



O
SACRED
head, now
wounded

*A Liturgy for Daily
Worship from Pascha
to Pentecost*



Jonathan
Gibson

“C. S. Lewis once expressed his view that modern worshipers who no longer used the church’s liturgy were guilty of spiritual arrogance—the only reason for ignoring it being the assumption that we can do things better. What would the blunt-speaking Lewis say about corporate worship today? And no doubt the character of communal worship is inevitably reflected in the private devotions of Christians. So where can we find help? In *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*, Jonny Gibson once again comes alongside us with another splendid volume to guide our personal disciplines, inform our spiritual meditations, and nurture and nourish our private devotions. In addition, he enables us to grow into a biblical appreciation of the fact that, while Paul, Apollos, and Peter are ours, so too is the ministry of the historic and worldwide family of God.”

Sinclair B. Ferguson, Chancellor’s Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary; Teaching Fellow, Ligonier Ministries

“A good liturgy is like a window rather than a wall, inviting worshipers to look through it and behold the glory and goodness of God. The devotional liturgies in *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* welcome us to see the Redeemer with clear vision and renewed affections. Jonny Gibson has done it again—focusing on how the heart of the gospel vividly reveals the heart of God toward his people.”

Matt Boswell, hymn writer; Pastor, The Trails Church, Celina, Texas; Assistant Professor of Church Music and Worship, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“The most obvious virtue of *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* is its comprehensiveness. It brings together passages from the Bible, the creeds and catechisms of the church, readings from the great Christians through the ages, and an abundance of liturgical materials. This abundance is firmly organized and meets the all-important criterion of being well thought out.”

Leland Ryken, author, *Poetry of Redemption: An Illustrated Treasury of Good Friday and Easter Poems*

“Jonny Gibson offers a disciplined structure for spiritual devotion rooted in ancient and Reformed Christianity. He has composed a daily rhythm of meditation and prayer, drawing from the Holy Scriptures, the creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the church fathers and Reformed theologians, Reformed liturgies, and the Psalter. Though designed to prepare a Christian for the annual remembrance of Christ’s death and resurrection in the traditional church calendar, these devotions could be used at any time of the year, for our Lord’s redeeming work should always be at the forefront of our minds.”

Joel R. Beeke, Professor of Homiletics and Systematic Theology, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

“Jonny Gibson’s liturgy for daily worship equips the reader to remember Jesus Christ in, as he puts it, an orderly, mystery-evoking, and worshipful way. I loved the content, structure, and rhythms of this book because they pointed me to the wonder of Jesus’s work of salvation and daily prepared my heart for the season from Pascha to Pentecost. It reminded me that form and liturgy can provide a beautiful framework for the personal and family worship of our Lord and Savior Jesus.”

Jenny Salt, Associate to Archdeacon of Women’s Ministry, Sydney Anglican Diocese; Host, *Salt—Conversations with Jenny*

“To some people, the word *liturgy* conjures up visions of dry-as-dust formal religion devoid of life and warmth. The irony is that evangelical informality, by which we often seem to say to God the first words that come into our heads, can result in dry-as-dust informal religion, sucked empty of depth and nourishment. There is a growing hunger for good liturgy. As a glad user of Jonny Gibson’s earlier book *Be Thou My Vision*, I warmly commend these deeply scriptural aids to remembering Christ in his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and the outpouring of his Spirit. They will do your heart good.”

Christopher Ash, Writer in Residence, Tyndale House, Cambridge

“Just as Jonny Gibson’s *Be Thou My Vision* has enriched both my private worship and my preparation for the leading of public worship, so his *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* will be a significant and structured resource for worship, both personal and public, at a significant season of the year. There can be no more important subject for Christian reflection and meditation than the passion, death, and resurrection of our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ. I believe that the use of this resource will not only enable us to reflect carefully and thoughtfully on the saving work of our Redeemer but will also lead to a new desire to honor and glorify the one who loved us and gave himself for us.”

