

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 5 October 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Psalm: 42C As Thirsts the Hart for Water Brooks

Confession of Sin

Almighty and everlasting God, Glorious Creator of all things, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; We have sinned against Your holy Name, by failing to glorify You in our lives as your redeemed children. Our unthankfulness extends to every thought and deed, as well as to our failure to thank you with our lips. We have not lived to the praise of the glory of Your grace. We have not esteemed the reproach of Jesus Christ our Savior to be greater than the riches of this world. We have failed to estimate the infinite cost of the salvation won for us at the cross through the shed blood of Jesus. We have not been faithful to You as You have been faithful to us in all things. Father, forgive us for our ingratitude through the reconciling sacrifice of Jesus Christ our all-sufficient Mediator, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 78:38-39

Psalm of Preparation: 75 We Give You Thanks, O God

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 42:1-11

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 12:18-29

Sermon Title: *Changed and Refined*

Hymn of Response: 286 Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 416 Your Hand, O God, Has Guided

PM Worship

425 How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place

430 Salvation unto Us Has Come

69B Thy Lovingkindness, Lord, Is Good and Free

Old Covenant Reading: Hosea 9:1-17

New Covenant Reading: Galatians 3:10-29

Sermon Title: *Into Exile*

Adult Sunday School – Visiting Missionaries. All Sunday School Classes Will Meet in the Cafeteria Together

Suggested Preparations

Monday (9/29) Read and discuss Hebrews 12:18–29

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal

gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (ESV)

The communion of saints contains both the church militant, those on earth who continue to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, through faith in Jesus Christ; and also the church triumphant, those believers who have passed from this life into the presence of the Lord. Commenting on the latter, Amy Peeler writes:

The author paints the humans gathered on Mount Zion as *spirits*. This term connects them with God, who is not a natural father but the Father of spirits (12:23). Because they are dwelling with God, it is fitting to describe them as *righteous* and as those who have been *made* perfect. They have reached the end of their struggle with sin. They have endured the training that took place during their lives and are now mature and are enjoying the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Put differently, because of their faith, they are now living with God. They are experiencing the perfection the law could not bring, but that is now possible because of Christ, the perfect one. The choice of this term also allows for the development of an intermediary eschatology. They do not have resurrected bodies yet, but exist as spirits. These phrases are the author of Hebrews’ way of describing the reality Paul articulates as “being absent from the body is to be present [more woodenly, to be at home] with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8).

Read or sing Psalm 42C As Thirsts the Hart for Water Brooks

Tuesday (9/30) Read and discuss Hebrews 12:12–17

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. (ESV)

Commenting on verses 12 and 13, Philip Edgecumbe Hughes writes:

The practical logic of the argument that has preceded is now applied to the readers in a prolonged and diversified exhortation, which continues virtually to the end of the epistle. In these two verses the imagery of the athletic contest is retained: the severity of the conflict with its continuous discipline is such that the competitor who lacks determination allows his hands to hang down and feels his knees to be weakened; and, giving way to discouragement, he easily falters in the race and fails to keep a straight course. The essential thing, however, is to press on and to continue competing. The struggle is serious, and on its outcome eternal issues depend. Present trials are the way to the greatest prize. Those to whom this letter is sent are, like us, not the only contestants, nor are they the first contestants (ch. 11!). Paul and Barnabas, as they blazed a trail for the gospel, learned the fierceness and the fatigue of the struggle; not only, however, did they themselves joyfully and undauntedly persevere, but they also “strengthened the souls” of their converts, “exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Read or sing Psalm 75 We Give You Thanks, O God

Wednesday (10/1) Read and discuss Psalm 42

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”
These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;

therefore I remember you
 from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
 from Mount Mizar.
 Deep calls to deep
 at the roar of your waterfalls;
 all your breakers and your waves
 have gone over me.
 By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,
 and at night his song is with me,
 a prayer to the God of my life.
 I say to God, my rock:
 “Why have you forgotten me?
 Why do I go mourning
 because of the oppression of the enemy?”
 As with a deadly wound in my bones,
 my adversaries taunt me,
 while they say to me all the day long,
 “Where is your God?”

 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you in turmoil within me?
 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
 my salvation and my God. (ESV)

If spiritual depression is a normal part of everyone’s walk with the LORD, and it is, what exactly are the cures? Well, “cure” is far too strong a word for us to use. It isn’t as though whenever you feel a bout of spiritual depression coming on that you can just follow these three easy steps and your life will be as happy as the pharmaceutical companies portray in their ads. Psalm 42 doesn’t give us easy and guaranteed steps to immediate happiness. But it does give us steps to take to combat spiritual depression so that we can walk faithfully through the valley of discouragement and eventually come out the other side.

