

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 22 March 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Psalm: 13 How Long Will You Forget Me, LORD?

Confession of Sin

O eternal God and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before your great majesty, against which we have frequently and grievously sinned. We acknowledge that we deserve nothing less than eternal death, that we are unclean before you and children of wrath. We continually transgress your commandments, failing to do what you have commanded, and doing that which you have expressly forbidden. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We are not worthy to be called your children, nor to lift up our eyes heavenward to you in prayer. Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that your mercy toward those who turn to you is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon you, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Forgive all our sins for Christ's sake. Cover us with his innocence and righteousness, for the glory of your name. Deliver our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all willfulness and rebellion, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. *Amen*

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:11-13

Hymn of Preparation: 510 Come, Ye Disconsolate

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 6:2-9

New Covenant Reading: Galatians 1:6-10

Sermon Title: *Changing Circumstances, Unchanging Message*

Hymn of Response: 246 Though Troubles Assail Us

Confession of Faith: 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 245 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

PM Worship

Hymn 224 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Psalm 61B "O Hear My Urgent Cry"

Hymn 452 "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 61:1-8

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 6:13-20

Sermon Title: *Our Strong Tower*

Adult Sunday School – Doctrine of the Church: The Church as Sheep

Suggested Preparations

Monday (3/16) Read and discuss Exodus 6:2–9

God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the

land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.’” Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

God declares in Exodus 6:3, “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Yahweh I did not make Myself known to them.” Do you see the dilemma in this verse? It appears that God didn’t give His name, Yahweh, to Israel’s ancestors. If this is the case, what should we do with verses like this: “To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of Yahweh” (Genesis 4:26)? Indeed, the name Yahweh appears in multiple verses throughout the Book of Genesis.

Exodus 6:3, however, doesn’t contradict Genesis. Instead, it announces God’s plan to bring greater clarity to His name. The verse has nothing to do with *when* the name of *Yahweh* was revealed. It has very thing to do with *what* the name of *Yahweh* reveals. A more comprehensive definition of God’s name becomes clear through His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, as well as His ensuing dealings with His people at Sinai.

The second time Yahweh defines His name in Exodus, He twice promise to bring Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 6:6, 7). These verses challenge Pharaoh’s double-reference to burdens in the preceding chapter: “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? God back to your burdens. ... You make them rest from their burdens.”

In Exodus 6:6, the Hebrew verb *redeem* appears for only the second time in the Old Testament. A redeemer acts because a family member is in desperate straits. Yahweh’s decision to redeem the Israelites, therefore, is based upon the fact that they’re His family members – indeed, the nation is His firstborn son.

Read or sing Psalm 13 How Long Will You Forget Me, LORD?

Tuesday (3/17) 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)

Kenneth Cherney writes:

Moses' approach to God at the end of the chapter seems like shocking effrontery, as he accuses God both of failing to keep His promise and of hurting rather than helping His people. Paradoxically, this marks Moses' relationship with God as a healthy one. Unlike the other suffering characters in the story, Moses takes his complaint directly to God, and his complaint is really a simple restatement of the facts. The truth is, the promised deliverance has not taken place, and since God sent him to Pharaoh, the lot of God's people has gotten worse, not better.

In this Moses' similarity to Job is striking. Unlike Job's friends, who engage in "blaming the victim" and who attempt to rationalize God's ways, Job looks reality in the eye and calls things what they are. Unlike the friends, who have a great deal to say about God, Job speaks to God, laying his case before Him and asking God, "Why?" Although God does rebuke Job for overstepping his bounds (Job 40:1-2), in the end, Job is rewarded with a statement of God's approval. He has been unflinchingly truthful, where the friends were not.

We should add two observations to Professor Cherney's comments:

1. This LORD, in fact, is doing what He had told Moses He would do. The LORD had repeatedly told Moses that Pharaoh would not initially let Israel go. In fact, back in chapter 4, the LORD told Moses that He was going to strengthen/harden Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh would not let them go.
2. Chapter 6, verse 1 restates the second part of what the LORD has already repeatedly told 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."

