

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 3 May 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 227 How Great Thou Art

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: Matthew 1:18-21

Sacrament of Baptism:

Psalm of Preparation: 103E O Come, My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 8:1-15

New Covenant Reading: Philippians 1:27-30

Sermon Title: *Pharaoh Seeks Intercession*

Psalm of Response: 119Q Wonderful Are Your Statutes, LORD

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Gloria Patri (Hymn 572)

Closing Psalm: 112 O Praise the LORD! The Man Is Blest

PM Worship

100B All People That on Earth Do Dwell

404 The Church's One Foundation

497 More Love to Thee, O Christ

Old Covenant Reading: 2 Samuel 12:1-14

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

Sermon Title: *Sorrow and Joy*

Adult Sunday School – Cornelius Van Til – Ben Richards teaching

Suggested Preparations

Monday (4/27) Read and discuss Exodus 8:1–15

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants

and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.””” And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt!’” So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.” So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

While the first and ninth plagues involve water and the sun, plagues two, three, four, and eight strike people using living things. Exodus 8:1-15, therefore, is the first plague that involves living creatures. When God created the heavens and earth, He declared “swarms” of life good. Now, the “swarm” of frogs is very bad. Frogs here. Frogs there. Frogs are everywhere – even in ovens and bowls. Ugh!

Egyptians worshiped frogs to secure fruitfulness, blessings, and abundant annual harvests. The god’s name was Heqet, depicted with a frog’s head. It’s as though God says to Egypt, “I hear you like frogs. Here are a whole bunch of them!” If that’s not bad enough, all the frogs die. “They gathered them together in heaps, and the eland stank.” Double ugh!

Imagine frogs in your bed ... and you can’t get images of frogs out of your head! After they’re dead, you go out for a walk one evening all you hear is the constant crunching of dead frogs under your feet. Then, suddenly, you slip on a slimy corpse and fall into a pile of decaying frogs. The entire experience makes you want to croak!

Some dim-witted Egyptian magicians make matters worse. In their quest to show Aaron that they can duplicate his power, they double the number of

frogs! Now Pharaoh has twice the number of frogs to deal with. Oops! All the trouble is now double.

Read or sing Hymn 227 How Great Thou Art

Tuesday (4/28) Read and discuss Exodus 7:14–25

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water, and stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him. Take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. And you shall say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.” But so far, you have not obeyed. Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”’” And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’”

Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Without water, Egypt would cease to exist. This becomes obvious when flying over the country. I remember looking down while on a flight from London to Nairobi and seeing a desert wasteland. For hundreds of miles, it’s not suitable for civilization, except for one ribbon of life – the Nile River. For millennia, people have depended on the regular, annual inundation and flood of the Nile. Egypt can be summed up in one word – *water*.

When describing the first plague in Exodus 7:17, then, Moses employs five different terms for Egypt’s waters, while in Exodus 8:5-7, he uses four words for water. What’s going on? Egypt is a land of imprisoning water.

That's why Moses structures his book to show that Israel is hemmed in by these waters (ch. 1-2; 14-15). It stands to reason, therefore, that God first strikes Egypt's water supply. In doing so, He foreshadows Israel's salvation from the land's watery abode – made evident through the Red Sea miracle in Exodus 14.

The first plague, water turned to blood, also stands as an indictment against Egypt's drowning of Hebrew sons in the Nile. While an earlier pharaoh used the Nile to kill Hebrew baby boys, now the tables are turned. Egypt's waters become a place of death. And more death through water is on the way. "The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained" (Exodus 14:28 ESV).

Read or sing Psalm 103E O Come, My Soul, Bless Thou the Lord

Wednesday (4/29) Read and discuss Philippians 1:27–30

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **For** it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. (ESV)

Gordon Fee writes:

People who reflect an attitude that suggests "Oh boy, I get to suffer for Jesus" cause most of us to squirm. Somehow they haven't got it quite right; and they surely cannot appeal to Paul for such an attitude. Paul's attitude toward Christian suffering is altogether theological and Christocentric at its core. It is based on Christ's teaching on discipleship, that servants are to be like their master, and on Paul's own understanding of present Christian existence as both "already" and "not yet."

The parenthetical nature of verse 28b makes the *for* with which this sentence begins a bit problematic. What ultimately triggers all of this is the mention of the opposition, filtered through Paul's knowledge of his readers' present, very real, situation. But the immediate reason for the *for* is the mention of their final salvation as from God. The God who saves you, who has thus granted to you (literally: "graced you"!) *on behalf of Christ ... to believe in Him*, is the same God who has also graced you *to suffer for Him*. So who needs such "gracing"? one might ask.

The clue again lies in the Christocentric nature of Paul's understanding of everything. Literally he says, "To you has been graciously given on behalf of Christ ... to suffer on His behalf." This emphasis must be understood in light of the Christ narrative to which Paul will appeal in 2:5-11. A crucified Lord produces disciples who themselves take up a cross as they follow Him. We are thus to live *on behalf of Christ* in the same way Christ Himself lived – and died – on behalf of this fallen broken world. That is why salvation includes suffering *on behalf of Christ*, since those who oppose the Philippian believers as they proclaim the gospel of Christ are of a kind with those who crucified their Lord in the first place. And for believers, as for our Lord, the path to glorification leads through the suffering of the cross.