Stafford Carson, Principal Emeritus, Union Theological College, Belfast;
Senior Director of Global Ministries, Westminster Theological Seminary

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

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A Liturgy for Daily Worship from Pascha to Pentecost

Jonathan Gibson

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded: A Liturgy for Daily Worship from Pascha to Pentecost

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We think that Paradise and Calvary,
Christ's cross, and Adam's tree, stood in one place;
Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;
As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

JOHN DONNE

For
my lovely Jackie
After winter, spring.
She was beautiful.

In Memoriam
Leila
Never forgotten,
forever loved.

Contents

Preface 13

Acknowledgments 17

PART 1: PREPARATION FOR DAILY WORSHIP FROM PASCHA TO PENTECOST

- 1 Remembering Jesus 23
- 2 Format for Daily Worship from Pascha to Pentecost 33

PART 2: PRACTICE OF DAILY WORSHIP FROM PASCHA TO PENTECOST

Days 1–42 43

Maundy Thursday 397

Good Friday 405

Holy Saturday 415

Resurrection Sunday 425

Ascension Sunday 433

Pentecost Sunday 443

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Tunes for Hymns and Psalms, *Gloria Patri*
and Doxology Versions 457

Appendix 2: Pascha to Pentecost Bible
Reading Plan 465

Appendix 3: Author, Hymn, and Liturgy Index 467

Preface

PASCHA, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN as Easter, always takes me somewhat unawares—not because I am ignorant of its significance or imminence each year, but because I do not really know how to prepare for it. Being raised in an evangelical church in the Christian Brethren tradition, any observance of Easter was more perfunctory than purposeful. In our home, we had no family traditions at Easter; there were no special gatherings or presents exchanged, unlike at Christmas. In some ways, Easter carried more connotations of chocolate than it did of Christ. Anglicans and Roman Catholics were the ones who kept Lent and Easter, not us.

Since then, however, having become more acquainted with church history, I have learned that the observance of evangelical feast days, particularly those around Easter, has been an honored tradition in branches of the Reformed church. Indeed, I have come to appreciate that the observance of feast days around Pascha to Pentecost serves as a fitting way to bookend the celebration of Christ's person and work: at Christmas, we celebrate his birth; at Pascha, Ascension, and Pentecost, we celebrate his life, death, burial, resurrection,

ascension, and the outpouring of his Spirit. Yet, as with Christmas, I usually arrive at Holy Week rather dissatisfied with my personal meditation on God's saving work in Christ. In the days leading up to Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Resurrection Sunday, I hardly give a passing thought to the events in which Christ accomplished my salvation. Before I know it, the weekend has come and gone without much reflection. However, if as Christians we are going to observe Pascha each year, remembering the work of our Savior at least in some way, then surely preparing for it with a daily liturgy that is orderly, mystery-evoking, and worshipful can only be a good thing. The book you now hold in your hands is my attempt to help us prepare better for meditating on the great work of God in the person of his Son from Pascha to Pentecost.

If you are familiar with *Be Thou My Vision: A Liturgy for Daily Worship*, then you will recognize the similarities in this book; but there are also differences. I have incorporated more worshipful elements throughout the daily liturgy to fit the season. In this volume, each day begins with a meditation on the redeeming work of Christ from a prominent figure in church history; the calls to worship are tailored to the content of the day's liturgy, focused on the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; the element of adoration is a hymn or psalm appropriate to Pascha, Ascension, and Pentecost; three alternative *Gloria Patri* hymns and two alternative doxologies rotate on a weekly basis; the catechism questions (from Heidelberg Catechism or Westminster Shorter Catechism) are focused on the necessity, accomplishment, and application of Christ's work; the Scripture readings in Pascha concern Old Testament types and prophecies of Christ's work of

redemption, followed by Ascension and Pentecost readings; a new reflective element, in the form of an ancient Christian prayer or hymn focused on Christ's redeeming work, follows the Scripture reading; finally, the liturgy closes with a scriptural benediction and a doxological postlude (based on Psalm 72:17–19).

