

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 7 December 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done. And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But You, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent; According to Your promises declared to mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father; For His sake; That we may hereby live a godly, righteous, and sober life; To the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:1-3

Psalm of Preparation: 11B The LORD Is My Refuge

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 1:15-22

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Sermon Title: *The Triumph of the Meek*

Psalm of Response: 9B Wholehearted Thanksgiving

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 301 Song of Mary

PM Worship

27A The LORD's My Light

508 Jesus, Priceless Treasure

477 By Grace I Am an Heir of Heaven

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 27

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

Sermon Title: *Driven to Trust*

Adult Sunday School – Herman Bavinck, Part II - Ben Richards teaching

Suggested Preparations

Monday (12/1) Read and discuss Exodus 1:15–22

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people

multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” (ESV)

What was Pharaoh trying to accomplish by killing off the male children in Israel? Kenneth Cherney writes:

If the idea is simply to reduce Israel’s population and prevent them from rising up and leaving Egypt (which presents logical problems of its own), why target the males and why babies? If reducing the population were the point, culling females is much more effective than culling males, and killing babies would do nothing to prevent an imminent uprising.

Again, based on the characterization of Pharaoh by the narrative, expectations that he will behave rationally are misplaced. But there is probably more involved here. The goal is not merely to decrease the population, but to remove the threat to Egypt’s stability with minimal effect on the corvee labor force. With a whole generation of men eliminated, the situation of the women would have become like that of captives in wartime, they and any offspring they bore would quickly have been absorbed into the surrounding population, probably very quickly. Not only does Pharaoh’s plan aim to destroy innocent life on a massive scale, horrifying as that is, but it also puts Israel’s survival as a people, and therefore god’s plan of salvation, at stake.

Read or sing Hymn 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Tuesday (12/2) Read and discuss Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” (ESV)

Terence Fretheim writes:

The New Testament picks up on the theme of vv. 23-24 in 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17. The Apostle Paul speaks of the divine strategy in calling people to “proclaim Christ crucified” (1 Cor 1:23). God did not choose people because they were rich and powerful, nor because they were wise and skilled in debate. God chose what is foolish and weak, what is low and despised in the world, so that the focus of their proclamation (their “boasting”) would be on Jesus Christ rather than on themselves. The source of life and wisdom and righteousness is to be found, not in human virtues or resources, but in what God has done in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world. The point for both Paul and Jeremiah is not that human wisdom

or strength or resources are of no importance. They have their own value ... but they must finally be in the service of “boasting” in the LORD.

Read or sing Psalm 11B The LORD Is My Refuge

Wednesday (12/3) Read and discuss 1 Peter 5:6–11

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

Commenting on verse 10, Tom Schreiner writes:

Peter uses four different verbs to describe God’s promise for believers. There is no need to distinguish carefully between the meanings of the verbs, for together they emphatically make the same point. The God who has called believers to eternal glory will strengthen and fortify them so that they are able to endure until the end. He will fulfill His promise to save and deliver them. The exhortations to vigilance and resistance in the letter are not intended to raise questions about whether believers will receive the eschatological promise. Peter instead conceives of the exhortations as means by which believers will persevere and receive the promise of salvation on the last day. The God who has given such promises also uses exhortations to provoke His people to be faithful until the end. The exhortations and promises, therefore, should not be played off against each other, as if the exhortations introduce an element of uncertainty to the promises. The exhortations are the means by which God’s promises are secured, and indeed God in His grace grants believers the strength to carry out the exhortations. Still, such grace can never be used to cancel out the need for responding to the exhortations.

Read or sing Psalm 9B Wholehearted Thanksgiving

Thursday (12/4) Read and discuss Psalm 27

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me
to eat up my flesh,

my adversaries and foes,
it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me!
You have said, "Seek my face."
My heart says to you,
"Your face, LORD, do I seek."
Hide not your face from me.
Turn not your servant away in anger,
O you who have been my help.
Cast me not off; forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!
For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the LORD will take me in.

Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD

in the land of the living!
Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD! (ESV)

Gerald Wilson writes:

The stronghold of my life. How do we find a rock solid place of confidence when all else is swirling about us? It is this ability to stand confidently that sets the faithful apart and gives testimony to the presence of God in our lives. Where or to whom do you go when life seems too much to handle? Perhaps to your spouse or a close friend, a trusted minister, your parents? For the psalmist, God is the stronghold of his life – the secure place when all else fails.

Too often human relationships fail – because they are human. Many of us have felt betrayed or abandoned by friends, spouses, and even parents. ... When we place our hopes and reliance on fallible human beings, we are bound to experience failure. When all our human resources are so unreliable, where do we turn for unshakeable support?

