

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 30 November 2025

AM Worship – Pastor Woods preaching

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 250 I Sing the Almighty Power of God

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: Romans 5:1-2

Psalm of Preparation: 130A LORD, from the Depths to You I Cry!

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 130

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Sermon Title: *Sojourning in Fear*

Hymn of Response: 455 I Need Thee, Precious Jesus

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

PM Worship

243 How Firm a Foundation

532 Be Still, My Soul

456 Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners!

Old Covenant Reading: Isaiah 51:7-16

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Sermon Title: *The God of all Comfort*

Adult Sunday School – Herman Bavinck, Ben Richards teaching

Suggested Preparations

Monday (11/24) Read and discuss 1 Peter 1:17–21

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (ESV)

Simon Kistemaker writes:

When we call God our Father because we are His children, we should expect Him to be our judge as well. Peter adds that the Father “judges each man’s work impartially.” God does not favor anyone, whether he is rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, slave or master. The text says that God judges without looking at man’s face and that God the Father is already judging the works of each man. No one is going to be excluded from judgment, for God will judge impartially man’s every deed. Accordingly, when we invoke the Father’s name, we face an impartial judge.

What is the purpose of knowing that God is our Father and our judge? Peter continues, “Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” The Christian should consciously live in the presence of God. He knows that God’s eye is constantly upon him. Moreover, he also realizes that the non-Christian is carefully observing him in regards to the words he speaks and the deeds he performs. Therefore, he must be a true child of God, so that in the child the virtues of the Father are reflected.

Read or sing Hymn 250 I Sing the Almighty Power of God

Tuesday (11/25) Read and discuss Exodus 1:1–14

These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. (ESV)

Kenneth Cherney writes:

Israel in Egypt grows into a huge population, but they live in such abject servitude that freeing themselves is unthinkable, and their oppressors have no incentive or intention other than to see their servitude continue. When later in Scripture the oppression is mentioned, often it is to set Yahweh’s

spectacular act of deliverance into bold relief. This is the basis for the grateful amazement, loyalty, and loving obedience with which God's people respond and for the confidence that Yahweh's promises regarding the future can be relied upon as well. It also cast in an odd light Israel's apparent nostalgia for Egypt while on their trek through the desert. In the same way, when Scripture recounts the servitude from which we have been rescued, its purpose is to magnify the LORD's spectacular deliverance of us in Christ, to invite us to put our trust in Him, and to make nostalgia for our old way of life seem ridiculous – which it is.

Read or sing Psalm 130A LORD, from the Depths to You I Cry!

Wednesday (11/26) Read and discuss Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!
O Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

What do we owe a God who gives us all we have and keeps us alive every second? We ought to love Him and serve Him without rival. But no one does this, so no one can “stand” on Judgment Day based on their record. Waiting for God's mercy may seem hopeless, like a sleepless person longing for morning, which never seems to come. But here's the Gospel: “He *Himself* will redeem Israel from all their sins” (verse 8). Jesus is God Himself, dying to save His people from their sins. God's forgiveness and mercy generates a joyful fear and wonder that empowers our lives. Morning has broken!

Read or sing Hymn 455 I Need Thee, Precious Jesus

Thursday (11/27) Read and discuss Isaiah 51:7–16

“Listen to me, you who know righteousness,
the people in whose heart is my law;
fear not the reproach of man,
nor be dismayed at their revilings.
For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool,
but my righteousness will be forever,
and my salvation to all generations.”

Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD;
awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago.
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,
who pierced the dragon?
Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to pass over?
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

“I, I am he who comforts you;
who are you that you are afraid of man who dies,
of the son of man who is made like grass,
and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth,
and you fear continually all the day
because of the wrath of the oppressor,
when he sets himself to destroy?
And where is the wrath of the oppressor?
He who is bowed down shall speedily be released;
he shall not die and go down to the pit,
neither shall his bread be lacking.
I am the LORD your God,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the LORD of hosts is his name.
And I have put my words in your mouth

and covered you in the shadow of my hand,
establishing the heavens
and laying the foundations of the earth,
and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Just when Israel was fleeing Egypt and was as good as dead, Yahweh’s Spirit/wind/breath blew again, and the waters covered the Egyptians. After all, He is “the one stirring up the sea so that its waves roar – Yahweh of armies is His name” (Is 51:15). Water and Spirit are Yahweh’s means of salvation. The Son of the Sea (Exodus 15) does not mention human instruments in God’s warfare against the heathen nation. The sword Pharaoh drew was not opposed by another sword. The chariot he rode was not met by another chariot. The army he led clashed with no human fighting force. Israel sang, “Yahweh is a man of war. Yahweh is His name!” (Ex 15:3).

