

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 15 March 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 214 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

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: John 3:16-17

Psalm of Preparation: 73B Yes, God Is Good to Israel (1-5)

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 5:1-6:1

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-17

Sermon Title: *Who is Yahweh?*

Psalm of Response: 73B Yes, God Is Good to Israel (6-11)

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 284 Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim

PM Worship

530 Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord

532 Be Still, My Soul

514 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

Old Covenant Reading: Genesis 12:1-9

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Sermon Title: *A Better Home*

Adult Sunday School – Fellowship Lunch no Sunday School Today

Suggested Preparations

Monday (3/9) Read and discuss Exodus 5:1-6:1

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.” Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” But

the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.” And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!” The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’ Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw. Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.’” So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.” And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.” But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.” The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.” They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; and they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.” (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

Enter pharaoh (another one). This one will forever be remembered as the pharaoh of the exodus itself – even though we cannot be completely certain which pharaoh he was. Actually, he is the fourth Egyptian pharaoh to play a part in the story of God so far.

The first is the one who enriched Abraham for Sarah's sake but then taught Abraham a lesson in truth telling – not the only pagan to rebuke one of God's people for their failure to observe basic moral standards.

Then, second, there is the pharaoh under whom Joseph eventually prospered and rose to high political office. That pharaoh acknowledged that God had endowed Joseph with surpassing skill and in appreciation rewarded Joseph accordingly. The same pharaoh proves remarkably hospitable toward Jacob and the whole family of Joseph. The welcome that the children of Israel received when they came as famine refugees seeking asylum in Egypt was never forgotten, in spite of the long history of hostility that lay ahead. When Jacob died in Egypt, this pharaoh not only permitted the Israelites to leave the country and go to Canaan for his funeral but also honored their dead ancestor with what seemed like an Egyptian state funeral attended by representatives of the court itself and their professional wailers.

How different, then, the third pharaoh, who either knew nothing about Joseph or certainly acknowledged no obligation to him or his people. On the contrary, he imposes upon them the oppressive regime of brickmaking slavery that they have been enduring now for a long time.

And so to this fourth pharaoh in chapter 5, who comes to power after the previous one had died, along with all those who had been seeking the extradition and execution of Moses the murderer. If his predecessor did not know Joseph, this one did not know Yahweh. His words, "I do not know the LORD" (v. 2) become the trigger for the whole next section of the story. Educating pharaoh is a major subplot of the whole narrative of Exodus 7-14. By the time Moses and his aged sister Miriam sing their songs on the other side of the sea, this pharaoh will know a great deal about Yahweh, the God he did not, or would not, know.

Read or sing Hymn 214 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

Tuesday (3/10) Read and discuss Exodus 4:27–31

The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had

visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. (ESV)

This passage ends with the people bowing their heads and worshipping. Kenneth Cherney comments:

To worship is to acknowledge God's infinite majesty and holiness, but when it follows a declaration of God's mercy, it becomes more. Worship is the response of a believing heart to the message that this holy, majestic God knows our misery, has compassion, and is present to help. For the Reformers, it was not enough to say that faith leads to worship. Faith itself is worship. "[Faith is] praised everywhere as the foremost act of worship as in Psalm 50:15: 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.' This is how God wants to become known and worshiped, namely, that we receive blessings from Him, and indeed that we receive them on account of His mercy and not on account of our merits. (*Apology of the Augsburg Confession* VI, 59-60)." God's mercy is – in its own way – even more overwhelming than His holiness and majesty. Accordingly, faith never loses its awe at the mercy of God. It continually bows down before its heavenly Sovereign, but it does so with a joyful song.

Read or sing Psalm 73B Yes, God Is Good to Israel (1-5)

Wednesday (3/11) Read and discuss 1 Peter 3:13–17

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

The suffering of believers is attributed to the will of God. ... Peter does not know the extent to which God wills the suffering of each believer. He realizes that some will experience more vilification and even bodily harm than others. Such opposition, however, is not outside God's control. The suffering each believer endures represents God's will for them. Peter does not deny the reality of Satan and his evil ragings in the persecution of the church, nor does he exempt from responsibility human beings who persecute the church. Nevertheless, no one can ultimately touch God's children apart from His permission. This is also the message of the book of

Job. Satan could only inflict damage on Job with God's acquiescence. Naturally God's intentions and motives in allowing suffering are remarkably different from Satan's and thus God remains unalterably good in the process, while Satan is irremediably evil.

