

490 Behold, My Servant

486 Rejoice, Believer, in the Lord

Old Covenant Reading: Leviticus 9:1-24

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 7:11-19

Sermon Title: *A Better Priesthood*

Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School Today

Suggested Preparations

Monday (4/14) Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 15:20–28

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his

feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (ESV)

Richard Hays writes:

Having asserted so strongly that “the resurrection of the dead *has* come” through Christ (v. 21) and that we also have a share in the benefits of His resurrection, Paul now thinks it is necessary to qualify what he has said so that there can be no misunderstanding: the resurrection of our bodies remains an eschatological hope. “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.” Since Paul so carefully delineates the sequence of these events in time, this is the one sentence in the chapter that might offer some support for the view that some of the Corinthians were prematurely claiming to be enjoying the life of the resurrection. Paul carefully situates the church’s present life in the interval between Christ’s resurrection and *Parousia* [Second Coming] and insists that our resurrection must await His coming. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the Corinthians had an “overrealized eschatology.” It simply means that Paul is concerned to tell the story rightly and to correct a possible misreading of what he himself had just said in verses 20-22. The resurrection of the dead will occur at the time of Christ’s *Parousia*, not sooner.

God has planned the assault on death that way: Christ comes first, then, in the second line of attack, those who belong to Him. ... Death is an “enemy” to be subdued by Christ as He destroys all the enemies of God and takes control of everything in creation. The final defeat of Death at the general resurrection will constitute the collapse of all resistance to Christ’s power and bring us to “the end, when He hands over the kingdom [to] God the Father, after He has destroyed every ruler and authority and power.”

Read or sing Psalm 8B LORD, Our Lord, in All the Earth

Tuesday (4/15) Read and discuss Matthew 26:47–56

While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be

so?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled. (ESV)

Knox Chamblin writes:

Far from catching Jesus off guard, the betrayal and arrest fulfill His prophecy. Judas calls Jesus a rabbi; never in Matthew does Judas address Him as “Lord.” The kiss is both hypocritical and treacherous. Jesus calls Judas a friend, “an open-hearted but not intimate greeting (D.A. Carson).” ... If it is a question, Jesus confronts Judas with the enormity of his deed.

The disciple apparently intends to kill the high priest’s servant. Jesus’ response accords with His teaching. His refusal to call upon a power easily able to prevent the arrest confirms His resolve to obey the Father and fulfill the Scripture. Rejecting the way of rebellion, Jesus exercises power in teaching. Moreover, Jesus here deliberately turns Himself over to His enemies both human and spiritual, allows their malice to envelope Him, and by that very means conquers them. Jesus shows His power by standing His ground and submitting to the arrest. The disciples’ flight is both the result of their having exerted spurious power, and the proof that they lack genuine power.

Read or sing Hymn 282 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art

Wednesday (4/16) 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 has made us in His image and 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 and then everything will be made right.

Read or sing Hymn 360 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Thursday (4/17) Read and discuss Leviticus 9

On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. And say to the people of Israel, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you.'" And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. And Moses said, "This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar. But the fat and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses. The flesh and the skin he burned up with fire outside the camp.

Then he killed the burnt offering, and Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar. And they handed the burnt offering to him, piece by piece, and the head, and he burned them on the altar. And he washed the entrails and the legs and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar.

Then he presented the people's offering and took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and killed it and offered it as a sin offering, like the first one. And he presented the burnt offering and offered it according to the rule. And he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.

Then he killed the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people. And Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar. But the fat pieces of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the entrails and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver—they put the fat pieces on the breasts, and he burned the fat pieces on the altar, but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses commanded.

Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. (ESV)

Jay Sklar writes:

A central part of the LORD's character is that He is holy – set apart as unique and distinct – in terms of His moral purity. He has the ultimate sense of what is morally good and right; in fact, He defines it. As a result, He is not indifferent to sin. Those who have a good sense of smell are not indifferent to bad odors; they are repulsed by them. So, too, with the LORD and sin. If He is to be present in the midst of a people, they must deal properly with their sin.

But sin is not just an offense to the LORD's character; it undermines His good and holy purposes for His creation. Because of His absolute moral purity – His love of all that is good and right – the LORD created this world to be a place characterized by mercy, kindness, justice, and love. Sin mars these things; it is a parasite on His creation, robbing humanity, whom He loves, of the goodness and peace He intended. He does not oppose sin because He is a cosmic killjoy; He opposes it because He is a loving and holy God.

Thus, when the Israelites dealt properly with their sin, they were in effect saying, "Most good and holy LORD, who hates our sin and the damage it causes, forgive us, cleanse us, and strengthen us to reflect Your character into the world that it might be filled with Your goodness, mercy, justice, and love." This is the natural prayer for anyone who has come to see the beauty and glory of this King's holiness and the loving goodness of His purposes for His world.

Friday (4/18) Read and discuss Hebrews 7:11–19

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him,

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

For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. (ESV)

Doug Moo writes:

The author makes clear that the law was never adequate in itself to provide intimate and permanent access to God. It was weak and ineffectual; it focused on the outward and was unable to cleanse the conscience. To be sure, it is important not to take this criticism too far. The author clearly affirms the divine origin and beneficial purpose of the law. Moreover, he brings out a certain kind of continuity by placing the “change” in the law in the context of the new covenant. An important provision in this covenant was the writing of God’s laws in the mind and on the heart. The coming of the new covenant then, means not simply a cancellation or annulment of the law but its internalization and transformation.

If we ask why, according to Hebrews, this “change” had to occur, the answer appears to focus on the inherent weakness of the law. ... Hebrews, focusing on the cultic law, sees the law itself as inadequate to care for the human dilemma. ... At the same time, the author makes clear that the Old Testament continues to speak directly and meaningfully to the people of God. It is just that the words God speaks in the Old Testament have to be sifted in the hermeneutical filter of new-covenant fulfillment to determine how they now relate to God’s new-covenant people.

Read or sing Hymn 365 Thine Be the Glory

Saturday (4/19) Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 15:20–28

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (ESV)

Richard Hays writes:

All the “if” clauses of verses 12-19 are counterfactual conditions. With the ringing affirmation of verse 20, Paul moves from illusion to reality: “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.” This triumphant declaration resumes the glad story told in verses 3-8 and sweeps away all the gloomy hypothetical consequences that follow from denying the resurrection.

There is also a new element in the story here, an aspect of Christ’s resurrection not made explicit in the traditional kerygmatic formula of verses 3b-5: the risen Christ is “the *first fruits* of those who have fallen asleep.” His resurrection is not merely a wondrous event that confirms His special status before God; rather it is the beginning of a much greater harvest. This is the crucial point that some of the Corinthians had failed to understand: they did not see that there was a direct connection between Christ’s resurrection and their own future fate. It may seem remarkable to us that anyone could have become an adherent of the early Christian movement without understanding this point, but as both 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 demonstrate, Paul had to explain it repeatedly to his Gentile congregations. (Paul’s correspondence in general suggests that a fundamental task of ministry is to teach the basics of the faith again and again.) Perhaps he had not articulated this connection fully enough while he was with them, precisely because it was so obvious to him.

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