As will be seen, each day's liturgy has been carefully crafted for the purpose of enhancing daily worship during the season of Pascha to Pentecost so that our minds are better fixed on, and our hearts are better affected by, God's great work of salvation in Christ, in which he "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). My prayer is that the content, structure, and rhythms of this daily liturgy may help us to be more like the women who stood near the cross on that dreadful Friday afternoon, pondering in silence; and who left the empty tomb on that hopeful Sunday morning, proclaiming and praising with exuberance.

Jonathan Gibson, Glenside, PA
Saint Leila's Day
Spring 2023
Soli Deo Gloria

Acknowledgments

MY THANKS TO Justin Taylor for his willingness to entertain another devotional in addition to *Be Thou My Vision* and *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. As always, the good folk at Crossway have been a pleasure to work with: my thanks to Lydia Brownback for her editorial skill and wisdom, and to Dan Farrell and his team for yet another beautifully designed cover. I am grateful to my research assistants Jeremy Menicucci, Jiang Ningning, and Bryce Simon for their help with content formation. Lee Augsburger kindly pointed me to the Augustine quote on Day 33. Mitchell Dixon, Anthony and Lorraine Gosling, Lawrence McErlean, and Jason Patterson each provided valuable feedback, which has further shaped the content and structure of this book. Drew Tulloch, music coordinator at Trinity Church, Aberdeen, helped to compile the tunes and meter for the hymns and psalms. I am grateful to Todd Rester and Danny Hyde for helping to locate some of the prayers in the Old Palatinate Liturgy of 1563. Tyndale House in Cambridge served as a quiet and productive place to bring this book near to its completion. My thanks to the principal, Peter Williams, and Ayi Jihu for making our stay possible and pleasant.

Many of the meditations I discovered in Justin Holcomb’s book *God with Us: 365 Devotions on the Person and Work of Christ*,¹ though I retrieved original sources in Logos and then made slight adaptations where needed. Other meditations I found in my own reading of original sources. The majority of prayers in this book are taken from the *ESV Prayer Bible*; a dozen or so are taken from *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present*.² These latter prayers were translated by Matthias Mangold and Bernard Aubert. I am grateful to Crossway and New Growth Press for permission to use a select number of prayers from these respective works. Other prayers have been modernized from original sources that are in the public domain, such as Augustine’s *Confessions* (c. 400), Gregory the Great’s “Seven-Fold Litany” (c. 600), the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1552 and 1662), the Old Palatinate Liturgy (1563), the Middelburg Liturgy (1586), The Scottish Collects (1595), the Savoy Liturgy (1661), *Preces Ecclesiasticae* (1856), and *A Book of Public Prayer* (1857). The prayer by John Donne (1572–1631) is adapted from a sermon Donne preached at Whitehall on Acts 7:60, February 29, 1627.³ The psalms used are from the Free Church of Scotland’s *Sing Psalms* (2003 edition) and are used here with permission. The questions and

- 1 Justin Holcomb, *God with Us: 365 Devotions on the Person and Work of Christ* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany, 2021).
- 2 *ESV Prayer Bible: Prayers from the Past, Hope for the Present* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, eds., *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2018).
- 3 Eric Milner-White and G. W. Briggs, eds., *Daily Prayer* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1959), <http://assets.newscriptorium.com/>. I have reinserted some phrases into the prayer that Milner-White and Briggs left out in their adaptation of Donne’s sermon.

answers from Heidelberg Catechism (1563) are taken from the modern version published by the Christian Reformed Church in North America and are used here with permission. The questions and answers from the Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647) have been modernized, as well as the Collects from the Book of Common Prayer (1552).

