

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 4 October 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Psalm: 116C What Shall I Render to the Lord

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: Psalm 130:7-8

Hymn of Preparation: 257 Children of the Heavenly Father

Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-21

New Covenant Reading: Luke 12:42-48

Sermon Title: *The Voice of God*

Hymn of Response: 169 Master, Speak! Thy Servant Hearth

Confession of Faith: Apostles Creed (p. 851)

Gloria Patri (Hymn 572)

Closing Hymn: 259 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

PM Worship

16A Preserve Me, O My God

20B The LORD in Your Distress Attend

515 More Than Conquerors

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 17:8-16

New Covenant Reading: Hebrews 7:11-25

Sermon Title: *The Battle Belongs to the LORD*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (9/28) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 3

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.”

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

Many of the great figures of the Bible began their careers with a dramatic call from the LORD, including Abraham, Moses, the prophet Isaiah, and the apostle Paul. Samuel’s importance in Bible history is seen by his inclusion on this list of chosen and specially called servants of the LORD.

Popular literature likes to picture Samuel as answering God’s summons as a little boy, but it is more likely that enough years had passed for Samuel to have at least entered his adolescence. In chapter 2 we read that “the young

man Samuel continued to grow” (v. 26), and in 3:2 we read that Eli was now so old that his “eyesight had begun to grow dim.” Whereas chapter 2 compared little Samuel to the wicked sons of Eli, chapter 3 describes him in contrast to aged Eli. While Eli was “lying down in his own place,” suggesting a room or chamber off the temple, “Samuel was lying down in his own place,” suggesting a room or chamber off the temple, “Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.” In effect, Samuel was filling Eli’s shoes, and now he would be formally installed by God in Eli’s place. Just as Israel’s spiritual decrepitude followed by Eli’s blind infirmity, now the Word of the LORD will come to Israel through the spiritual vigor of young Samuel.

The setting for Samuel’s calling is provocatively stated: “The lamp of God had not yet gone out.” This indicates that it was in the early hours before dawn that God called to Samuel, since the lamps were kept lit until morning. But this was also symbolically true: the lamp of God’s presence in Israel was dim but not completely out. In such a setting, the voice of the LORD was once more heard within His house: “Then the LORD called Samuel.” What grace there is in these words! At a time when God’s Word had been violated and trampled on by even the high priest’s sons, when God’s injured law provided every reason for a judgment of eternally divine silence, yet still the voice of the LORD was heard calling to a child of His covenant.

Read or sing Psalm 116C What Shall I Render to the Lord

Tuesday (9/22) Read and discuss Read and discuss 1 Samuel 2:12–36

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.” So then they would return to their home.

Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.”’” (ESV)

Tony Cartledge writes:

Hophni and Phinehas failed to show reverence for the temple of God, while Samuel served there faithfully. There is no temple in Shiloh anymore, nor in Jerusalem. But the Apostle Paul described the human body as the sacred temple of God’s Spirit. Christian worshipers do not offer animal sacrifices at a physical place but are called to recognize the sacred character of their own *bodies*, and to offer themselves as living sacrifices to God. In Judaism,

the temple served as a bridge of communication or contact between God and the world. An important way modern believers can communicate their faith is through treating their bodies with the respect they deserve.

Hophni and Phinehas also showed disrespect for the offerings brought by God's people. This reminds modern churchgoers to make careful and responsible use of the tithes and offerings contributed for the work of the church. How much should the ministers receive as an appropriate wage? How much should be spent for the church's own local expenses? What is an honorable allotment for missions?

Of course, the most common way modern believers "despise" the offerings of God is by not bringing them at all. Yet the Scriptures teach plainly that all gifts and resources are from God. We show respect for God by returning a portion of our material blessings to Him. Hannah and Elkanah were faithful in making an annual pilgrimage to Shiloh to deliver their tithes and offerings. Faithful giving expresses trust in God and thanks to God. Those who respect what belongs to God, like Samuel and his parents, will enhance their spiritual growth.

Read or sing Hymn 257 Children of the Heavenly Father

Wednesday (9/30) Read and discuss Luke 12:42–48

And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

Those who are unfaithful and yet know what they ought to do will suffer discipline from the Lord. Those who act out of ignorance will be disciplined, but less severely so than those who knew the master's will. Finally, the faithful will receive honor from the Lord in terms of serving Him on a more permanent basis. They receive His unqualified praise as they share fully in the Lord's banquet. The last three groups are made up

of disciples and leaders of what became the church. In short, Jesus calls disciples to be faithful, because unfaithfulness is costly.

Luke 12:35-48 shows that Jesus' authority implies responsibility to him. Those who serve him are to await his return when he will evaluate all that everyone has done. The servant who works for God's people is to look for Messiah. Those who know He is returning but uncaringly flaunt His will are subject to rejection. Those who know but do not do His will are subject to discipline. Those who act out of ignorance are subject to less discipline. Jesus notes that the blessed servant is the one who looks expectantly for Him and serves Him faithfully. Jesus will serve that steward on His return, appoint the steward to more service, and reward that steward with a place at the blessed banquet table. Given the choice, Luke's reader is to see that faithfulness pleases the Lord and results in long-term benefits to the faithful follower. One is to serve, knowing that God's eye is on each one. The disciple serves with one eye looking for Jesus' return and the other knowing that the disciple will give an account of service. Faithfulness means walking with God and responsibly serving his children.