Read or sing Psalm 73B Yes, God Is Good to Israel (6-11)

Thursday (3/12) Read and discuss Genesis 12:1–9

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. (ESV)

Iain Duguid writes:

Make no mistake, what we see here in Genesis 12 is nothing short of a new beginning for mankind. In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we observe the slow, steady, shocking spread of sin from its origin in the Garden of Eden. Five times in these chapters, God's solemn curse is pronounced upon sin and sinners, replacing the original blessing upon life in the Garden. But now God begins the process of recreating for Himself a people by pronouncing a fivefold blessing upon Abram. God will bless Abram and turn him in the very embodiment of blessing, a living model of what blessing should be. In the same way that Babe Ruth is "Mr. Baseball," Abram will be "Mr. Blessing." What the builders of the Tower of Babel sought to do in their own behalf and failed to accomplish – to establish a lasting city and thus make a name for themselves – God will do for Abram. God will make him into a nation and make his name great. Through his obedience, Abram will bring blessing to the whole world: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." God's original plan of blessing for the

whole world will be brought to fruition through Abram's obedience. The way of blessing that was once marked by the Tree of Life and then by Noah's ark is now marked by identification with Abram and his seed. Abram is promised a heady mixture of power, prestige, and status.

Friday (3/13) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 5:1–10

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

In this unit's conclusion Paul switches from the assurance of resurrection to its ethical consequences for life here and now. That we must all appear before the judgment seat of God serves as a solemn forewarning. It is this divine judgment seat, not Pilate's, not Gallio's, and not public opinion's, that ultimately counts. No one, including Christians, can escape it. We will be held accountable for our individual actions and commitments. The changes are nil that we might deceive God, who knows even our subconscious thoughts.

Read or sing Hymn 284 Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim

Saturday (3/14) Read and discuss Exodus 5:1-6:1

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from

their work? Get back to your burdens.” And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!” The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’ Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw. Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.’” So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.” And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.” But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.” The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.” They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; and they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

As state slaves in Egypt, the Israelites had no legal status, no worth, and no value. Their sons were murdered, tools of torture brought mayhem, and the daily quota of bricks meant a life of endless monotony.

In their first rescue attempt, Moses and Aaron run into a brick wall (pun intended). Israelites slaves continue making bricks – only now with this pharaonic ultimatum, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it.” He empire’s organizational blueprint functioned like their pyramids – a few at the top benefitted through the toil and sweat of masses at the bottom.

And Pharaoh won’t let anyone mess with this well-oiled machine. Thus, he spews forth this short but toxic propaganda about the Hebrew slaves: They “are idle.” In other words, “The Hebrews are a bunch of whining, crying, lazy bums!” Pharaoh’s goal? Blame the oppressed instead of the oppressors. “It’s their fault that they’re in such a mess. If they would get more motivation, organization and education – they would have such a better life.” Such is the twisted logic of all oppressors.

The king’s decree is draconian – production takes priority over people. Brick quotas remain while slaves now supply straw. And straw was more than a binding agent. It enhanced the bricks’ strength and flexibility. Apart from chopped straw, bricks lost their shape and became useless. ...

Pity Moses and Aaron. Israelite foremen meet them, point their accusing fingers, and say, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” These supervisors, who sold out to the system, dared to scold their God-ordained leaders. It wasn’t enough to ask for divine judgment upon Moses and Aaron. The foremen add insult to injury by blaming these two old men for Egypt’s animosity. Really? Hadn’t the Hebrews been mistreated since Exodus 1:11-14? Wasn’t Moses himself once a target of Egypt’s plan to exterminate every Hebrew baby boy? Is this really fair? One thing is certain. Being called by God and having the assurance of His presence doesn’t mean immediate results. Moses is now behind the eight ball – despised by both the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Tending sheep was so much easier!

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