

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 10 May 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Hymn: 230 Holy, Holy, Holy!

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: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Psalm of Preparation: 96 Sing to the Lord, Sing His Praise

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 8:16-32

New Covenant Reading: 2 Peter 1:3-11

Sermon Title: *No Compromise*

Psalm of Response: 119N Your Word Sheds Light upon My Path

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 569)

Closing Psalm: 119U Though Princes Hound Me for No Cause

PM Worship

181 Now Thank We All Our God

405 I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

185 We Give Thee But Thine Own

Old Covenant Reading: 1 Kings 17:8-16

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

Sermon Title: *Following in Grace*

Adult Sunday School – Cornelius Van Til – Ben Richards teaching

Suggested Preparations

Monday (5/4) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 8:16–32

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats

on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.”’” And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants’ houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? We must go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us.” So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.” Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Imagine your water supply has turned to blood. Add innumerable dead frogs throughout the land. On top of that, now there are millions of gnats making everyday life impossible. Had enough? Raise the white flag? Not if you’re Pharaoh!

People who directed the film *The Wizard of Oz* created several illusions that looked real. For instance, the tornado was a big white sock while the farmhouse in the tornado was three feet high. The threatening army of monkeys? They were six inches tall and hung by piano wire. And underneath the monkey costumes were small, battery-driven electric windshield-wiper motors making their wings go up and down.

It is hard to distinguish illusions from the real thing – that is, unless you are Moses and Aaron. By the time we come to the third plague, Pharaoh's magicians are seen for what they really are – delusional, thinking they can keep up with Yahweh. Because Egypt is familiar with magic and secret arts, it was natural to label Moses as just another rank-and-file magician. That is, until the gnats stormed the gates.

Egyptian diviners had turned their rods into serpents. They had also duplicated the first two plagues, turning water into blood and being fruitful with frogs. Now, however, the magicians admit they're weaker than Yahweh – saying of the gnats, "This is the finger of God."

The gnats come with no warning, suggesting that they're God's judgment against Pharaoh for not living up to his word in Exodus 8:8 – that he would let Israel go and sacrifice to Yahweh. "All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt." "Dust," in this case, denotes loose topsoil, meaning scores and scads of gnats!

Read or sing Hymn 230 Holy, Holy, Holy!

Tuesday (5/5) 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)

Kenneth Cherney writes:

Moses and Aaron do as they are asked: they leave Pharaoh's presence, and Moses raises his voice in prayer to the LORD. In fact, "raise his voice" is exactly what he does. Moses prays several times in the Plague Narrative, but this is the only time that the verb used is [the verb which means] "cry aloud, shout." Lerner is correct: the reason for this is not that Moses is overwrought about the frogs, since these were probably the least dangerous plague of the ten. The reason is that Moses had to shout to make himself heard over the tsunami of croaking that has engulfed Egypt.

Yahweh answers Moses' prayer, but the frogs do not go away. They simply drop dead, and it is up to the Egyptians to get rid of them. The image of labor gangs under the hot Egyptian sun shoveling dead frogs out of "houses, courtyards, and croplands" and onto enormous reeking piles is one of the most vivid and memorable in the Plague Narrative.

It makes little impression on Pharaoh, however, who notices only that there is "relief." For the first time, it becomes explicit that Pharaoh is responsible for the "numbness" of his own "heart." He does not "listen," i.e., yield to Yahweh's demand or keep his promise to release Israel. In this, Pharaoh is the equivalent of the person who "gets religion" when he needs a favor from God and then forgets all about God the moment the troubles pass. But Pharaoh is also much worse. He has made a deliberate choice to act as though recent events never happened, ignoring incontrovertible evidence that he has set himself on a collision course with the One whose power is unique in all the earth.

Read or sing Psalm 96 Sing to the Lord, Sing His Praise

Wednesday (5/6) Read and discuss 2 Peter 1:3–11

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For

whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

Interesting, isn't it, that we are told to resist the devil (1 Peter 5:9), but, both here and in 2 Timothy 2:22, to run away from the lust which drags us down to the sub-human level. The word for 'run away from' is sometimes translated as 'shun,' as though merely pushing these things away, like someone refusing a second helping of food, were enough, but neither Paul nor Peter is satisfied with that. Think of Joseph when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. She made a grab at him, but he ran away. That isn't cowardice. A coward, as a wise old writer once put it, saves his prospects at the cost of his honor; Joseph did the opposite. Both Paul and Peter want us to do the same.

The running away from the lusts of the flesh isn't a negative thing, despite what people will rather frantically tell you today. Lust is like a drug. Like all drugs it demands more and more but gives less and less. It turns people into shadows of real human beings. Like shady financial dealings, it 'corrupts:' it does to the moral fiber what cancer does to physical cells.

