

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 19 July 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 286 Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder

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 i

mploring 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: Psalm 86:12-15

Hymn of Preparation: 247 We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 13:1-16

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 12:18-24

Sermon Title: *Sons and Matzah*

Hymn of Response: 348 Glory Be to Jesus

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Gloria Patri (Hymn 572)

Closing Psalm: 73C In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee

PM Worship

100A Shout to the LORD, All Earth

492 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

238 Lord, with Glowing Heart I'd Praise Thee

Old Covenant Reading: Proverbs 26:4-12

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:16-21

Sermon Title: *Playing the Fool*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (7/13) Read and discuss Exodus 13:1–16

The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the

Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” (ESV)

Commenting on verses 8 through 10, Doug Stuart writes:

Because Moses spoke these words to those who actually did participate personally in the exodus, he told them to make first-person statements such as “I do this” and “for me when I came out of Egypt.” However, this does not exhaust the reason for the first-person language. Another factor is also at play: Moses had in mind the pan-historical solidarity of the Israelite people. All generations of fathers are to say to their children these words also in the first person, because all generations are part of the continuum that experienced the exodus. The community of faith at every age is supposed to identify fully with the original exodus generation, just as one gets “caught up” in a powerful story in book or movie form, or, more significantly, just as one identifies with various kinds of values and commitments learned from beloved grandparents and parents. A parade example of this sort of pan-generational thinking is found in Deut 4:3-40, in which Moses addressed his audience (who were in fact the generation that grew up in the wilderness) as if they had grown up in Egypt, as if they had also lived for many years already in the Promised Land (they weren’t there yet), and, as well, as if they were about to be driven from it into Exile many centuries later, and then were the actual exile generation who had a chance to come back from that exile to new and greater blessings – in other words, as if one generation lived a thousand years. In God’s economy *each*

generation of His people is expected to cultivate an identification with *all* the experiences of all the generations, and *all* the generations must identify with the events that have happened or will happen to *any* generation.

Read or sing Hymn 286 Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder

Tuesday (7/14) Read and discuss 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)

Christopher Ash writes:

It is good to reflect on what Psalm 113 would have meant to the discouraged church of God in the fragile days after the exile. “The object,” writes Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, “is to inspire with courage ... the poor little flock, after the captivity, by lifting up their hearts to their heavenly Father, who visits in the loveliest manner the smallest dwellings.” Philip Eveson likewise notes that the purpose was “to encourage a people dejected and in low spirits after the exile” to look for the fulfillment of the covenant promises. Both Hengstenberg and Eveson extend this, through the prophetic character of the psalm, to the church of Christ, whose glory is “now covered over by a bare cross” (Hengstenberg) but will one day be seen. Our God is

high above aggressive nationalisms, corrosive cultural secularisms, seductive or oppressive religions, and all hostility to Jesus Christ.

Each of us must acknowledge that we are “poor and needy.” We bring nothing of value to God and need His salvation not as a little “extra” added to our already quite good lives but as the complete rescue given to broken people. Martin Luther makes the observation that although our state is objectively one of being poor and needy, not all will acknowledge this reality. We need to know that God “does not lift and raise up all, but only those who acknowledge themselves to be downcast and depressed.”

Read or sing Hymn 247 We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator

Wednesday (7/15) Read and discuss Hebrews 12:18–24

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (ESV)

Amy Peeler writes:

Amid the humans stands God. That the author describes God as *Judge* shows the amazing grace of humanity’s dwelling on the heavenly mountain. The author has appealed to God’s judgment several times throughout the sermon to emphasize the fittingness of God’s actions against disobedience. In fact, in every other instance in the [letter], God’s status as Judge is meant to provoke awe, reverence, and obedience. It is a somber reality. By including that description here, the author asserts that God has not ignored the implications and sins of those who are gathered – God the Judge sees and is sovereign over all – but somehow those gathered have passed through this judgment. This provides hopes for the readers who stand before this mountain that they can do the same.