This book is dedicated to my lovely wife, Jackie. She is the joy of my life and the heart of our family. Besides supporting me in ministry, she is a devoted mother to our children Benjamin, Zachary, and Hannah, constantly pouring herself into their lives and daily imaging the death and resurrection of her Savior. She is also a mother to our beautiful daughter, Leila, who was stillborn at full-term on March 17, 2016. Leila died in the spring, and each spring when we see the daffodils blooming, we are reminded that “winter can never hold back the Spring.”⁴ My prayer is that this liturgy of daily worship from Pascha to Pentecost may remind us each springtime that the enduring hope for our daughter is not the immortality of her soul but the resurrection of her body—and this, because of Christ’s death and resurrection.

See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
Folded the grave clothes, tomb filled with light,
As the angels announce, “Christ is risen!”
See God’s salvation plan,

4 N. D. Wilson, *Notes from the Tilt-a-Whirl: Wide-Eyed Wonder in God’s Spoken World* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2009), 88. See also Jackie Gibson, *You Are Still a Mother: Hope for Women Grieving a Stillbirth or Miscarriage* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2023), chap. 12, “After Winter, Spring.”

Wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man,
For He lives: Christ is risen from the dead!
Stuart Townend and Keith Getty⁵

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PART I

PREPARATION FOR
DAILY WORSHIP
FROM PASCHA
TO PENTECOST

Remembering Jesus

WE HUMAN BEINGS are forgetful by nature. I do not mean in a finite sense but in a fallen sense. We forget because we choose to forget—at least that is the case when it comes to our response to God’s character and covenant and commands, to his ways and works and words. We forsake our Maker because we choose to forget our Maker.

Biblical history testifies to this truth, especially the Old Testament. In Eden, Adam chooses to forget the goodness of God in giving him the freedom and pleasure to eat from every tree of the garden, bar one (Gen. 2:15–17). After the flood, Noah forgets the righteousness of God that he had preached about prior to the flood: he becomes drunk and is defiled by his son (Gen. 9:20–25). In Canaan, Abraham forgets the promise of God that he would provide him with a son from Sarah’s womb; instead, he takes matters into his own hands with Hagar (Gen. 16:1–6). Israel forgets God’s promise to be with them as he leads them out of Egypt; they complain of

his absence in the wilderness (Exod. 17:7). Before entering the land, God warns Israel repeatedly to “take care” lest they “forget” the Lord once they are in the land (Deut. 4:9, 23; 6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7; 25:19; 26:13). When they enter the Promised Land, they fare no better. Not long after the conquest under Joshua, a generation grows up that does not know the Lord or the work that he has done for Israel (Judg. 2:10); they forget the Lord their God and serve the Baals (Judg. 3:7; cf. 1 Sam. 12:9). Israel’s kings are also forgetful of God and his covenant and commands. Saul forgets to devote the enemy to complete destruction; as a result, the kingdom is stripped from him (1 Sam. 15:10–23). David forgets the commandments of God and steals another man’s wife, committing adultery with her (2 Sam. 11); as a consequence, the son conceived by his affair dies and his family dissolves into bitter and deadly infighting (2 Sam. 13–18). Solomon forgets the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of his wisdom; he exchanges wisdom for folly and is led into idolatry (1 Kings 11:1–8); in so doing, the kingdom splits (1 Kings 11:11–13). During the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, the prophets spotlight forgetfulness as a besetting sin of God’s people (Isa. 17:10; 51:13; Jer. 2:32; 3:21; 13:25; 18:15; 23:27; Ezek. 22:12; 23:25; Hos. 2:13; 4:6; 8:14; 13:6). In the end, Israel’s forgetfulness leads them into exile where they are made not to forget the judgment of God.