Peter is urging his readers to go in the opposite direction. Become more fully human, he says, by building one aspect of Christian character on top of another: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, piety, family affection, and finally love. All these take thought; all these take effort. They don't happen by accident. You have to want to do them; you have to choose to do them. But when you do, and pray for God's grace, promises and power to help, you will be coming to know Jesus the Messiah. And in that knowledge you won't just be a Christian for your own sake, as it were. You will become fruitful in God's service.

Read or sing Psalm 119N Your Word Sheds Light upon My Path

Thursday (5/7) Read and discuss 1 Kings 17:8–16

Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel

of bread in your hand.” And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah. (ESV)

Walter Maier writes:

All that the widow, a woman without a husband to provide for her and her family, has left in her house is a handful of flour and a little oil, which she was going to combine and bake into a very small amount of bread. This would serve as the last food for the widow and her family; after eating it, they would have nothing more to sustain them and so would eventually starve to death. The woman indeed was at the end of her rope; no other options lay before her. She certainly had reason to be afraid.

Elijah responds by telling the widow, “Do not be afraid.” Despite what the woman told him about the last provisions in her house, Elijah directs her to make some bread for him anyway. He did this no doubt because he was hungry, but also for other reasons. He deals with her fear by indicating that a miracle was going to take place. She was to make for him a small loaf first – which in an ordinary situation would have used up the handful of flour which was left. Yet he tells her that afterward she was to make some bread for herself and her family, which could happen only if the flour and oil had been miraculously renewed. Elijah then immediately bakes up the implication of his directive with the explicit assertion of 17:14, quoting the promise of Yahweh, the God whom the widow knew existed, who had already been in contact with her, and whose word about an Israelite prophet coming to her had proven to be true. Thus she does as Elijah asks, probably because she feels she really has nothing to lose. If what Elijah foretold turned out not to be true, obeying his request would result in the provisions being used up and the woman and her family starving to death; but going according to her original plan also had as the final outcome their dying. However, if the prophet’s words were true, they would go on living. ...

Elijah’s consuming a small loaf right then did not imply a miracle. But her having food, “and her house” as well, did. In 17:15, the statements “she ate, she” and “and her house” form a sort of *inclusion*. The author of Kings adds right away that all these people ate not only at that point in time, soon after

Elijah had come to Zarephath, but also “for some time,” due to the jar never running out of flour and the jug never lacking oil. This would and did continue “until the day Yahweh” gave “rain on the ground,” that is, until the LORD restored the rainfall and crops could grow and there could again be harvests and adequate food at a cheap enough price that the widow could purchase.

The wondrous provision of food recalled God sending manna to sustain Israel while the people were in the wilderness in the time of Moses. As well, it foreshadowed the miracles of the greatest Prophet, who, by His own almighty power, miraculously multiplied fish and loaves of bread in order to feed thousands.

Friday (5/8) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 8:1–7

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

Paul gives the impression that he was taken aback by the Macedonians’ eagerness and generosity. They gave beyond their means and did so without Paul’s encouragement, let alone his insistence. If it comes from “grace,” then it cannot come from coercion. They gave beyond anything he anticipated because they gave of themselves.

The quantity of what they gave does not matter to Paul, but the spirit in which they gave does. With God, a couple of “mites” can far outweigh a ton of gold bullion. In keeping with this divine outlook, Paul never mentions the word *money* when talking about this project. He cloaks the whole enterprise in language that is both formally administrative and theologically profound. It is a “ministry.” The word “ministry” had a technical meaning in Judaism for supporting the needs of the poor. Paul regards this ministry as something far more than simply delivering aid to poor people. It had major theological consequences and was something he was prepared to risk for his life to carry out. Business language is therefore hardly adequate to describe it, and so Paul resorts to theological language.

Read or sing Psalm 119U Though Princes Hound Me for No Cause

Saturday (5/9) Read and discuss Exodus 8:16–32

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.”’” And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants’ houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? We must go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us.” So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me.” Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.” So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

With gnats still buzzing, a new disaster strikes – swarms of flies. And, to state the obvious, this happened long before screened-in-porches, insect repellents, and bug zappers! However, God explicitly protects the Hebrew land of Goshen. To see flies stop before entering Goshen – as though they

ran into a plexiglass wall – must have been quite a sight to see. God tells Pharaoh the reason for this distinction, “That you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth” (Exodus 8:22). Even after god removed all the flies that were whizzing around the king’s head, he wouldn’t budge. “Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.”

There are several notable features that appear in this plague. First, the flies begin the second cycle of three that includes livestock and boils. Second, for the first time, a plague is introduced without either Moses’ or Aaron’s staff. In fact, staffs are missing in the entire second sequence Third, this is the first plague that distinguishes between the Egyptians and the Israelites. Except of the locusts (the eighty plague), this separation continues through and includes the climatic last plague – the death of every firstborn in Egypt where God saves Israel through blood.

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