

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 6 September 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 271 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

Confession of Sin

O great and everlasting God, Who dwells in unapproachable light, Who searches and knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart; We confess that we have not loved You with all our heart, nor with all our soul, nor with all our mind, nor with all our strength; Nor our neighbors as ourselves. We have loved what we ought not to have loved; We have coveted what is not ours; We have not been content with Your provisions for us. We have complained in our hearts about our family, about our friends, about our health, about our occupations, about Your church, and about our trials. We have sought our security in those things which perish, rather than in You, the Everlasting God. Chasten, cleanse, and forgive us, through Jesus Christ, who is able for all time to save us who approach You through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for us. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: John 14:1-3

Hymn of Preparation: 239 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 16:1-18

New Covenant Reading: John 6:22-35

Sermon Title: *The Bread of Heaven*

Hymn of Response: 196 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Gloria Patri (Hymn 572)

Closing Hymn: 252 This Is My Father's World

PM Worship

162 Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now

133A How Excellent a Thing It Is

563 May the Grace of Christ Our Savior

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 133

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

Sermon Title: *The Church's Triune Hope*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (8/31) Read and discuss Exodus 16:1–18

They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt,

when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flakelike thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. (ESV)

John Goldingay writes:

The Israelites had their hands high when they marched out of Egypt. After their deliverance at the Red Sea I imagine their hands were high when they marched into the wilderness, but they soon discover that God’s defeat of Pharaoh by no means solves all their problems. It only introduces them to the next challenge. When God does something new and creative, it is tempting to think that everything now is going to be wonderful, but the early church soon found out it was having to deal with people being put in jail and people falsifying their pledges and with one group complaining about another group being neglected when food was distributed (Acts 4-6). It was

repeating Israel's experience, even in the sense that it involved down-to-earth questions like whether you have enough to eat and that it issued in division in the community. ...

The way [the children of Israel] complain about their food supply suggests they have learned nothing. Indeed, things have gotten worse, and time has given a rosy glow to their life in Egypt compared with the reality Exodus has described: "You brought us out of Egypt to starve us to death." "It's God you're complaining about, not us. God will act so spectacularly, it will show it was God who brought you out, not me," Moses and Aaron reply.

The concrete way the provision of food will test them is that it will come daily except at the weekend; they will get two days' supply on Friday so they don't have to do anything to make sure they have enough to eat on the Sabbath. This puts them into daily reliance on God.

Perhaps this is a good passage to meditate upon in conjunction with praying, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Read or sing Hymn 271 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

Tuesday (9/1) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 15:22–27

Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the LORD made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water. (ESV)

Godliness with content is not about denying our circumstances. Godliness with contentment comes from walking by faith and therefore bringing all of our hopes and pains to the LORD casting our cares upon Him knowing that He care for you!

The murmuring in this passage is not merely Israel expressing legitimate physical need. It is what they do with that need. Critically, they do not cry out to the LORD in prayer. Instead they murmur against Moses.

As Doug Stuart points out:

What is noteworthy ... is that the people were following the pillar of cloud and therefore knew perfectly well that it was Yahweh who had led them to this location.¹

Yet, instead of trusting that the LORD who had split the Red Sea and led them across on dry ground was both willing and able to care for them in their hour of need; they bitterly murmured against the man of God whom they could see. Instead of walking by faith they complained by sight.

Such murmuring is the polar opposite of singing praise for murmuring like this proclaims the lie that the LORD is not good in how He cares for His people.

This is the danger for every pilgrim including you and me. Bitter circumstances have a way of exposing where our trust actually lies. As long as the road is smooth, we can talk a good game about faith.

This past Friday even, a group of us were listening to a cover band together at Tuscan Village, in Salem, NH. To state the obvious, eating dinner with friends, on a beautiful New Hampshire evening, sitting around a fire pit in Adirondack chairs, while listening to live music is not where any of us feels tempted to murmur.