Forgetfulness. Since the day Adam transgressed the commandment concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we have been a race prone to forgetfulness. Forgetfulness reflects fallenness; it is a manifestation of our human condition in Adam. Forgetfulness is another way of describing disobedience. Israel and her kings “forget” the Lord their God by disobeying and forsaking him (cf. Jer. 2:29 and 2:32;

3:21). We forsake because we forget. And we forget because we choose to forget—deliberately, willfully, consciously. We forget our Creator—his character and covenant and commands, his ways and works and words; we forget our Redeemer—his promises and precepts, his redemption and righteousness. Moses captures well Israel’s problem and ours:

You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you,
And you forgot the God who gave you birth.
(Deut. 32:18)

Given this aspect of our fallen humanity, it is unsurprising to find commands in the Old and New Testaments to “remember” God and what he has done for us. In the Old Testament, we are exhorted to “remember” God as our Creator in the days of our youth (Eccl. 12:1); we are encouraged to “remember” him as our Redeemer and “the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered” (Ps. 105:5). The psalmist exhorts us, “Bless the LORD . . . and forget not all his benefits” (Ps. 103:2). This kind of remembrance has formal expression in Israel’s weekly observance of the Sabbath and their yearly observance of various festivals.

Most of these festivals point Israel back to events in their past, serving to remind them of what God has done on their behalf, so that they will not forget him. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the rest that God entered following his work of creation; it is a reminder to Israel that they too should rest at the end of their working week. In the Passover, Israel remembers their redemption by God from the angel of death and from their enemy, the Egyptians; the victory is further commemorated in the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread; in the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), Israel remembers the giving

of the law at Sinai, as well as offering the firstfruits of their wheat harvest to the Lord; on the Day of Atonement, Israel recalls their sins of the past year, repents of them with fasting and prayer, and asks God to forgive them through sacrifices offered by the high priest; in the Feast of Tabernacles, Israel contemplates God's faithfulness in their forty years of tent dwelling in the wilderness; and in the Feast of Purim, God's people are reminded of his gracious protection of them through Esther and Mordecai unmasking the evil plot of Haman to annihilate the Jewish people.

For Israel, these festivals serve as weekly and yearly reminders of God's gracious work in creation and redemption, and as such, they encourage God's people to remember the Lord and forget not all his benefits. They are times and seasons of remembrance for a forgetful people. But they also point forward. The weekly Sabbaths and yearly feasts are shadows of things to come—their substance belongs to Christ (Col. 2:16–17). As events in history, they become yearly memorials, serving as types of Christ and his redeeming work. The Sabbath serves as a type of the rest to come in a new heavens and a new earth, where there will be no evening and no morning. This rest is inaugurated by Christ, the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:8), who says to sinners restless in their sin, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). The Passover serves as a type of Christ's death as our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), who was sacrificed to rescue us from death and free us from our enemies. The Feast of Firstfruits serves as a type of Christ in his resurrection being the firstfruits of the final resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23); it also points to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33), who is the guarantee of our future

inheritance (Eph. 1:13–14). The Day of Atonement serves as a type of when Christ offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice and priest so that God can remember our sins no more (Heb. 9:11–14). The Feast of Tabernacles recalls not only Israel’s dwelling in tents but also God’s own dwelling with them in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:7); as such, it points forward to the Word becoming flesh and tabernacling among us (John 1:14). The Feast of Purim signposts the time when another redeemer would arise from among God’s people and turn the devil’s plot on its head, rescuing us from eternal destruction (Col. 1:13–14; 2:13–15).