1. First, as Jesus teaches us in Luke chapter 18 – “We are to always pray and to never lose heart.” Singing this Psalm in times of discouragement is a wonderful way to put that command into practice. For even while the Psalmist confesses his spiritual dryness, he is pouring out his soul to God. Tim Keller puts it like this: “If nothing else, talk to God about the fact that you don’t feel like you are getting anything out of worship. Talk with God about how you long to feel His presence again.”

When you don’t feel like worshipping, when you don’t feel like praying, when you don’t feel like reading your Bible – do it anyway. For we don’t walk by our feelings – we walk by faith.

2. Second, the Psalm teaches us to remember the loving kindness of God that we have experienced in the past. Look back at verse 4 with me:

These things **I remember**,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

On the one hand, this is an expression of discouragement – that times in the past were better than they are in the present. But it is also a reminder of the joy of worshipping God with His people – of God’s gracious presence in our lives that we have experienced in the past. This reminder of past experiences of God’s loving-kindness encourages us to hope in God for the future.

This is why thanksgiving is so closely related to faith.

3. Third, this Psalm teaches us to preach to our own hearts. What is the Psalmist doing? He is looking for his hopes and he is realizing that he is downcast because he has been placing hope in the wrong things. And he is calling himself to refocus his hopes on the Living God.

It is only when the Psalmist focuses his hopes on the LORD that he begins to see a glimmer of true hope returning to his life.

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Intriguingly, the Psalmist can’t even bring himself to say that I am praising him. It still feels like something in the future. But in the very act of saying this – he praises LORD as the God of his salvation.

4. This leads to a natural extension, as we in the New Covenant seek to preach to our own hearts. Now that Christ has come, we can meditate on this Psalm in light of everything Jesus has done for us. How do we know that God hasn’t abandoned us? Jesus came and identified with us – to bear our burdens and to carry away our sins. Therefore, Jesus is the One who pre-eminently cries out on the cross: “I thirst.” Jesus is the One who is most brutally and unjustly surrounded by mockers who derided Him saying: “Where is His God?” Jesus is the One, who on the cross gave out that great cry of dereliction from Psalm 22, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” Jesus didn’t just lose a sense of the gracious presence of God in His life. His Father in heaven, turned away kindness and poured out upon Jesus His holy wrath against every sin that you and I will ever commit. This is the Jesus who has promised to never leave nor forsake you. Jesus was temporarily forsaken by God so that you never would be.

Read or sing Hymn 286 Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder

Thursday (10/2) Read and discuss Galatians 3:10–29

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise. (ESV)

The Judaizers in Galatia were trying to convince the Gentile Christians that they had to become Jewish Christians, that they needed to get circumcised and keep the Jewish ceremonial law, in order to fully inherit the promises that the LORD had made through Abraham. In this passage, Paul is making clear that the Mosaic Law could not possibly have annulled or changed the LORD’s prior covenant promises.

Scott McClelland writes:

Paul is arguing that no one acquainted with the Abrahamic covenant could mistake the Mosaic law as its fulfillment. The very terminology of the older

pact, “and to your seed” (v. 16), precludes the idea that the Israelites, even if they had been capable of following the law, would have been the earlier covenant’s fulfillment (this is what Paul means when he points out that a multifaceted fulfillment was never in view as would be implied if the covenant had specified “and to seeds,” v. 16). The apostle is not being overly literal with the term seed. He only wishes to remind his readers of what they, and the Judaizers, had come to know, namely, that the Abrahamic covenant would be fulfilled by a personal deliverer, not by a legal code followed by many.

Friday (10/3) Read and discuss Hosea 9

Rejoice not, O Israel!

Exult not like the peoples;
for you have played the whore, forsaking your God.
You have loved a prostitute’s wages
on all threshing floors.

Threshing floor and wine vat shall not feed them,
and the new wine shall fail them.

They shall not remain in the land of the LORD,
but Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria.

They shall not pour drink offerings of wine to the LORD,
and their sacrifices shall not please him.

It shall be like mourners’ bread to them;
all who eat of it shall be defiled;
for their bread shall be for their hunger only;
it shall not come to the house of the LORD.

What will you do on the day of the appointed festival,
and on the day of the feast of the LORD?

For behold, they are going away from destruction;
but Egypt shall gather them;
Memphis shall bury them.

Nettles shall possess their precious things of silver;
thorns shall be in their tents.

The days of punishment have come;
the days of recompense have come;
Israel shall know it.

The prophet is a fool;
the man of the spirit is mad,
because of your great iniquity
and great hatred.

