

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 25 May 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Psalm: 95A O Come before the LORD, Our King

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: Isaiah 55:7-9

Psalm of Preparation: 103E O Come, My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 53:7-12

New Covenant Reading: Matthew 27:11-26

Sermon Title: *The King Condemned*

Hymn of Response: 280 Wondrous King, All-Glorious

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 338 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

PM Worship

274 Jesus, My Great High Priest

354 Not All the Blood of Beasts

377 Join All the Glorious Names

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 1:1-20

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 9:1-14

Sermon Title: *How Much More!*

Adult Sunday School – Personal Eschatology

Suggested Preparations

Monday (5/19) Read and discuss Matthew 27:11–26

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they

had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

It is very likely that when Jesus of Nazareth stood before Pontius Pilate, there was no formal trial in the normal sense of Roman justice. Legal procedures of which we are aware did not apply to justice administered in the provinces; we actually possess no direct information about Roman justice in Judea outside of the Gospels’ own testimony. Moreover, Roman law was apparently largely concerned with the rights of citizens, who were highborn. Jesus of Nazareth was almost certainly not a Roman citizen. When he stood before Pilate, he stood as a Galilean Jew of lowly birth and status. What this means is that Pilate would not need to follow Roman law; this case would have been handled *extra ordinem*, outside the law as established, and Pilate would function as prosecutor, judge, and jury. Only his own sense of right and wrong on the one hand and his own need to balance competing forces and interests on the other hand would come into play as the Galilean stood before him.

Pilate did, in fact, have to reckon with the Sanhedrin, and this was naturally the case. As the incidents related by Josephus show, Pilate needed to navigate between competing Roman and Jewish interests in a way that kept the peace, preventing a public uproar. This is the background for the Gospels’ presentation of Jesus before Pilate and specifically of Matthew 27:11-26. The most prominent representatives of the Jewish temple and religion, with whom Pilate has had dealings for at least a few years, present to him a provincial noncitizen whom they have found guilty of serious charges that are both religious and political. The man has admitted to being the Messiah, God’s Son, a royal figure, and He has promised a future in which He exercises authority – all authority. How precisely the Sanhedrin articulated these charges to Pilate we do not know. He interpreted whatever was said as a claim to be “the King of the Jews.” That is where Matthe’s

narrative picks up the events, now that Jesus has been handed over to Pontius Pilate.

These sixteen verses tell of the final decision to crucify Jesus. The human authority belongs to Rome and to Pilate, the representative of Rome's authority. The drama grows on every level: political, human, and divine. We can consider the unity in three parts of the purposes of commenting on it. The first part presents Pilate with the enigmatic figure of Jesus, accused of claiming (in some sense) to be "the King of the Jews." It is on that charge that Pilate will finally condemn and execute Jesus. The second part raises, delays, and then raises again this question: which one will Pilate release, and which one will he crucify? The final three verses tell how all the human characters are caught in the divine irony as they join together in rejecting the King of the Jews and sending Him to the cross – which is precisely the place that God wants Him to go.

Read or sing Hymn 95A O Come before the LORD, Our King

Tuesday (5/20) Read and discuss Matthew 27:1–10

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." (ESV)

Knox Chamblin writes:

The suicide of Judas expresses Judas's final, horrified realization of his bondage to money. Under its mastery, he has betrayed an innocent person – indeed the supremely Innocent One. The authorities are even more guilty. Like Judas, they hand Jesus over to death; unlike him, they refuse to acknowledge the enormity of their deed.

In the face of the judgment against Jesus, verse 6 appallingly illustrates Jewish scrupulousness. In verses 9-10 Matthew artfully weaves together three Old Testament passages: (1) Zechariah 11:12-13 (thirty pieces of

silver thrown “into the house of the LORD to the potter”); (2) Jeremiah 32:6-9 (a purchased field); and Jeremiah 19:1-11 (hence the naming of this prophet in Matt. 27:9), which speaks of a potter and the Potsherd Gate, of elders and priests, of Jerusalem’s being filled with innocent blood, and of a burial site. Both Zechariah and Jeremiah speak of judgment. In Zechariah 11 the exchange of money expresses Judah’s rejection of Yahweh and His judgment on her. In Jeremiah 19 the shedding of innocent blood precipitates judgment, the severity of which is preserved in the cemetery’s name.

Read or sing Psalm 103E O Come, My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord

Wednesday (5/21) Read and discuss Isaiah 53:7–12

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors. (ESV)

Willem VanGemeren writes:

The Servant Himself did nothing wrong. He did no violence, nor did He speak in a deceptive way. Why, then, did Yahweh lay such suffering upon Him? The reason for the suffering must be found in the nature of the judgment of God. The LORD brought Him through torture, judgment, death, and finally burial. In these verses Isaiah describes how the Servant was oppressed and afflicted, how He did not receive a just sentence. He was put to death and buried like a criminal. Even though His suffering was unjust, the Servant accepted His humiliation quietly, patiently, and obediently. He is compared to a lamb which is led to the slaughter or to a sheep when it is being sheared (v. 7). Quietly He received the judgment from God because He bore that judgment for others.

Read or sing Hymn 280 Wondrous King, All-Glorious

Thursday (5/22) Read and discuss Isaiah 1:1–20

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
for the LORD has spoken:
“Children have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.
The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master’s crib,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.”

Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
children who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the LORD,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged.

