

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 8 February 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Psalm: 31B In Thee, O Lord, I Put My Trust (1-5)

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: Joel 2:12-13

Psalm of Preparation: 31B In Thee, O Lord, I Put My Trust (6-11)

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 3:13-22

New Covenant Reading: John 8:48-59

Sermon Title: *The Faithful God of Our Fathers*

Hymn of Response: 222 O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 44 O God, We Have Heard (1-4)

PM Worship

168 Father, Again in Jesus' Name We Meet

145D God, My King, Thy Might Confessing

92A It's Good to Thank the LORD

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 4:10-17

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 2:17-3:6

Sermon Title: *Sufficiency in Ministry*

Adult Sunday School – Abraham Kuyper and Neo-Calvinism, Part III

Suggested Preparations

Monday (2/2) Read and discuss Exodus 3:13–22

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God

of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.”’ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.” (ESV)

John Goldingay writes:

If the people ask about God’s name, the simple answer is “Yahweh,” but further and significantly that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The one intending to act is not only one with that name but one who has long been involved with this people and who made those promises to them. In asking about god’s name, they may themselves mean more than “What is the label this God wears?” Names often say something about the person. The people may also be saying, “Tell us something about this God; help us believe what you say.” The name “Yahweh” could remind one of the verb “to be”; specifically it is similar to the part of that verb that means “he will be.” So Exodus precedes the declaring of the name with the declaration “I will be,” and it precedes that with enigmatic “I will be what I will be.” Excuse me? But God has already used that expression in promising Moses, “I will be with you.” What kind of God is promising to get them out of Egypt? Yahweh is a God who will be there, who will be with them, who will be whatever it is necessary [for Him] to be in different contexts to achieve that purpose announced to the ancestors.

Read or sing Psalm 31B In Thee, O Lord, I Put My Trust (1-5)

Tuesday (2/3) Read and discuss Exodus 3:7–12

Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the

oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” (ESV)

Duane Garrett writes:

The first dialogue between Moses and YHWH (3:11-3:15) begins with Moses’s assertion that he is inadequate for this task. As mentioned in the translation notes, Moses actually speaks of being inadequate for two tasks: putting himself before Pharaoh and leading Israel out of Egypt. We should not be quick to censure these objections. Moses was indeed inadequate for this task, as anyone would be. God’s response (“I will be with you”) is the only thing that could answer this objection. Moses will not need to be adequate or competent; God Himself will be there to do the heavy lifting.

But the “sign” that follows is astonishing: the Israelites will worship God at Sinai after Moses has completed his mission! How can it be a sign, that is, a token of divine presence meant to reassure Moses before he heads off toward Egypt, if it will not actually occur until after he gets back to Sinai and has accomplished his primary mission? One would expect the sign to be something that Moses could see or experience immediately, before he goes, such as the turning of his rod into a snake. But, as described in the translation note ..., it is undeniable that Israel’s coming to worship on the mountain is itself the sign. What are we to make of this? It is probably that God was initially giving Moses a call to faith. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the proof of matters not seen” (Heb. 11:1). God wanted Moses to keep the vision of Israel gathered at Sinai to worship God as the “proof” that would sustain him as he embarked on his difficult mission. That is, the greatest sign one can have is a guiding vision. By keeping in his mind’s eye the vision of a free Israel worshipping God at the mountain, Moses should have been able to set out on his task and to endure the setbacks along the way. Unfortunately, Moses did not find this sufficient, and he required other, more tangible signs.

Read or sing Psalm 31B In Thee, O Lord, I Put My Trust (6-11)

Wednesday (2/4) Read and discuss John 8:48–59

The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you

say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. (ESV)

Leon Morris writes:

[Jesus] introduces His words with the solemn "Truly, truly." What He is about to say is very solemn and very important. Then He says, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (v. 58). This is emphatic speech in the style of deity in the form of words He uses and there is a claim to deity in the meaning we must give them. Jesus claims to have existed not only in the time of Abraham (who could thus have seen Him and rejoiced), but before that time. Jesus' "I AM" is timeless. He existed long before Abraham. We should probably understand the words to mean that He has always existed. This is a tremendous claim.

It is a claim that outraged His hearers. To them it was nothing less than blasphemy. In the face of that claim there are only two possibilities. We may accept it and open our hearts to Jesus so that He becomes our Lord and we live to do His will. Or we will reject him. There is no middle course. And if we reject Him, we may well take action against Him and that was what these Jews did. "They took up stones to throw them at Him." Stoning was the Jewish punishment for blasphemy, and these people did not wait for the verdict of some court. Had they not heard Him themselves? They saw no reason to delay but attempted to carry out an execution in the traditional style.

But they could not do it. Jesus "was hidden," which may mean that He hid from them in some way. Or the passive may be taken with full seriousness, and we then see in it the thought that the Father hid Him so that these evil people could not carry out their plan. The will of God is done. Jesus would die on the cross, but it would be in God's good time.

Read or sing Hymn 222 O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Thursday (2/5) Read and discuss Exodus 4:10–17

But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.” (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

So far, God has dealt with each of Moses’s responses with helpful reassurance.