According to our Psalmist, Yahweh is the one reliable support – the one who accepts us even “though my father and mother forsake me” (27:10). There is no more crushing experience than for a child to be abandoned by his or her parents. Orphan children – even those adopted by loving and caring families – are often obsessed to know why their birth mother “abandoned” them. ... Many abandoned children who have been unable to answer the questions of their birth and loss of parental love have found in God a loving parent who does not forsake them.

Friday (12/5) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 1:8–11

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (ESV)

Scott Hafemann writes:

The priority Paul places on endurance as our response to God’s sovereign power and will points to two important implications for modern Western culture. (1) On the one hand, contrary to the movement made popular by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, we must resist “accepting” affliction and “welcoming” death as merely a normal part of life. For Paul, death is still “the last enemy” and the result of sin in the world. The gospel is not a coping

mechanism, but the promise of resurrection life in the future, the inauguration of which is God's power for a new life in the present. In destroying the stranglehold of sin, Christ vanquishes the "sting" of death. (2) On the other hand, we must also resist at all costs the "health and wealth gospel." The glory of the gospel is its declaration that the message of the cross is the power of God.

The former attempt to sanitize suffering and death expects too little from God, as if the kingdom of God has not been inaugurated. In this view, all we can hope for in life is the *status quo*. Thus, we must have faith to accept things the way they are. The latter attempt to purge suffering from the life of the Christ expects too much from God in the present, as if the kingdom of God has been inaugurated in all its fullness. In this view, true believers can expect to experience almost all the glories of heaven already on earth. Thus, we must have faith to ignore the way things are.

In contrast, Paul proclaims an endurance of faith that lives in the tension of the "overlapping of the ages," in which the kingdom of God is certainly here, but is not yet where in all its fullness. In Paul's view, we must have faith in the sovereignty and goodness of God in and through the way things are – expectant, enduring, full of praise, confident that God is glorified through comforting His people in Himself.

Read or sing Hymn 301 Song of Mary

Saturday (12/6) Read and discuss Exodus 1:15–22

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live." (ESV)

Kenneth Cherney writes:

Christian theologians treat lying in different ways. Augustine does not believe it is justified under any circumstances. Aquinas concedes that one criterion for classifying lies would be their intended effect, and there would be three different kinds: lies meant to do harm; lies told to help or protect someone; and humorous or pleasurable lies (e.g. jokes). For Aquinas, as for Augustine, all lies are wrong, but harmful are the worst, the helpful are the

most innocuous, and humorous are somewhere in between - on the principle “the better the good intended, the lesser the guilt.”

Luther accepts Aquinas’ three categories but sees only the first group as wrong. God, Luther says, is certainly not offended by false statements made in just, for these can serve a literary or pedagogical purpose or promote ... fellowship. And just as a perfectly truthful statement becomes sinful when it disregards my neighbor’s well-being, speaking an untruth to help my neighbor – Aquinas’ helpful lie – is sometimes not only justified, but even necessary.

It would be a mistake to see Luther’s position as utilitarian, for this is not a case of the end justifying the means. Nor is it a concession to the reality that sinful human beings are inveterate liars who can’t help it or that our best deeds are invariably tainted with sin, which in the case of believers, God overlooks. It rather illustrates how, for Luther, the Christian life is not an inwardly focused project of continually disinfecting one’s conscience by scrupulously obeying a set of rules. Faith in Christ makes a Christian’s conscience as clean as it will ever need to be. Accordingly, Luther’s ethics are directed not inward but outward, toward the neighbor and his need. For this reason, Luther would probably have had little patience with the moral prissiness that would rather tell the truth to a Gestapo agent who asks where a Jewish friend is hiding than sully one’s conscience by telling a lie, to use an oft-cited example.

The situation in which the midwives found themselves was similar. The natural inference from the midwives’ statement to Pharaoh is not just that the baby boys’ survival is not their fault but also that Pharaoh’s plan won’t work and should be abandoned. That makes it reasonable to conclude that they are lying to save the baby boys, not just themselves. True, when God rewards the midwives with “houses” of their own, the reason given in the text is their fear of God, not their dishonesty. But the text does not suggest that their fear of God was commendable but their lying to Pharaoh was not, and this fine distinction is not persuasive unless we assume a priori that, in the Bible, lying to anyone under any circumstances is always wrong. “Fear of God,” as argued above, denotes an inner life that is oriented toward God and submissive to His will. The midwives’ fear of God would not let them commit infanticide, but it did allow them to lie to Pharaoh, and there is no hint in the text that this involved any inconsistency.

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