

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, December 31, 2023

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalm 84 (p. 814 in the *Trinity Hymnal*)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!

**My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.**

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—

a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

Hear my prayer, O LORD God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob.

Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere;

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor;

no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

* *Congregation is requested to stand, if able.*

The pastor will read the plain text; the congregation will read the bold text.

Jesus Shall Reign

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.

To him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown his head;
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns; the pris'ner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen! Amen.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Our God and Father, we praise you for the loving kindness you have shown us in Jesus Christ. While we were still sinners, he died for us.

All: Forgive us, O Lord, for our many sins. We confess that we are guilty of pride and unbelief, of anger and lust. We have sinned against you by breaking your commandments and by wasting your good gifts to us. Our transgressions are ever before us, and they weigh heavy on our hearts.

Leader: Grant us repentant hearts to understand the sinfulness of our sins but also the assurance of forgiveness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus. We thank you that our sins will not be counted against us, because they all have been laid upon him.

All: All praise to you, O God, for such wondrous grace! We are loved with an everlasting love! Grant that we, by your Spirit, may live daily unto you and may seek to glorify you in thought, word, and deed. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Private Confession of Our Sins

Assurance of Forgiveness

Colossians 2:13-14

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

Genesis 43

Congregational Response

Yet Not I, but Through Christ in Me

What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer; there is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom, my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus, for my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine! Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken, for by my side, the Savior, He will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need His power is displayed.
To this I hold: my Shepherd will defend me; through the deepest valley He will lead.
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome! Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

No fate I dread; I know I am forgiven; the future sure, the price, it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon, and He was raised to overthrow the grave.
To this I hold: my sin has been defeated; Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am free! Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath I long to follow Jesus, for He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me until I stand with joy before the throne.
To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus; all the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat: yet not I, but through Christ in me. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Nicene Creed (p. 846)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets;
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship ❖

Gloria Patri*

Hymn 735

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

❖ *Tithes and offerings may be placed in the box at the entrance to the sanctuary or given online through our church's website.*

THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

Second Reading*

Genesis 44

Congregational Response

The Power of the Cross

Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day;
Christ on the road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten, then
Nailed to a cross of wood.

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us.
Took the blame, bore the wrath;
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Oh, to see the pain written on your face,
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.
Ev'ry bitter thought, ev'ry evil deed
Crowning your bloodstained brow.

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us.
Took the blame, bore the wrath;
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Now the daylight flees; now the ground beneath
Quakes as its Maker bows his head.

Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life—
“Finished!” the victory cry.

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us.
Took the blame, bore the wrath;
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Oh, to see my name written in the wounds,
For through your suff'ring I am free.
Death is crushed to death, life is mine to live,
Won through your selfless love!

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Son of God—slain for us.
What a love, what a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross. Amen.*

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

Pastor Ben Muresan

“There Is No Greater Love Than This”
Genesis 43-44

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

GOD’S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 299

Look, Ye Saints, the Sight Is Glorious

Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious:
See the Man of Sorrows now;
From the fight returned victorious,
Ev’ry knee to him shall bow.
Crown him! Crown him!
Crowns become the Victor’s brow.

Crown the Savior, angels, crown him;
Rich the trophies Jesus brings;
In the seat of pow’r enthrone him,
While the vault of heaven rings.
Crown him! Crown him!
Crown the Savior King of kings.

Sinners in derision crowned him,
Mocking thus the Savior’s claim;
Saints and angels crowd around him,
Own his title, praise his name.
Crown him! Crown him!
Spread abroad the Victor’s fame!

Hark! those bursts of acclamation!
Hark! those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station;
O what joy the sight affords!
Crown him! Crown him!
King of kings, and Lord of lords. Amen.

Benediction*

Congregational Benediction Response*

May the peace of God, our heav'nly Father,
And the grace of Christ, the risen Son,
And the fellowship of God, the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within his love.

*And to him be praise for his glorious reign;
From the depths of earth to the heights of heaven
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings.*

May this peace which passes understanding,
And this grace which makes us what we are,
And this fellowship of his communion,
Make us one in spirit and in heart.