Why will you still be struck down?
Why will you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and raw wounds;
they are not pressed out or bound up
or softened with oil.

Your country lies desolate;
 your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence
 foreigners devour your land;
 it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.
And the daughter of Zion is left
 like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
 like a besieged city.

If the LORD of hosts
 had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
 and become like Gomorrah.

Hear the word of the LORD,
 you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
 you people of Gomorrah!
“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
 says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
 and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
 or of lambs, or of goats.

“When you come to appear before me,
 who has required of you
 this trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain offerings;
 incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
 I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
Your new moons and your appointed feasts
 my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me;
 I am weary of bearing them.
When you spread out your hands,
 I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
 I will not listen;
 your hands are full of blood.
Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
 remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
 learn to do good;

seek justice,
 correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
 plead the widow's cause.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
 they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
 they shall become like wool.
If you are willing and obedient,
 you shall eat the good of the land;
but if you refuse and rebel,
 you shall be eaten by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (ESV)

Andrew Bartelt writes:

Isaiah 1 provides an overture or prologue to the entire message or vision of the prophet, whose message begins with a word of warning, a call to repentance. I have argued that 1:2-20 represents a first stage in Isaiah's ministry, in which his message – summarized in the name of his older son, *She'ar-yashub* – is that remnant will repent (and return to be the people of God that they have been chosen and called to be) and be spared the judgment of God that would entail the full destruction of the land, the city, and the temple. If the reference to the land in 1:7 and to the city in 1:8 reflects the situation at the time of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 BC, then Isaiah is here reflecting on the bulk of his prophetic ministry as seen through that lens. Indeed, to some degree, the faithful actions of Hezekiah, in contrast to those of Ahaz a generation earlier, had, in fact, spared the city, even if only a remnant remained and the fullness of Isaiah's message was yet to be realized.

But the two major problems addressed in 1:2-20, the people's rejection of the Holy One of Israel as their God (1:4) and the false worship of even the true God (1:11-14), were not resolved, in spite of God's willingness to “work this out” under His graceful forgiveness (1:18). Isaiah had witnessed the major attempt at reform under Hezekiah with its “multitude of sacrifices” (1:11), but the underlying problems of vain ritualism and trust in the ways and means of the nations, instead of faith in the faithfulness of Yahweh as King over His kingdom were, at best, temporarily abated. ...

While reacting to his own historical moment, Isaiah's opening speech speaks to a chronic problem within the people of God in any age. The self-centeredness and self-seeking of even God's people continues to turn the gracious covenant relationship of God and people, father and son, into one of rebellion against even the most caring and loving parent. The profound

implications of the covenant relationship are simply expressed in the formulation “I am your God; you are My people.” This establishes our identity, and the breadth and depths of what it means to be the people of God should shape and drive our attitudes and actions. But too often God’s ways are rejected, His discipline gets ignored, and His grace and forgiveness are taken for granted.

Friday (5/23) Read and discuss Hebrews 9:1–14

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (ESV)

Douglas Moo writes:

In Hebrew’s distinctive presentation of salvation, the spatial imagery of “drawing near” to God or “entering” into God’s presence stands out. Spatial imagery obviously dominates this paragraph, with its overview of the structure of the sanctuary. One aspect of that structure is of special interest to the author: its division between an “outer room” and an “inner room.” This structure itself illustrates, as our author concludes in verse 8, that “the way into the Most Holy Place was not yet disclosed, as long as the first tabernacle still had standing.” The coming of Christ, however, opens the way to that Most Holy Place, the representation of the presence of God. The

“way” into the Most Holy Place has been opened for us. The solid hope we have because of the work of Christ “enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain;” this hope enables us to “draw near” to God. Believers in Hebrews are therefore described as those who “draw near” to God. At the same time, we are also urged to “draw near” to God. The importance of this call to draw near can be seen in the fact that the two places where the author urges us to draw near occur in the paragraphs that frame the great central section of Hebrews. Thus, Hebrews 4:16: “let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Applying this verse to prayer is entirely appropriate. Yet the call to “draw near” applies much more broadly than just to our prayer life. “Drawing near” to God should mark our entire lives. The detailed prescriptions for how to enter God’s presence and the dire warnings about seeking to approach Him without appropriate measures in the Old Testament testify to the great gap that exists between sinful humans and a holy God. But the good news that Hebrews broadcasts is that Christ entered into God’s presence as our “pioneer” or “forerunner.” He not only enters ahead of us, leading the way, but through His entrance he paves the way for us to enter as well.

Entrance into the presence of the God of the universe is an inestimable privilege and blessing – available for all those who seek to follow our forerunner in faith. We should not take that privilege lightly but treasure it and take advantage of it every day.

Read or sing Hymn 338 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Saturday (5/24) Read and discuss Matthew 27:11–26

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

Pilate exercises his authority. Having let the leaders and the crowds express their preferred choice, he decides. He exercises the authority that he alone possesses. Releasing a dangerous man to their keeping, Pilate orders the innocent Jesus to be flogged and then handed over to his soldiers so that Jesus might be crucified. And yet Pilate’s authority is utterly subservient to God’s greater plan. The pattern of unwitting agreement continues. Whether it is the disciple who betrayed Jesus, the religious leaders who condemned Him, or the Roman prefect who decided that Jesus would die in order to keep the peace, they all agree with God. Jesus will be crucified.

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