The prophet is the watchman of Ephraim with my God;
yet a fowler’s snare is on all his ways,

and hatred in the house of his God.
They have deeply corrupted themselves
as in the days of Gibeah:
he will remember their iniquity;
he will punish their sins.

Like grapes in the wilderness,
I found Israel.
Like the first fruit on the fig tree
in its first season,
I saw your fathers.
But they came to Baal-peor
and consecrated themselves to the thing of shame,
and became detestable like the thing they loved.
Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird—
no birth, no pregnancy, no conception!
Even if they bring up children,
I will bereave them till none is left.
Woe to them
when I depart from them!
Ephraim, as I have seen, was like a young palm planted in a meadow;
but Ephraim must lead his children out to slaughter.
Give them, O LORD—
what will you give?
Give them a miscarrying womb
and dry breasts.

Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal;
there I began to hate them.
Because of the wickedness of their deeds
I will drive them out of my house.
I will love them no more;
all their princes are rebels.

Ephraim is stricken;
their root is dried up;
they shall bear no fruit.
Even though they give birth,
I will put their beloved children to death.
My God will reject them
because they have not listened to him;
they shall be wanderers among the nations. (ESV)

Derek Kidner writes:

Every nation has its celebrated spots whose names evoke the glories of the past or present. Yet sometimes it might be startling to compare their earthly

with their heavenly reputations. Gilgal is a case in point: hallowed by its altars (12:11) and famous names and monuments (Joshua's first foothold in the Promised Land; Saul's first kingly glory, David's welcome back from exile) – all of which leave God entirely unimpressed. Far from hallowed, it is crammed with evil; and the only reference to its history is to its role in forfeiting God's favor for the nation as a whole.

In its direct, outspoken way this is as devastating as Amos's barbed mockery of its corrupted shrine and superstitious pilgrims:

Go to Bethel and sin;
go to Gilgal and sin yet more.
- Amos 4:4

But what is meant by *I hated them there*? 'Hate' is a harsh Hebrew way of expressing rejection, used with varying degrees of severity and emotional content. The warm affection which pervades this book from end to end forbids us to take either *I hated them there* or *I will no longer love them* (15) as an expression of mere animosity. Rather this language is announcing (with what anguish, other passages make evident: e.g. 6:4; 11:8) a break-off in relations which amounts to the suspension of the marriage (*I will drive them out of My house*, 15) as the only hope of mending it. The theme has already met us in the sequence of severity and tenderness in 2:2ff. with 2:14 ff. and in the last verse of chapter 5. ...

So the chapter ends with a reiteration of the nation's immediate prospect, which was equally God's sentence and their own choice, a fourfold doom of barrenness, carnage, estrangement, and homelessness. The last of these, they will be wanderers among the nations, was to become, tragically, part of their distinctive and proverbial reputation – yet it was not the last word that God would have for them. For this, see Romans 11 in its entirety, but especially verses 11-16 and 25 to the end.

Read or sing Hymn 416 Your Hand, O God, Has Guided

Saturday (10/4) Read and discuss Hebrews 12:18–29

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (ESV)

Amy Peeler writes:

Amid the humans stands God. That the author describes God as *Judge* shows the amazing grace of humanity’s dwelling on the heavenly mountain. The author has appealed to God’s judgment several times throughout the sermon to emphasize the fittingness of God’s actions against disobedience. In fact, in every other instance in the [letter], God’s status as Judge is meant to provoke awe, reverence, and obedience. It is a somber reality. By including that description here, the author asserts that God has not ignored the implications and sins of those who are gathered – God the Judge sees and is sovereign over all – but somehow those gathered have passed through this judgment. This provides hopes for the readers who stand before this mountain that they can do the same.

The final phrases of the mountain’s description explain why. On this mountain dwells *the mediator of the new covenant*. The author uses a different term here of new than he did earlier; it is one that indicates being more recent or younger. This is the “newer” covenant established by God’s word that made the first “older.” This new covenant, as articulated through the words of Jeremiah in Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16-17, is that which has forgiven their sins, put God’s law inside them, and renewed their standing as God’s people. It is a covenant effected with *sprinkled blood*, and this blood *speaks better than that of Abel*. The mention of Abel puts a bookend on the entire section, going back to the beginning of chapter 11 (11:4). This mention also invites multiple comparisons. Jesus’s blood is superior to Abel’s because it is living and not dead. It does not cry out (metaphorically) spilt on the ground but intercedes at the right hand of God (7:28) because Jesus is not separated from His blood but unity with it in His resurrected body. Moreover, His is not a cry for justice for himself but a plea for mercy of all His siblings, precisely what humans need to stand in the presence of a holy God.

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