*And to him be praise for his glorious reign;
From the depths of earth to the heights of heaven
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings. Amen.*

HOME WORSHIP GUIDE

The daily reading schedule follows the One Year Bible Reading Plan.

Monday, January 1

Scripture: Genesis 1:1 - 2:25; Matthew 1:1 - 2:12; Psalm 1:1-6; Proverbs 1:1-6

Catechism: The Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 27

Pray for: Our federal, state, and local government leaders.

Tuesday, January 2

Scripture: Genesis 3:1 - 4:26; Matthew 2:13 - 3:6; Psalm 2:1-12; Proverbs 1:7-9

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 60

Pray for: Our military, police, fire, and medical personnel.

Wednesday, January 3

Scripture: Genesis 5:1 - 7:24; Matthew 3:7 - 4:11; Psalm 3:1-8; Proverbs 1:10-19

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 61

Pray for: Our covenant children, and Christian military chaplains.
The churches in Norway and persecuted Christians.

Thursday, January 4

Scripture: Genesis 8:1 - 10:32; Matthew 4:12-25; Psalm 4:1-8; Proverbs 1:20-23

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 62

Pray for: Nelly Jasbon, our Elders, Deacons, Women's Ministry, & the PCA.

Friday, January 5

Scripture: Genesis 11:1 - 13:4; Matthew 5:1-26; Psalm 5:1-12; Proverbs 1:24-28

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 63

Pray for: Our members who have ongoing health care needs.
The Shepherd's Church Plant in Riverside and the Manrique Family.

Saturday, January 6

Scripture: Genesis 13:5 - 15:21; Matthew 5:27-48; Psalm 6:1-10; Proverbs 1:29-33

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 64

Pray for: The preaching, and for our Sunday School teachers.

Sunday, January 7

Scripture: Genesis 16:1 - 18:15; Matthew 6:1-24; Psalm 7:1-17; Proverbs 2:1-5

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 65

Pray for: Our worship this morning.

MISSIONS CORNER

Pray for our missionaries. Their prayer requests are sent out through the Prayer Chain and their newsletters are published in Grace Notes as they become available.

Ray & Michele Call | Presbyterian Church in Belize

Dave & Darlene Eby | Africa Reformation Theol. Seminary Uganda

LORD'S DAY DEVOTION AND QUESTIONS

In our study of Genesis, we have seen that Moses did not hesitate to record Judah's many sins. Judah was the one who came up with the idea of selling Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37). Judah was also happily conforming to the ways of the Canaanites, befriending them and even being sexually immoral with a cult prostitute (whom he did not know was actually Tamar, his daughter-in-law). And yet, by Genesis 44, we see that the Holy Spirit had transformed Judah into a true believer. Judah revealed his true faith by offering himself in the place of his brother, Benjamin. Kent Hughes, in his commentary on Genesis, writes:

As God would have it, Judah's willingness to suffer as a substitute for his brother foreshadowed the substitutionary, vicarious atonement of his ultimate Son, Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. We must never underestimate the transforming grace of God. Just as God was with Joseph and his brothers across those two almost silent decades, so he is with all his children. Transformation is concomitant with the gospel. In fact, it fairly detonates at conversion. The Greek of 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, "If any man in Christ, new creation," indicating an explosive transformation. Boom—new creation! And that is the universal experience of every believer. At the same time, conversion introduces a process of ongoing transformation until he appears, because "we know that when he appears we will be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

1. Read Genesis 43:1-14. How was this situation also a test for Jacob's faith in the Lord? What was God teaching Jacob through these trials?
2. Read 43:15 - 44:17. What were Joseph's goals in testing his brothers? What evidence is there in the passage that Joseph was not testing them out of spite but out of love and compassion?
3. Read James 1:12-15 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What is the difference between tempting and testing? Why does Satan tempt us? Why does God test us?
4. How does understanding God's purpose in testing each of his people encourage and strength your faith? How does it help develop patience and perseverance during times of suffering?
5. How does Judah foreshadow Christ at the end of Genesis 44? Read John 15:13 and spend some time praying and thanking the Lord for his sacrificial love, asking him to increase the love that you have in your heart for others.