Thursday (10/1) Read and discuss Hebrews 7:11–25

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn

and will not change his mind,
‘You are a priest forever.’”

This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (ESV)

Hebrews holds out the reality that the Law (the Law which was holy, and righteous, and good to accomplish the purposes for which God gave it) “made nothing perfect.” Therefore, the “former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness.”

The word here for “set aside” is very strong. The Law was cancelled or abrogated. One of the consequences of this for the Jewish Christians who first received this letter is that though they were being tempted to return to Old Testament Judaism doing so wasn’t even possible. Put simply, in 60 B.C. the Levitical Priesthood was an instrument of the LORD as *a means of grace* for His people. In 60 A.D., the Levitical Priesthood was merely an empty shadow. For with the death and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah that entire sacrificial system has been made void.

Intriguingly, in the letters of Paul, or for those of you who believe that Paul wrote Hebrews in the *other* letters of Paul, the emphasis is not on the weakness of the Law but on the weakness of fallen human beings to fulfill the Law.

Therefore, as the Apostle Paul would write in Romans chapter 8:

God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Here in Hebrews the author of Hebrews actually describes the Law as being “weak and useless.” That said, it seems that Hebrews and the letters explicitly credited to the Apostle Paul are arguing for essentially the same thing. Hebrews is not suggesting that the Old Covenant Law was somehow bad or pointless. He is saying that it is weak and useless in terms of making the people of God perfect. That makes sense given that this was never the intent of the Law.

The Mosaic Law held out two genuinely good hopes:

1. First, it enabled a sinful people to live with a Holy God in their midst, and it enabled them in an admittedly more restricted way, to draw near to the LORD with their worship and with their prayers.
2. Second, as a system of types the Mosaic Law pointed forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

These hopes were good. Jesus is better!

Read or sing Hymn 169 Master, Speak! Thy Servant Hearth

Friday (10/2) Read and discuss Exodus 17:8–16

Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The LORD Is My Banner, saying, “A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

There are times when God is a one-man-wrecking-crew, annihilating Israel’s enemies in the twinkling of an eye. For example, in the late eighth century B.C., God’s Messenger single-handedly strikes down 185,000 Assyrians (Isaiah 37:36). In the second half of Exodus 17, however, God employs a combination of forces – Moses’ intercession, Aaron and Hur’s assistance, and Joshua’s skill on the battlefield.

We meet Joshua for the first time in Exodus 17:9. He will be mentioned over two hundred more times in the Bible. Also, for the first time, we hear about Moses’ writing: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this as a memorial in a book.’” What book? We call this book the Pentateuch – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Israel's battle against Amalek is described as between Yahweh and Amalek – not Israel and Amalek. Why? “the battle belongs to Yahweh (17:47).” Moses' hands are now God's power is unleashed. But Moses needs help – help to keep his hands up.

What kind of leader is *this*?

In Egypt, it's mortifying not to know the answer. It's embarrassing not to make the team or get the grade. In a system where it all depends on you, weakness is something to overcome. In Egypt, all you have is you. Therefore, you'd better get moving, get a plan, and get going.

That's Egypt. But we left Egypt. We've been baptized! There's now something to be feared much more than weakness: strength. Our strength. It gets us into trouble every time. Why? Taking the bull by the horns assumes that we don't need divine power, that we don't need an answer to prayer, that we don't need God's Word.

In God's kingdom, weakness is a virtue and strength is a vice. We all need help – God's help. We're unqualified and unprepared for the unplanned and unexpected!

What's the only sane thing to do? Admit your weakness. Confess your confusion. Come clean and say, “I'm POH – Plain Ol' Human.” Listen to Paul. “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor 12:9).

Read or sing Hymn 259 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

Saturday (10/3) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 3

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

The beginning of new life in Israel came with Samuel's hearing God's Word. The same pattern holds true today: God's people are revived when they give ear to God's Word. Our own generation bears much similarity to that of Eli: we have a great deal of religious activity, with legions of preachers, and large amounts of time and money devoted to the church and its activities. But where is the Word of the LORD? Gordon Keddie writes: "Now, as then, there is no shortage of 'religion' and certainly no shortage of clergymen! It is the revealed truth of God that is conspicuous by its absence from the theology, the preaching, and, not least, the lives of clergy and people alike."

Today, we have what Eli and his sons did not have: the completed revelation of God's Word in the Bible. With the coming of Jesus Christ, God's revelation is complete, and the church possesses God's final written Word as we await the return of our Lord. Yet the famine of the Word of God can be just as severe for us who possess the Bible as for those who do not, because of our lack of interest. Revival and reformation in the church, and

in our individual lives, can come only in the same manner as it came to the Israel of Samuel's day: by the restoring of the divine Word in the hearts and minds of God's people.

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