But let the water turn bitter let the medical report come back with dreaded diagnosis of cancer; let the weeks without a longed-for relationship stretch into months and then into years let the burdens of work in a fallen world leave us between the rock of painful employment and the hard place of wondering if we can make ends meet and very quickly, we discover whether we actually trust the LORD and whether we believe that He who saved us at the Red Sea is still trustworthy at Marah.

Read or sing Hymn 239 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Wednesday (9/2) Read and discuss John 6:22–35

On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus

¹ Doug Stuart, *Exodus*, p. 366.

was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the

food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (ESV)

In verse 25 we read:

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him,
“Rabbi, when did you come here?”

What they are really asking is: “How did you get here?” They knew that Jesus hadn’t arrived by boat yet, mysteriously, He had made it to Capernaum. How did He get there?

Part of me wishes that Jesus responded: “I walked!” ... just to see the look on their faces [O.k., I’m not as sanctified as Jesus – but you already knew that]. Jesus doesn’t answer their question. Instead He cuts to the heart of the matter. Verse 26:

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”

The Lord God had multiplied the bread and the fish as a sign. The crowd should have traced the supernatural provision of food back to the goodness and astonishing power of Jesus. That is, the crowd should have seen the miracle and believed in Jesus. But they didn’t do that. Instead they were getting the relationship between Jesus and the physical bread exactly backwards. Instead of seeing the arrow as

pointing from the physical bread to Jesus, they saw the arrow as pointing from Jesus **to what they *really* wanted** – the physical bread.

It isn't as though they didn't see Jesus as valuable. They thought Jesus was so valuable that they wanted to make Him their King. The problem was that they saw Jesus as valuable only because of the physical goods He could provide for them. Jesus healed the sick and gave them free food, but they didn't desire Jesus Himself as their greatest good and they weren't thinking in spiritual terms at all.

This form of idolatry, where the people can appear to be seeking Jesus or otherwise “religious”, is rampant in our own day. This idolatry is at the very heart of the so called “health and wealth” gospel – which is no gospel at all. Indeed, even many evangelical churches that would explicitly condemn the heresy taught by someone like Joel Osteen are still trying to sell Christianity in our culture by telling people that they will have better marriages, more successful children, or a whole range of things other than Jesus. Let me state the problem plainly: If you want to use God rather than love God you are an idolater. Sadly, this sort of idolatry is actually being promoted by people who call themselves ministers and organizations which call themselves churches.

Please don't misunderstand me: When we cling to Jesus Christ, the LORD is delighted to frequently give us many other blessings as expressions of His love for us. We ought to enjoy those blessings with grateful hearts. But here is the key point: We ought to enjoy the blessings that God gives us expressions of His love for us rather than viewing God as someone to be used for the sake of gaining those material benefits – when it is those material benefits rather than God that our hearts truly crave.

Saint Augustine gives this powerful illustration. Augustine writes:

It's as if a bridegroom were to give a ring to his bride, and she came to value the ring more than the one who gave it. By all means let her love the bridegroom's gift, but if she were to say, “The ring's enough for me, I don't want to see his face,” what sort of woman would this be? Who wouldn't consider her an adulteress in her heart? ... Well then, God gave you all these things, so love Him who made them! There's something more that he wants to give you - Himself, who made these things. Even though they are made by God, if you love

them and you disregard Him and love the world, won't your love be counted adulterous?²

Read or sing Hymn 196 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Thursday (9/3) Read and discuss Psalm 133

Behold, how good and pleasant it is

when brothers dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls
on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD
has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore. (ESV)

John Phillips writes:

Nobody can organize brotherhood. People can join lodges and clubs, the can found United Nations organizations and promote ecumenical movements all in vain. There can be no universal brotherhood of man apart from a universal fatherhood of God, and the bible makes clear that God is not the father of all. He is the creator of all, but He is the father only of those who are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit of God. What the world is looking for is a practical demonstration of the brotherhood and unity among the children of God.