Read or sing Hymn 510 Come, Ye Disconsolate

Wednesday (3/18) Read and discuss Galatians 1:6–10

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

Paul ... warns us in this text about the danger of trying to please people instead of pleasing God. What slavery we live under when we long for the good opinion of others! It is far better to be a slave of Christ than to be enslaved to human opinions of us. Fear of human beings can be deadly. The reason many did not believe in Jesus was because they lusted for the glory and praise of people more than the glory of God. The parents of the blind man in John 9 were intimidated by the Pharisees and so refused to acknowledge Jesus' healing work in their son. In chapter 12 [of his account of the gospel] John sums up Jesus' public ministry: "Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in Him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God."

I understand these verses to teach that such people did not have genuine saving faith. Again, the reason for their failure to follow Jesus was fear of human beings. Such fear cannot be dismissed as trivial, for we have seen that fear of people may prevent us from putting our trust in Christ. What conquers such fear/ God's promise that he will give to us everything we need, that He does not withhold any good thing from those who fear Him. We need a work of God's grace and Spirit to trust His great promises and to be liberated from the fear of people. Perhaps we fear to tell someone else at work what it means to be a Christian. Or perhaps we fear to share our struggles with other Christians because we are worried that they will think less of us. But we must fear God rather than people and be willing to be courageous and vulnerable.

Read or sing Hymn 246 Though Troubles Assail Us

Thursday (3/19) Read and discuss Hebrews 6:13–20

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

We are not promised that there won't be any storms; indeed, the provision of a secure anchor implies that there will be. What we are promised is that we will be kept safe.

This is the promise which lies underneath the appeal of the last two sections, the appeal to stand firm and hold on patiently. The rest of our present passage, leading to this climatic statement, explores the way in which Abraham, the classic biblical example of faithful patience, hung on to God's promises through thick and thin. And it explains, in particular, why Abraham knew – and why we should know – that God means what He says, and that the promises are as solid and unbreakable as they could possibly be. When God made the promises, he swore that he would keep them, not by anyone else, but by His own self.

Friday (3/20) Read and discuss Psalm 61

Hear my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;
from the end of the earth I call to you
when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I,
for you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me dwell in your tent forever!
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah
For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!
May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

So will I ever sing praises to your name,
as I perform my vows day after day. (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

David piles up images: God is his rock, a secure place where he can see things from God's perspective. God is his fortified tower, where he can take refuge from attackers. God dwells in the tabernacle, where he can be met in worship. God is like a mother bird, protecting her chicks under her wings.

Jesus claims each of them for Himself: He is the Temple, where we can come face-to-face with God; He is the mother bird, protecting His loved ones by sheltering them and enduring danger and pain while keeping them unharmed. He is the rock, struck for us, so in Jesus we are kept safe from every enemy, even death.

Read or sing Hymn 245 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Saturday (3/21) Read and discuss Exodus 6:2–9

God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.’” Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery. (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

What a program God has in mind! These verses are astonishingly comprehensive. In a rapid series of seven “I will” statements, God lays out his intentions for Israel. This is one of those key programmatic texts (comparable to Gen 12:1-3 and Exodus 19:4-6) that govern not only the immediate future but also the long- distance story of God and His ultimate purposes for this people. It has far-reaching missional relevance, too, since its grand themes stretch forward into the New Testament and God’s purpose for all nations and the earth itself.

The seven “I will” commitments by God are:

1. I will bring you out.
2. I will free you.
3. I will redeem you.
4. I will take you as My own people.
5. I will be your God.
6. I will bring you to the land.
7. I will give it to you as a possession.

- 1-3 can be combined as the act of *redemption*. God will save and deliver His people.
- 4 and 5 combine to describe the *covenant relationship* between God and Israel.
- 6 and 7 combine in the gift of the *land* of Canaan as promised to Abraham.

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