

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 19 October 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 157 When Morning Gilds the Skies

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 106:43-45

Psalm of Preparation: Psalm 98B “Sing to the LORD, a New Song Voicing”

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 98:1-9

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 13:7-15

Sermon Title: *The Joy of Faithfulness on our Pilgrimage*

Psalm of Response: Psalm 98C “Sing a New Song to Jehovah”

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 348 Glory Be to Jesus

PM Worship

236 To God Be the Glory

130A LORD, from the Depths to You I Cry!

143A Hear Now My Prayer, O LORD

Old Covenant Reading: Hosea 10:1-15

New Covenant Reading: Luke 23:26-43

Sermon Title: *A Fruitful Vine*

Adult Sunday School – Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School Today

Suggested Preparations

Monday (10/13) Read and discuss Hebrews 13:7–15

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is

to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (ESV)

Amy Peeler writes:

The author urges his listeners to *remember their leaders*. He uses the same term for leaders in vv. 7, 17, and 24. This is a different way of speaking of leadership than that which appears in the letters of Timothy and Titus, where leaders are described as overseers, elders, and deacons. For Hebrews, to describe those entrusted with the care of the community as those who lead connects to Jesus, who is their chief leader (2:10; 12:2). Following their human leaders is made all the easier when they know that those people are also following Jesus. And although they have these human leaders to follow and respect, they also have direct access to Jesus Himself.

The fitting way to remember them is to consider the *outcome of their life*, to pay close attention to the arc of these leaders' lives, up to the very end. The author's admonition to consider has a visual component: they can look at or examine their lives because they knew them. It is clear that these are leaders who have passed away, underlining the fact that this community has been in existence for some time. The goal of remembering and contemplating the lives of their former leaders is action. They should reflect so that they can *imitate their faith*. The leaders ended their race successfully, without growing weary or falling away. They show that completion of the race of faith is possible by offering a memorable example, with whom they were acquainted in the flesh. Although they serve as an example of those the author had encouraged his listeners to imitate, people who inherited God's promises through faith and patience like Abraham, these leaders whom the community members knew personally grant a more intimate connection than the faithful of Israel's ancient past.

These people are designated as leaders by the author because they *spoke the word of God*. Like the author of this sermon, they have facilitated the word of God being communicated directly to the people (12:25). Since the speech of God for this author has come only as the words of the Scriptures of Israel, it seems most consistent to believe that these leaders also would have used Israel's Scripture as the foundation of their speaking. Surely, they did more than read written texts, however. Much like this author, they likely also reflected on the texts in light of their confession of Jesus as the Son of God and communicated lessons that met the needs of the congregation at that time. Because God is now speaking in the Son (1:2), those who speak the word of God speak of the Son. They proclaim God's faithfulness in the Son as made evident by God's promises through the prophets. They have participated in the revelation of the Son by facilitating others' ability to hear God speaking. What an amazing task fell to these leaders. It is the same high calling and immense blessing that falls on all those who proclaim God's word to others throughout time.

The transitory nature of their leaders, who, not unlike priests, are prevented from remaining by death, contrasts with Jesus the Messiah who is the same yesterday and today and forever. Jesus spoke to and through these leaders, helped them reach the end, and will do the same for those who remain behind.

Read or sing Psalm 98B “Sing to the LORD, a New Song Voicing”

Tuesday (10/14) Read and discuss Hebrews 13:1–6

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear;
what can man do to me?” (ESV)

God's love liberates us is by freeing us to honor the sacred boundaries God has established for human sexuality. Now, this might seem like an odd place to find liberation. Our culture tells us, constantly, that sexual restrictions are oppressive, that true freedom means doing whatever feels right, that boundaries are the enemy of love.

