

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 3 August 2025

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Hymn: 486 Rejoice, Believer, in the Lord

Confession of Sin

O great and everlasting God, Who dwells in unapproachable light, Who searches and knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart; We confess that we have not loved You with all our heart, nor with all our soul, nor with all our mind, nor with all our strength; Nor our neighbors as ourselves. We have loved what we ought not to have loved; We have coveted what is not ours; We have not been content with Your provisions for us. We have complained in our hearts about our family, about our friends, about our health, about our occupations, about Your church, and about our trials. We have sought our security in those things which perish, rather than in You, the Everlasting God. Chasten, cleanse, and forgive us, through Jesus Christ, who is able for all time to save us who approach You through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Romans 8:1-14

Psalm of Preparation: 33 With Joy Let Us Sing to the LORD (1-3)

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 4:1-16

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 11:1-7

Sermon Title: *Living by Faith*

Psalm of Response: 33 With Joy Let Us Sing to the LORD (4-5)

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 234 The God of Abraham Praise

PM Worship

118A O Thank the LORD for All His Goodness (1-4)

118A O Thank the LORD for All His Goodness (5-8)

402 Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

Old Covenant Reading: Hosea 1:1-2:1

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 2:1-10

Sermon Title: *Broken Family, Unbroken Promises*

No Sunday School – Extended Time of Fellowship

Suggested Preparations

Monday (7/28) Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1–7

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his

faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (ESV)

Doug Moo writes:

Faith, according to the author, gives us the ability to “see” things that cannot be seen (11:1). These unseen things may now exist or they may be promised future realities – the author, as I have argued, mentions both in verse 1. Thus, in this chapter, Moses, for example, persevered in the course God chose for him “because he saw Him who is invisible” (v. 27); at the same time, he was willing to suffer disgrace for Christ because “he was looking ahead to his reward” (v. 26). This ability of faith to see the unseen bookends the passage [in both verse 1 and verse 7].

The importance of seeing the unseen is underscored throughout the New Testament. Paul famously reminds us that “we live by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7). A key word in Ephesians is “the heavenlies” – the unseen spiritual realm where we, as believers, have our true identity and where we daily fight a battle with evil spiritual forces. In Revelation, John is regularly given a vision of the spiritual reality that lies behind the battles we fight in this world. But the need for faithful Christians to see the unseen is especially prominent in Hebrews 11.

Read or sing Hymn 486 Rejoice, Believer, in the Lord

Tuesday (7/29) Read and discuss Matthew 28:16–20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (ESV)

Jeffrey Gibbs writes:

The mission command to “make disciples” is just that, a command. The Eleven began to carry it out, and others are to continue it. It is a command, however, that is based on a Christological reality and supported by a Christological promise. The Eleven (and others) will make disciples *because* all authority has been given to Jesus, risen from the dead. That means that He is the Lord and that ultimately the work of making disciples

is rooted in His authority to save. Ultimate matters are not in the hands of the Eleven or anyone else. Ultimate matters are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. Moreover, the making of disciples is supported by the promise of the ongoing presence of Jesus in that task: “I am / will be with you for all the days, until the consummation of the age” (28:20) is not a general sort of promise of Christ’s presence to His disciples; rather, it is a promise that sustains and enables the making of disciples. The church will not go out alone as she baptizes and teaches. Jesus will be going with her. In that sense, although the Great Commission is, on one level, Jesus’ command, which His Israel must obey, on a deeper level, it is a command to which Jesus commits Himself; He will undergird and accompany the performance of it. “the one who receives you, receives Me” (10:40). With this authority and this promise, Jesus speaks to their doubt.

Read or sing Psalm 33 With Joy Let Us Sing to the LORD (1-3)

Wednesday (7/30) Read and discuss Genesis 4:1–16

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, and you must rule over it.”

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (ESV)

Tremper Longman writes:

The biblical God does not need sacrifices for food. [In Psalm 50, verses 12-13] God tells the Israelites, “If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the

world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?”