In the New Testament, these events, and their accompanying memorial festivals, come to their fulfilment in Jesus Christ—the Lord of the Sabbath, the Passover Lamb, the once-for-all atoning sacrifice and perfect High Priest, the Word made flesh, the conqueror of the devil’s schemes. As a result, the ceremonies cease with his coming. The shadows give way to the reality. But they do not change the fact that God’s people remain forgetful. While the typological “reminders” cease with Jesus’s arrival, the encouragement for God’s people to remember remains. Jesus challenges his disciples about their “not remembering” his miracles (Matt. 16:9; Mark 8:18). It is the same with his teaching: he teaches his disciples and then exhorts them to “remember” what he has taught them (John 15:20; 16:4). He also inaugurates the Lord’s Supper, a meal to be received “in remembrance” of him (Matt. 26:26–28). The apostles bring to remembrance the words of Jesus in their teaching (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 11:23–26). As an encouragement to Timothy to press on in the ministry as a faithful soldier of Christ, Paul exhorts him to “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as

preached in my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8). While Paul does not flesh out how Timothy or the church is to “remember Jesus Christ,” the command is clear. Remembering Jesus is a divinely inspired, apostolic imperative.

Throughout its history the Christian church has remembered Jesus by gathering each week for worship on the Lord’s Day. Jesus is remembered in the preaching of his word, the singing of hymns and psalms, the affirmation of creeds, and the saying of prayers, including the Lord’s Prayer. He is also remembered in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the bread symbolizing his body; the wine, his blood. Each time we participate in the Supper, we take and eat “in remembrance” of him. In short, the remembrance of Jesus has been expressed in the liturgy of the Christian church for over two millennia through the simple preaching of the gospel and the faithful administration of the sacrament. Each Lord’s Day, whether it be the expositional word or the edible sacrament, Christians remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. This has been so since the days of the apostles.

However, since the days of the early church, Christians have also observed times in the church calendar for a more focused remembrance of key moments in the life of our Lord. Advent has served as a time to consider his second coming as we reflect on his first coming. Christmas Day has been set aside as a time to celebrate Christ’s birth and to reflect on the great mystery of the incarnation. New Year’s Day has been marked as the day to remember Christ’s circumcision. The days during Pascha—Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Resurrection Sunday—have served as a time to meditate on Christ’s life, death, burial, and resurrection. Ascension Sunday and Pentecost Sunday

mark the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. The origins of observing Pascha go back at least to the middle of the second century; a Paschal homily by Melito of Sardis, an early Christian apologist, indicates that the festival was well established in his day. The tradition of observing Lent, a forty-day period of fasting, developed later and received more formal status following the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Ascension and Pentecost observance are also of great antiquity.

Observing evangelical feast days, particularly those around Easter, is an honored tradition in certain branches of the Reformed church, though not so much the extended period of fasting during Lent.⁶ For example, the Belgic Confession of 1561 allows for such ordinances to be observed, while the Second Helvetic Confession, written in 1562 by Heinrich Bullinger, views the feast days as a matter of Christian liberty but nevertheless as beneficial to observe. The Old Palatinate Liturgy, collated with the Heidelberg Catechism to form the Palatinate Church Order of 1563, encourages the observance of feast days. In the Dutch Reformed Church, the observance of Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost was mandated at the Synod of Dort in 1619. Reformer stalwarts such as Wolfgang Capito, Martin Bucer, and Francis Turretin were also in favor of observing these days for the purposes of meditation, edification, and thanksgiving. Today, apart from rare exceptions, nearly all Protestant denominations observe Pascha in some demonstrable way, including most Presbyterian denominations. Of course, remembering Jesus

6 See Daniel R. Hyde, "Not Holy but Helpful: A Case for the 'Evangelical Feast Days' in the Reformed Tradition," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 26 (2015): 131–49, for a helpful overview.

is something we do each Lord's Day, but there is also spiritual benefit in setting aside a period in the church calendar each year to meditate more deliberately on the key events of his redeeming work.

This affirmation of the feasts days not only continues the practice of the early church; arguably, it continues the practice of the apostles.⁷ The apostle Paul, for example, arranges his travel plans around liturgical days in the Jewish-Christian calendar: he sails away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread (following Passover) (Acts 20:6) and makes a point of hastening to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16); on another occasion, he remains in Ephesus until Pentecost has passed (1 Cor. 16:8). Given the connection between Passover and the Lord's Supper, and given the redemptive-historical significance of Pentecost for the burgeoning Christian church in places like Philippi and Ephesus, it seems difficult to interpret Paul's travel arrangements as serving merely evangelistic purposes.