But Paul is not finished. He concludes by reminding his partners in the gospel that he and they are in this together as well; they are *going through the same struggle* they have seen him go through. His present accent falls on the same, meaning "of a kind with his," which causes a lot of things to fall into place, including both the length and the content of the preceding narrative about "my affairs" (vv. 12-26). Their present suffering on Christ's behalf has been equally brought on by those who oppose the gospel, very likely reflecting a common source as well, the Roman Empire.

Read or sing Psalm 119Q Wonderful Are Your Statutes, LORD

Thursday (4/30) Read and discuss 2 Samuel 12:1–14

And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.” (ESV)

John Woodhouse writes:

Have you ever been shattered by the word of God? Some of us have become so familiar with the word of God (or at least we think it is familiar to us) that God’s word never disturbs us. We read our Bibles, perhaps we study our Bibles, we listen to Bible talks, and life goes on. But we would not say that the word of God had *shattered* us.

In 2 Samuel 12 we hear about one of the most important occasions in world history when a man was shattered by the word of God. The man was King David. The circumstances were those that we have been following in our last three chapters. The king had not used his position and power (as he had previously) for “doing justice and righteousness for all his people” (8:15), but rather to commit adultery and arrange a murder to cover it up. Like too many humans given positions of power, he forgot the one to whom he was accountable. He used his position not to serve those entrusted to his care, but to assert his own self-serving desires, to abuse and harm others, to benefit and protect himself.

David deluded himself (and did his best to delude others) into thinking that he had done nothing wrong. However, the last line of 2 Samuel 11 casts a true light on “the thing that David had done”: it was “evil in the eyes of the LORD.” ...

Here is the scandal of the grace of God. How is it possible, indeed how is it right, that God would “put away” the sin of David (v. 13)? It is not as though David had any excuse. He, of all people, knew exactly what he was doing. Nor can we pretend that what he did was harmless. People died! And yet the LORD who had seen it all, in whose eyes it had been “evil,” who sent Nathan to tell David what the God of Israel says, “Put away” David’s sin (v. 13). This means that the LORD would not hold David’s sin against him. ...

Only when we understand the reality and seriousness of sin are we ready to wonder at God’s grace. He “put away” David’s sin (v. 13). David’s sin did not do all the damage that it could have done, but only because God was

gracious. It did not destroy God's good purposes. And for that reason we are privileged to know the Son of David, who was named Jesus, "for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Friday (5/1) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 7:2–16

Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted.

And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

Paul has realized that the Corinthians have got themselves in quite a muddle. Not only have they been strongly influenced by teachers who have been pulling their minds and imaginations back to the prevailing culture and its standards and away from the Christ-shaped way of life that the gospel is meant to produce. They have been muddled about their allegiance to Paul himself: have they really offended him? Will he ever come back and embrace them, love them and look after them as he did before? Paul now

needs to hold up a mirror to the Corinthians, and perhaps with gentle humor, invite them to look into it. Are you worried, he seems to be saying, that your response to my sharp letter isn't good enough? Let me tell you what Titus has discovered: that you have responded in every way possible, getting your act together and sorting things out, like people spring-cleaning a house before a royal visit. Paul needs to assure them not only that he is much comforted, but that they are on the right track.

In particular, he wants to assure them, as he did in chapter 2, that they have acted properly in relation to the matter of discipline which had caused the problem in the first place. (I wonder how many Christians, when teetering on the brink of some sin, think of the problems they will cause, not only for themselves and any other people immediately involved, but for the whole church as it faces the question of how to deal with that sin? Not many, I fear; which may be a sign, not only that Christians are careless about the effects of their sin, but that the church is by no means always eager to exercise appropriate discipline.

The letter has thus come round to a point of equilibrium. Paul has been through trouble and sorrow, fear and anxiety, acting out multiple forms of the dying of his Lord. Now, not simply through the work of the Spirit in his own heart, but through the work of Titus in going to Corinth and bringing back the good news, he is greatly comforted, for which he thanks God from the bottom of his heart. This has brought his relationship with the Corinthians back where it should be, and he is ready to proceed with the business he has to put to them. After all, that has been said in the last few chapters, if they are not ready now to hear the appeal of chapters 8 and 9, they will never be.

Read or sing Psalm 112 O Praise the LORD! The Man Is Blest

Saturday (5/2) Read and discuss Exodus 8:1–15

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.'"" And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt!'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the LORD to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.” So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. (ESV)

One of the oddest things is how we easily put off to tomorrow what would be best if we did that today. When Moses asked Pharaoh when he would like the plague of frogs to be cut off with all of the living frogs going back into the Nile – the only sensible answer would have been “right now!” But Pharaoh said, “tomorrow.” Tragically, we sometimes say this when it comes to repenting of our sins.

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Most of the time, it’s foolish to begin sentences with the words, “One of these days.” “One of these days, I’m going to make amends with my brother.” “One of these days, I’m going to finish college.” “One of these days, I’m going to read through the entire Bible.” Be honest, now. “one of these days” often turns out to be “none of these days.”

It’s better to begin more sentences with “Today.” “Today, I’m empowered to make godly choices.” “Today, I will give thanks for God’s gifts.” “Today, I’ll be kind and courteous because Jesus lives in my heart.” Why do this? Because today, Jesus is the doorway to deliverance, the pathway to peace, and the gateway to glory. Today, His mercy is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His love never changes. His grace is sufficient. And His word is enough.

“Today” is so much better than Pharaoh’s feeble “tomorrow.” Why fritter your life away surrounded by foul-smelling frogs?

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