So God was not disappointed in Cain because he failed to provide the proper legumes to go along with His main course provided by Abel, but rather because the quality of the sacrifice revealed the insincerity of his worship. The author of Hebrews contrasts the two sacrifices, “By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.”

The biblical witness is consistent in its condemnation of the mere outward exercise of religion. Sacrifice alone does not bring forgiveness, but only a repentant heart. Deuteronomy and Jeremiah both blast those who are circumcised in their body, but not in their heart.

God does not dislike religious ritual, far from it. He commanded the sacrificial system and told Abraham that he and his offspring should be circumcised, but the physical act itself does nothing unless it is an outward sign of an inward reality.

The point is that God wants us to love Him “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Unlike Cain, we should not just go through the motions of worship.

Read or sing Psalm 33 With Joy Let Us Sing to the LORD (4-5)

Thursday (7/31) Read and discuss 1 Peter 2:1–10

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (ESV)

Stephen Moyter writes:

A stone can look most unimpressive – but it can perform a vital function if made the cornerstone of a large building; or it can bring a person tumbling to the ground if he or she stumbles over it. Jesus has become the cornerstone of God’s spiritual temple, and there are two possible responses. We can either take our own angle and position from the Cornerstone, and line ourselves up on Him; or we can refuse to live by reference to Him, and stumble over Him instead. It is a vivid picture.

Peter urges his readers to see that they are being built in line with Christ: sharing all the angles of His life, experiencing His rejection as well as the glory. His opponents stumble fatally, but those joined to Christ are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, contrary to all appearances. In verses 9 and 10 Peter piles up phrases from the Old Testament to show how all that is true of God’s chosen covenant people is true for those who believe in Jesus, however rejected and weak they may seem.

Friday (8/1) Read and discuss Hosea 1

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beer, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

And the LORD said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Say to your brothers, “You are my people,” and to your sisters, “You have received mercy.” (ESV)

G. Herbert Livingston writes:

It was a customary practice among the Hebrews to give their children names bearing special meanings. A name could express affirmation of faith in God, parental hope concerning a child, or a trait of a baby. In Hosea’s family each name is given by the LORD to bear a divine message.

The first boy’s name, Jezreel, literally means “God sows” but has geographical and historical significance as well. There was a royal city by this name at the western tip of Mount Gilboa and also a valley that lay to the west. Its soil has always been highly productive. Jehu, an army general, attacked the royal city soon after the death of Ahab and killed Jezebel with her pagan prophets. Jehu became king and continued to brutally destroy anyone he did not like. The boy’s name symbolizes God’s punishment for this horrible sin and that it will happen at the same place.

The name of the next child, a daughter, is Lo-Ruhamah [“No Mercy”]. Her name signifies that the LORD is removing His mercy and love from Israel.
...

The second son’s name, Lo-Ammi, means “not My people” and declares to Israel that her relationship as the LORD’s people has come to an end. ... Yet in spite of Israel’s sin, that mercy is still available and the possibility for renewal of the relationship exists. As terrible as the day of Jezreel would be, the people of the two kingdoms could be reunited and ruled by one leader.

Read or sing Hymn 234 The God of Abraham Praise

Saturday (8/2) Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1–7

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (ESV)

John Kleinig writes:

After implying that Enoch must have been a man of faith since he was well-pleasing to God, the teacher draws an axiomatic negative and positive conclusion about faith from the cases of Abel and Enoch. Negatively, he asserts that without faith it is impossible to please God. Positively, he says why this is so: people please God by approaching Him in the right way in their worship of Him, like Abel with his offering. Logically, anyone who “comes near” to God in [worship] must believe two things about God. First comes belief that God “is.” That echo of Ex 3:11-14 does not refer just to theoretical belief in the existence of a God but to belief in the God of Israel and this God’s actual presence with His people in keeping with His undertaking “to be” their God (Ex. 3:14). The people who seek Him trust in His promises and approach Him in [worship] to petition Him as their heavenly patron for gifts from Him, the gifts that He promises to grant them as His clients who seek His mercy and grace.

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