The aim of this devotional liturgy, designed for daily worship from Pascha to Pentecost, is to prepare us better for the season in which we remember the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, as well as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—all while we wait for his return. To be clear, the season is not about what we can do for Christ by our work or prayers or fasting; rather, it is about what he has done for us in his work and prayers and fasting—a work that began in his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit, and which will conclude in his return in glory. In the meantime, as we wait for Christ to

7 See Hyde, "Not Holy but Helpful," 145.

complete his work in the final resurrection, we remember our Savior weekly and yearly, singing with Bernard of Clairvaux:

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown!

O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

Format for Daily Worship from Pascha to Pentecost

THIS DAILY WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL consists of forty-eight days of set liturgy for the season of Pascha to Pentecost. The date of Pascha (Easter) is different each year because early Christians aimed to link Pascha to Passover, the Jewish festival. Since the Jewish calendar is based on solar and lunar cycles, the dates for Passover and Pascha change each year. In terms of astronomy, the celebration of Easter coincides with the first Sunday following the Pascha full moon, the first full moon after the spring or autumnal equinox, depending on whether one lives in the northern or southern hemisphere.⁸ In terms of the yearly calendar, Pascha can occur on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25. Since the date of Pascha changes each year, this daily devotional is marked by days rather than dates. It consists of

⁸ The equinox is a time when the sun is directly above the Equator and day and night are of equal length.

forty-two days of daily worship followed by six traditional days of observance from Pascha to Pentecost: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Resurrection Sunday, Ascension Sunday, and Pentecost Sunday.⁹ For the purposes of this devotional, the season of Pascha begins forty-six days before Resurrection Sunday, traditionally known as the first day of Lent (Ash Wednesday).¹⁰ However, this liturgy of daily worship is not intended to be associated with the traditions of Lent, such as fasting or carrying the sign of the cross on Ash Wednesday; the only association is the general period of forty-plus days as the season for meditating afresh on the work of Christ—his temptations, entry into Jerusalem, trial, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The order of the elements in the liturgy is fixed and repeated each day, while the content of the elements changes except for the Lord's Prayer and postlude. The order and content of the elements is as follows, accompanied by a rubric to make the liturgy interactive:

Meditation

Reflect on these words about the passion of the Lord Jesus:

Forty-eight meditations from church history

Call to Worship

Hear God call you to worship through his word:

Forty-eight Scripture readings (alternating Old Testament and New Testament daily)

9 Ascension Sunday and Pentecost Sunday have been observed in some churches within the Reformed tradition since the sixteenth century and hence are also included here.

10 Strictly speaking the period of Lent—from Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday—is forty-six days in total; it is forty days if Sundays during this period are excluded.

Adoration

Say or sing this praise to God:

Forty-eight hymns or psalms from church history relevant to the season of Pascha to Pentecost (a psalm occurs every seven days)

Reading of the Law

Hear God's law as his will for your life:

Seven Scripture readings (repeated weekly)

Confession of Sin

Confess your sins to God:

Forty-eight prayers from church history (a prayer by Martin Bucer is repeated on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Resurrection Sunday, Ascension Sunday, and Pentecost Sunday)

Assurance of Pardon

Receive these words of comfort from God:

Forty-eight Scripture readings (alternating Old Testament and New Testament daily)

Creed

Confess what you believe about the Christian faith:

Apostles' Creed | Nicene Creed | Athanasian Creed (3 parts)
(repeated weekly in a chiasm: Apostles' | Nicene | Athanasian
1, 2, 3 | Nicene | Apostles')

Praise

Say or sing this praise to God:

Gloria Patri (traditional) | Doxology (traditional) | Gloria Patri (alternative 1) | Doxology (alternative) | