

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 12 July 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Hymn: 498 I Will Sing of My Redeemer

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: Romans 5:6-8

Psalm of Preparation: 113A Hallelujah! Raise, O Raise

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 113 (sermon text)

New Covenant Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Sermon Title: *Who is Like Our Lord?*

Hymn of Response: 432 By Grace I'm Saved

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 569)

Closing Hymn: 435 Not What My Hands Have Done

PM Worship

167 Jesus, Where'er Your People Meet

14 The Fool Speaks in His Heart

119A How Blessed Are Those Upright in Their Way

Old Covenant Reading: Ezekiel 34:1-11

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:5-15

Sermon Title: *A Superior Ministry?*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (7/6) Read and discuss Psalm 113

Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!

Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!
Who is like the LORD our God,
who is seated on high,
who looks far down
on the heavens and the earth?
He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.
He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the LORD! (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

Praise God because there is nothing too great for Him. He is over all time, all places, and all human power and authority. But also praise Him because there is no one too small for God. He enthrones the poor. The situation of the poor often is used to open them spiritually to the need for grace and the riches of salvation. Materially God works for justice in history for the oppressed. He loves working through the barren (think of Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth) and puts the lonely in community (verse 9). God's greatness is seen in His regard for the ungreat. In Jesus He proved to be great enough to become small Himself.

Read or sing Hymn 498 I Will Sing of My Redeemer

Tuesday (7/7) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 12:43–51

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts. (ESV)

Kenneth Cherney writes:

The legislation given here clearly envisions a situation when Israel is settled in the land, intermingling with foreigners, migrants, day laborers, and resident immigrants and acquiring enslaved persons. The mention of enslaved persons acquired by a nation newly freed from bondage is matter of fact and devoid of irony. More importantly, this future social situation will require additional attention to the question of who may and may not participate in the *Pesach* meal. Boundaries could have been erected based on ethnicity, ancestral land rights, or social status (enslaved versus free), but that is emphatically not the case. The sole qualifier is that any males be incorporated into the community via circumcision. As Utzschneider and Oswald put it, this a remarkable case of “disconnecting ethnicity and religion, or, to be more precise, ethnicity and cultic eligibility.”

Read or sing Psalm 113A Hallelujah! Raise, O Raise

Wednesday (7/8) Read and discuss Ephesians 2:1–10

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (ESV)

Clinton Arnold writes:

Salvation is more than the forgiveness of sins; it entails participation in Christ’s power and authority over the forces of evil. Although salvation involves forgiveness of sins, Paul here emphasizes that it also involves liberation from the powers that once determined our lives. He brings this out by emphasizing our real participation in the resurrection and exaltation

of Christ. Being “in Christ” means that we have experienced a relationship of solidarity “with Christ” in these key events.

This does not diminish Paul’s teaching in his previous letters about our future resurrection reign with Christ. Rather, it involves an affirmation of the closeness of our unity with Him in His resurrection to newness of life and in His present power and authority over the forces of evil that would seek to continue their influence and re-enslave us. Although these powers still exist, their dominating and irresistible grip on us has been broken. Believers are now free and empowered to live according to the way they have been designed by their Creator.

Read or sing Hymn 432 By Grace I’m Saved

Thursday (7/9) Read and discuss Ezekiel 34:1–11

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

The Lord GOD Will Seek Them Out

“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. (ESV)

Iain Duguid writes:

Jesus is not merely the model shepherd who makes contemporary pastors feel guilty by how far short we fall. He is Himself the One of whom Ezekiel 34 speaks. He is the One in whom all the covenants of the Old Testament find their fulfillment. He is the ultimate Shepherd-King, who fulfills the Davidic covenant, as the crowds recognized during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He fulfills the Mosaic covenant both as the Lawgiver, who speaks His authoritative word from the mountain (Matt 5-7), and also as the One who has come to fulfill the law given from Sinai. He is the Second Adam, who through His obedient life, death, and resurrection fulfills the covenant of creation. He is the One who ushers in for His people the blessings of the covenant by being the covenant-keeper in our place. In Him, we have peace with God; in Him, we have peace with one another; in Him, all creation finds peace.