The final phrases of the mountain’s description explain why. On this mountain dwells *the mediator of the new covenant*. The author uses a different term here of new than he did earlier; it is one that indicates being more recent or younger. This is the “newer” covenant established by God’s

word that made the first “older.” This new covenant, as articulated through the words of Jeremiah in Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16-17, is that which has forgiven their sins, put God’s law inside them, and renewed their standing as God’s people. It is a covenant effected with *sprinkled blood*, and this blood *speaks better than that of Abel*. The mention of Abel puts a bookend on the entire section, going back to the beginning of chapter 11 (11:4). This mention also invites multiple comparisons. Jesus’s blood is superior to Abel’s because it is living and not dead. It does not cry out (metaphorically) spilt on the ground but intercedes at the right hand of God (7:28) because Jesus is not separated from His blood but unity with it in His resurrected body. Moreover, His is not a cry for justice for himself but a plea for mercy of all His siblings, precisely what humans need to stand in the presence of a holy God.

Read or sing Hymn 348 Glory Be to Jesus

Thursday (7/16) Read and discuss Proverbs 26:4–12

Answer not a fool according to his folly,
lest you be like him yourself.

Answer a fool according to his folly,
lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.

Like a lame man’s legs, which hang useless,
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Like one who binds the stone in the sling
is one who gives honor to a fool.

Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Like an archer who wounds everyone
is one who hires a passing fool or drunkard.

Like a dog that returns to his vomit
is a fool who repeats his folly.

Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him. (ESV)

Commenting on verses 4-5, Andrew Steinmann writes:

These verses are probably the best-known pair of proverbs in the book and have received much attention from commentators. General agreement exists that these two proverbs speak of differing circumstances. The first states that, in general, it is foolish to engage in dialogue with fools. However, the

second affirms that on some occasions a fool's words are so dangerous that they must be answered and refuted or else he (and any others listening to him) will think that he has presented the truth. The same apparent contradiction exists in proverbs in the English language. Compare, for example, "look before you leap" and "he who hesitates is lost." Each truism must be applied to the right situation.

Friday (7/17) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 11:16–21

I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

With biting irony Paul confesses, "I say this to our shame: We have been too weak for that!" He owns up to his weakness. They are right. He has utterly failed in this regard. As far as God is concerned, however, the dishonor is theirs, not his. His confession becomes a painful rebuke. As far as the world's values are concerned, he lives in dishonor; but according to God, he has honor. If being "strong" means doing what his rivals have done, then he is unquestionably weak. Yet it is a weakness that God approves. God never condones the tyranny, pomposity, and meanness that church despots have inflicted on the church across the ages.

Paul will show that his weakness allows God's power to work more powerfully through him. Who is of Christ? The boastful autocrat who ascends the throne of his own pride, coercing others to bow to his will and running roughshod over any opposition? Or the gentle and mild servant whose only badge of rule is his consideration of others and devotion to their spiritual welfare? Paul's answer can be found in Phil 2:6-8; Rom 15:3; and 2 Cor 8:9. He gladly shares the shame with Christ of unselfish and sacrificial service for others.

Read or sing Psalm 73C In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee

Saturday (7/18) Read and discuss Exodus 13:1–16

The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” (ESV)

Children desire to learn the reasons for the practices they grow up observing. It was therefore to be expected that in their natural inquisitiveness Israelite children would ask their parents the meaning of the consecration/redemption of the firstborn. The parents were expected in replying to their children to link the practice to the exodus, which was triggered by the death of the Egyptian firstborn and the sparing of the Israelite firstborn. In effect the child was to be told, “Our identity is that of God’s chosen people who were rescued from slavery in Egypt and rescued from the death of the firstborn by faith in Yahweh. We keep showing that faith by dedicating all firstborn children and all firstborn male livestock to God. But we buy back the children, and the livestock that are inappropriate for God’s offerings because God is generous enough to allow us to do that. He still gets an offering, but it is a substitute offering for what He wants us to keep. When we do all this, we are doing something that reminds us of His powerful deliverance from Egypt.”

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