Zechariah 4:6 gets to [the] heart of this military strategy. “‘Not by strength and not by power, but by My Spirit,’ says Yahweh of armies.” With the defeat of the Hitlerian horde, Israel celebrated, “Yahweh is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation” (Ex 15:2).

But there will be an even greater exodus. Yahweh promises the beleaguered, “A fettered man will quickly be released. He will not die [and go] to the pit, and he will not lack his bread” (Is 51:14). “Thus says you Lord, Yahweh, even your God, who will contend for His people: ‘Behold I am taking from your hand the cup of reeling, the chalice cup of My poison; never again will you drink it. For I will place it into the hand of your tormentors’” (51:22-23). Babylon will exile the Judeans but meet its match in Yahweh.

Friday (11/28) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 1:1–7

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. (ESV)

Scott Hafemann writes:

Paul's prayer of praise introduces the main topic of his letter, expresses his controlling perspective, and carries an implicit appeal to his readers to join him in his convictions. In other words, rather than being a spontaneous outburst of unreflected piety, Paul's prayer in 1:3-7 is a carefully crafted expression of his main points, which provides a crucial key to the theme, perspective, and purpose of his letter. Moreover, the opening declaration, "Praise be to ... God," follows the blessing formula found in Jewish prayers of thanksgiving, in which God is declared blessed for benefits in which the speaker himself has participated. From the beginning, therefore, the focal point of Paul's letter is on himself, thereby reflecting the apologetic character of the letter as a whole.

Though focused on his own experience as an apostle, Paul's opening prayer of praise reflects the fact that the letter as a whole is theologically oriented. God the Father is praised in verse 3, and God is the subject of the action throughout verses 4-6. It is also Christologically qualified. The God who comforts in suffering is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," just as the sufferings and comfort experienced are both explicitly associated with Christ, through whom we come to know the "compassion" and "comfort" that characterizes the Father. Indeed, the vocabulary in this section confirms that the main theme of 2 Corinthians is the "comfort" that comes from God in the midst of affliction and suffering.

The concept of "comfort" and "comforting" occurs ten times in this short passage. The density of this concentration is even more striking in view of the fact that of the approximately thirty-one times these two words are found with this meaning in the New Testament as a whole, twenty-five of them are in Paul's writings. Of these twenty-five occurrences, seventeen occur in 2 Corinthians and ten in this short introduction. If Paul is the apostle of comfort within the New Testament, then 2 Corinthians is the letter of comfort, with 1:3-7 being the paragraph of comfort.

Read or sing Hymn 200 Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Saturday (11/29) Read and discuss 1 Peter 1:17–21

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (ESV)

Simon Kistemaker writes:

The readers have never seen Jesus, yet they believe in Him. Peter actually tells them that Jesus has given them faith so that they believe in God. Through Jesus Christ the believers come to know God the Father. Notice that the believers have faith in God, even though Christianity emphasizes a Christocentric approach to God. Yet faith in Christ is always in the context of the Trinity, so that Christians believe in the Triune God.

Why do we believe in God? Because He raised Jesus from the dead! From the teachings of the New Testament we have learned that the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moreover, God raised Jesus from the dead and glorified Him. That is, God perfected Him and exalted Him by giving Him a name that is above everything God has made (Phil 2:9). God, who predestined Christ in eternity to be our redeemer, could not leave Him prey to death. Christ could not be held in the power of death, for God raised Him on the third day.

“And so your faith and hope are in God.” The implication is that in Jesus’ resurrection, the believer has the assurance that he, too, will be raised from the dead. The basis of our faith is the resurrection of Jesus. Says Paul, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

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