All of these blessings have both a “now” and a “not yet” aspect to them. We see them in part now, but we do not yet see them in all their fulness. Creation still groans with anticipation as it awaits the revelation of the new heavens and the new earth and of ourselves as sons and daughters of God. In the meantime our experience frequently continues to be “trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword.” But these are momentary light afflictions in comparison to the glory that awaits us. One day Christ will return, and all will be gloriously fulfilled as God gathers his worldwide flock from many nations into His presence. Then there will be no more suffering, no more pain, no more disharmony with God, my neighbor, or the world. As Revelation 7:17 puts it:

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;
He will lead them to springs of living water.
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Friday (7/10) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 11:5–11

Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God’s gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

Paul now finds he's being damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. Having bent over backwards not to be a burden to them – and perhaps to make clear one of the points we've just suggested – he now finds himself accused of not really loving them, because he's allowed other Christians to help him out financially but has refused all help from Corinth! (And, of course, just to confuse matters still further, he is now asking them for money, but it's not for himself but for Jerusalem.) to be fair, it must have been puzzling for the Corinthian Christians to have people coming from Macedonia to keep Paul in funds. But he had his reasons for organizing things that way, and had explained it to them carefully.

Anyway, this questioning of his motives and practice was clearly coming from one particular source, or one particular group of people: the 'super-apostles,' as he calls them with heavy irony in verse 5. Now he drops the irony and declares, forcefully, that they aren't 'super-apostles' at all; they are *false* apostles, proclaiming and teaching a false gospel. Worse: they are servants of the Satan. That is one of the strongest accusations anyone can make, but it's not simply a bit of miscellaneous religious name-calling. The teachers in Corinth had been *accusing* Paul of all kinds of things of which he knew he wasn't guilty. In traditional biblical and Jewish thinking, the 'Satan' was the accuser, the Director of Public Prosecutions for the heavenly court. It was his job to accuse people, to bring charges against all wrongdoers. In order to have charges to bring, the Satan seems to have taken to whispering ideas into people's ears ... and so became the tempter as well as the prosecutor. And if people failed to respond to the whispered suggestions, the Satan was quite capable of making false accusations instead.

Read or sing Hymn 435 Not What My Hands Have Done

Saturday (7/11) Read and discuss Psalm 113

Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!

Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens!

Who is like the LORD our God,
 who is seated on high,
who looks far down
 on the heavens and the earth?
He raises the poor from the dust
 and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
 with the princes of his people.
He gives the barren woman a home,
 making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the LORD! (ESV)

Allen P. Ross writes:

This little psalm reveals so clearly the greatness and the grace of the LORD: The gracious acts of the LORD reveal His greatness, for as sovereign Lord He cares for His creation. That care is portrayed in two arenas, the miserable poor people who have no hope of a better life, and the lonely barren woman who is filled with sadness. By His power and through His grace He can change these things. The LORD who reigns above all the world comes down to earth to exalt the lowly and care for the needy. He can lift up the poor from the ash heap and enable them to enjoy a royal life; and He can change the fortunes of a barren woman so that she will be a joyful mother of children. The two samples focus on the circumstances in society and the joy in the home.

The psalm provides a glimpse of things to come. In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son to redeem people; and so to fulfill the eternal plan, the Son laid His glory by and became incarnate in order to meet the needs of people. He demonstrated in His earthly ministry that he is able to meet all the physical needs that people have, but in so doing He revealed He could meet the greater need of redemption, delivering us from the bondage and emptiness of this world to dwell with Him in glory and enjoy His eternal blessings. Such grace and power certainly require that people everywhere and at all times praise the name of the LORD.

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