Years ago I was part of a detachment of troops stationed on Haifa docks in Palestine. There were about twenty men in the barrack room, drawn from all strata of society and from all walks of life. On my first Sunday morning I left camp to find a place where I could fellowship with the people of God. Making my way up Mount Carmel I saw a small building half a block down a side road. It bore a sign that read: "Gospel Hall." I knew at once what it was. It was an assembly of believers known as Brethren. I had been raised in such a group in South Wales. A few minutes conversation with an aged man at the door convinced him that I knew and loved the Lord, that I was a baptized believer in fellowship with a likeminded group of believers back home, and as such I was made welcome. I was at home. I was with people

² Augustine, *Love One Another, My Friends*, St. Augustine's Homilies on the First Letter of John, p. 20.

who knew and loved the Lord. I was part of a worldwide family of God's people.

After the morning service I was invited to the home of a young Christian Arab. There I was made welcome, entertained at his table, introduced to his aged mother and his sisters, and shown Christian love and hospitality. In that home I forged links of love that lasted for many years and which proved true and real even in distant lands in later times.

I was also invited that Sunday to have supper with a Russian brother and his wife. Here, too, new links of love were forged and a friendship formed which stood the test of time. After the evening service I was invited to the home of a Palestinian [Messianic] Jew.

I arrived back at camp quite late at night. The first question I was asked by a curious group of men was, "Where have you been all day?" I said, "I went to church this morning. I had lunch at the home of a Palestinian Arab along with his mother and his sisters. I had supper at the home of a Russian. I have just come back from the home of a [Messianic] Jew." I shall never forget the comment with which this astounding piece of news was received. The men in this unit had been there for months. They knew nobody outside their own circle. Incredulously one of them asked, "What kind of a lodge do you belong to?"

It was no lodge. No lodge on earth can provide its membership with what I enjoyed that day. When I walked in that Gospel Hall I walked into a family, my family, the family of God. I enjoyed something of that unity of the Spirit which exists nowhere outside Christ but which, within the wide circle of the family of God, is known to all who love the LORD.

Friday (9/4) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 13:11–14

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

Paul calls down God's blessings upon all of them, including those who have given him so much trouble in Corinth. The letter seems to have met with success. According to Acts 20:2-3, Paul spent three months in Greece, and

we may assume that most of that time was spent in Corinth. The letter to the Romans was probably written from Corinth on the eve of his departure for Jerusalem with the collection to which the Achaean contributed (Rom 15:26). Clement, a leader of the Roman church, wrote to the Corinthians at the end of the first century, referring to 1 Corinthians and praising Paul as an example. Best comments: “He would hardly have done this unless Paul and his writings were held in honor in Corinth. We may then assume that Paul’s pleas were successful and that when he came to Corinth he did not have to tear down but was able to build up.”

Read or sing Hymn 252 This Is My Father’s World

Saturday (9/5) Read and discuss Exodus 16:1–18

They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flakelike thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to

one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

Like the rest of the wilderness narratives, the events of our passage lived on in Israel’s memory. The story served both as a testimony to the faithful provision of God, and therefore a matter of celebration in worship, and also as a record of the ungrateful grumbling and rebellions of Israel, and therefore a matter of warning to future generations. ...

On the plains of Moab, recalling the past forty years, Moses reminds Israel of their long journey in the wilderness (including the manna) and how God had used it as a teaching and learning experience (Deut 8:2-5). They had learned the fatherly discipline of their God as well as His loving provision. That note of thankful appreciation surfaces again in prayer and worship, such as Nehemiah 9:20-21 and Psalm 105:40-41.

But the story could be used to warn Israel of the danger of repeating their sin of grumbling rebellion (Deut 6:16). This more negative use of. The tradition then predominates in the Psalms that recount Israel’s history as a counterfoil to Yahweh’s faithfulness. Sometimes the motivation is didactic. At other times the thrust is confession, in which the sins of the past are summoned in the context of confessing present distress and asking God for renewed [deliverance]. Even when the whole mood of the moment is a call to unfettered praise – singing the praises of the king of the universe, the owner of the earth, and the maker of Israel – the memory of Meribah and Massah lurks in the background as a warning against the terrible consequences of not paying heed to the voice of such a God (Ps 95:7-11).

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