But that is a lie. Sexual immorality is fundamentally selfish. Sexual purity is both a support for and an expression of genuine love. So, the author of Hebrews tells us:

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Notice the command has two parts: "Let marriage be held in honor among all" that is the positive. Marriage is precious. It is to be valued, protected, celebrated. And then, "let the marriage bed be undefiled"—that is the negative. Sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage. Outside those boundaries, it becomes sexual immorality and adultery. And these things, Hebrews warns us, God will judge.

Why does God care so much about this? Why is sexual sin treated so seriously in Scripture? Because sexuality is a sacred trust. It is not just a physical act. It is a covenantal union that mirrors the relationship between Christ and His church. Ephesians 5 tells us that the one-flesh union of marriage is a profound mystery pointing to Christ's union with His bride.

Furthermore, sexual immorality *always* hurts other people. This is true even when the sexual immorality doesn't directly involve other people such as in the use of pornography.

When people selfishly gratify their baser desires through pornography ... they re-wire their own brains to see other people as **objects** ... objects *to be used* rather than as people created in the image of God who are *to be loved*. This hurts both the user of pornography and everyone else in his or her life.

When we violate God's design for sexuality, we are not just breaking rules we are distorting the picture of the gospel itself, and we are causing genuine harm both to ourselves and to other people. We are saying that Christ's covenant with His church can be treated casually, that intimacy doesn't require commitment, and that union doesn't require faithfulness.

Sexual temptation is always making the false promise: That in violating God's law you will find freedom and satisfaction. Those who choose this path, receive bondage and guilt instead.

So how does God's love liberate us? He liberates us by satisfying the deepest longings of our hearts. When you are gripped by the knowledge that you are loved by God with an everlasting love, that you are cherished, that you are united to Christ forever, you are freed from the desperate search for validation and fulfillment in sexual experiences outside of God's design and you come to find deeper satisfaction within it.

Read or sing Hymn 157 When Morning Gilds the Skies

Wednesday (10/15) Read and discuss Psalm 98

Oh sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
The LORD has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!
Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together
before the LORD, for he comes

to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

This psalm praises God for the exodus. We know, however, that from the cross Jesus Christ accomplished a greater liberation and reached the nations on a scale beyond anything the exodus did. And Jesus's victory on the cross explains how Psalm 97, with its intimidating depiction of God's holiness and wrath, can be followed up by the exuberant praise and joy of Psalm 98. Christ paid for our sins. God sees us as beautifully perfect and righteous "in Him" (Philippians 3:9). This means the righteousness of God is not against us but for us. So how do we live? Always live your daily life against the background music of joy (verses 4-60).

The imagery of the trees and fish praising God (psalm 96:11-12), with the rivers and the mountains clapping and singing (verse 8), is more than just poetry. Romans 8:18-25 says that nature was made to be far more alive and glorious than it is in its current state. Modern philosophies cannot fathom that the natural world will not come into its own until the human race is made righteous again. Jesus will come to restore this ancient harmony (verse 9). So our future hope is powerful. If rivers and mountains will be like this when he returns, what will we be like (1 John 3:2-3)?

Read or sing Psalm 98C "Sing a New Song to Jehovah"

Thursday (10/16) Read and discuss Luke 23:26–43

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (ESV)

David Garland writes:

Luke is the only gospel to trace Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam, the son of God (3:38). The reference to paradise here may reflect an Adam typology. Death in early Hebrew thought “involved a movement from the created realm to the realm of uncreation, or chaos (Dominic Rudman).” But in Jesus’ assurance, one does not return to the primordial chaos in death. One enters paradise with him. Brown comments: “By bringing this wrongdoer with him into paradise, Jesus is undoing the results of Adam’s sin which barred access to the tree of life (Gen 3:24).”

The first Adam lost paradise; the second Adam regains it and opens it up for others. It is Jesus who is the final judge. He decides who will or will not be with Him, and the sinner who confesses and expresses trust in Him will share His destiny. Luke expresses theologically in a narrative what Paul states in prose in Rom 10:9: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Friday (10/17) Read and discuss Hosea 10

Israel is a luxuriant vine
that yields its fruit.
The more his fruit increased,
the more altars he built;
as his country improved,
he improved his pillars.
Their heart is false;
now they must bear their guilt.
The LORD will break down their altars
and destroy their pillars.