- “Who am I, that I should go?”
- “I will be with you.”
- “What is your name?”
- “I am what I am; I am Yahweh.”
- “What if they won’t listen to me?”
- “Try these signs.”

Now Moses comes to what he hopes may be a clinching fact to get God to look elsewhere. If the job requires being able to convince people by the power of words (even with a few signs), what is the point in sending somebody who is a notoriously unimpressive speaker? You are wasting your time sending me, LORD, is the point Moses tries to get across. ...

For the first time, God’s reply to Moses’s objections has a note of impatience. That note is amplified by the way God concludes, “No go!” (v. 12) – “Stop wasting my time” is the flavor of that final command.

This time God gives no further explanation or revelation and offers no more handy mini-miracles. A quick-fire salvo of rhetorical questions beginning “Who?” and ending “Is it not I, Yahweh?” makes a simple, emphatic point. God is the creator of human beings and their faculties, with all their capacities or incapacities. When Moses says, “I’m not a very good speaker,” God retorts, “You think I don’t know that? I created you as the person you are. Your defects (real or imaginary) are no reason to refuse my plans.” Whatever Moses may or may not be in the public speaking department, God

made him so. His native ability is irrelevant to the issue at stake here. God created him. God has called him. God has a job for him. Get on with it!

Friday (2/6) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 2:17-3:6.

For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (ESV)

The Corinthians seem to be accusing Paul of writing self-congratulatory letters. Some in Corinth may even be telling him: "If you want to come back to Corinth, you should get someone ... or perhaps the church in Ephesus ... to give you a letter of recommendation.

Tom Wright comments:

Paul responds in the only way he can. But, in responding, he sets off on a journey of explanation in which he goes down to the depths of what being an apostle is all about. As so often in the history of the church, it's only when something really outrageous is said that a true theologian is stirred to write something which explains what up until then, one might have thought, had been assumed, but obviously hadn't been. And in this case the central thing is the new covenant.

The new covenant! Paul, as so often, is deeply rooted in the Old Testament; and the passage where the new covenant is promised is Jeremiah 31. Faced with imminent exile, the punishment for Israel's persistent and unrepentant covenant-breaking, the prophet promises that one day YHWH will restore the fortunes of Israel by bringing about a new covenant, a new agreement between Himself and Israel, a new marriage of God and God's people. The old covenant was the one made by God through Moses, but it didn't have the power to make the people everything God longed for them to be. The new covenant will therefore have a negative and a positive task: negatively, it must deal with the sins which the people had committed; positively, it must establish the relationship between God and Israel on an entirely new footing. Something must be done to create a new sort of people, a people

who will be alive with God's own life. Jeremiah spoke of this in terms of God putting his law into people's hearts, and that is very close to what Paul envisages here. But the central thing he has to say, the central contrast between the old covenant and the new one, is that now God will give His own spirit to His people.

This the heart of Paul's response to the charge. This is why he can say, so dramatically in verse 2, that *you* – you Corinthians, you muddled, beloved, infuriating, joyful Corinthians – you are my letter of recommendation. If anybody wants to find out what sort of a person Paul is, what sort of a Christian worker he is, then they should look at the church in Corinth and draw their conclusions. That's quite a frightening thought, considering the trouble Paul was having with them; but it puts them nicely on the spot. ...

If they are a 'letter,' it's a letter from the Messiah Himself, written by the Spirit: a letter to the whole world, declaring 'the man who founded this community is a genuine apostle of Jesus the Messiah.' ... Paul, with extraordinary boldness, is quietly confident that the letter will in fact tell the truth; because he knows that the living God has performed a powerful work among people in Corinth, writing this 'letter' not on tablets of stone – this is where he is starting to contrast the 'new covenant' with the covenant of Moses – but on tablets of living, beating hearts, 'hearts of flesh' as a more literal translation would have it. The new marriage-covenant God has made with His people – and His people are now a worldwide family, not of Jews only but of all who believe – is inscribed in the innermost beings of those who believe. It isn't that they've had a new religious experience which might last, say, a week or even a year. It is that the living God has written something in their hearts, so that they can never be the same people again.

Read or sing Psalm 44 O God, We Have Heard (1-4)

Saturday (2/7) Read and discuss Exodus 3:13–22

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall

go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.” (ESV)

Willem VanGemeren writes:

First, although the patriarchs perhaps knew and used the name *Yahweh*, their relationship with God is better understood through the designation *El Shaddai* (“God Almighty”). ... “Yahweh” affirms the patriarchal promises. At the same time, by the use of the divine name, God is obviously trying to say that a new era is beginning. He is now to be known as the Savior-God of Israel. Second, with the raising up of Moses as Israel’s leader during the Exodus, God will reveal Himself in a new way, demonstrating that He is both the Creator-God and the Savior-God of Israel who is with His people. Finally, on the basis of these two truths, the imminent salvation of Israel from Egypt is seen to be a logical – indeed necessary – result of the patriarchal covenant!

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