For now they will say:
“We have no king,
for we do not fear the LORD;
and a king—what could he do for us?”
They utter mere words;
with empty oaths they make covenants;
so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds
in the furrows of the field.

The inhabitants of Samaria tremble
for the calf of Beth-aven.
Its people mourn for it, and so do its idolatrous priests—
those who rejoiced over it and over its glory—
for it has departed from them.
The thing itself shall be carried to Assyria
as tribute to the great king.
Ephraim shall be put to shame,
and Israel shall be ashamed of his idol.

Samaria's king shall perish
like a twig on the face of the waters.
The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,
shall be destroyed.
Thorn and thistle shall grow up
on their altars,
and they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us,"
and to the hills, "Fall on us."

the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel;
there they have continued. From
Shall not the war against the unjust overtake them in Gibeah?
When I please, I will discipline them,
and nations shall be gathered against them
when they are bound up for their double iniquity.

Ephraim was a trained calf
that loved to thresh,
and I spared her fair neck;
but I will put Ephraim to the yoke;
Judah must plow;
Jacob must harrow for himself.
Sow for yourselves righteousness;
reap steadfast love;
break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek the LORD,
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

You have plowed iniquity;
you have reaped injustice;
you have eaten the fruit of lies.
Because you have trusted in your own way
and in the multitude of your warriors,
therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your people,
and all your fortresses shall be destroyed,
as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle;
mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.

Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel,
because of your great evil.
At dawn the king of Israel
shall be utterly cut off. (ESV)

Commenting on verses 13 through 15, G. Herbert Livingston writes:

The divine cry of appeal changes abruptly to a cry of disappointment, for Israel has no interest in detaching herself from Baalism. The farmer metaphor is continued; Israel has sown the seeds of wickedness instead of righteousness. The reapers will gather evil and the food prepared from it will be deception. All this is being done in Israel's own strength, with their hope based on their many warriors. The strength available in the LORD is completely ignored.

The evil reaped at the harvest will be the roar of battle and the destruction of strong fortresses. It may be that Shalman (v. 15) is a shortened form of Shalmanezar, which was the name of five emperors of Assyria. The last one destroyed the nation of Israel in 722 B.C. but a battle at Beth-arbel is not mentioned elsewhere.

The final assault on Bethel will match the memorable massacre in cruelty, due to the wickedness of the city. The final blow will be the death of the last king of Israel whose name Hoshea, is similar to the prophet's name.

Read or sing Hymn 348 Glory Be to Jesus

Saturday (10/18) Read and discuss Hebrews 13:7–15

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (ESV)

Amy Peeler writes:

The embrace of societal disdain encourages the audience to maintain a loose hold on their current residence. For *we do not have here an abiding city, but we are seeking that which is to come*. Wherever here might be for the author and his addressees, he asserts that the world as they currently know it does

not offer an abiding city for them. ... The readers have learned through experience and the teaching of the author that many things around them do not last. Given that impermanence, wherever they might be now, they should have their eyes on that which they are seeking, the coming city. The futurity of this city connects to the coming world, of which the author spoke in 2:5, and the age to come, from where the power of God derives. The author does not say they *should* seek the coming city but that they already are. This might be a way of positively encouraging them, seeing the best in their actions, even if they also have shortfalls. The author has seen, however, tangible evidence of their faith, and so he is right to claim that they are doing the faithful action of seeking this city. Just like their forebears, they are aliens and strangers looking forward to God's city. There, instead of being shamed and killed on the outskirts of the city, Christ reigns supreme in the midst of it. The promise of arriving at that city in the future gives them hope that helps them. Endure the suffering they are presently experiencing.

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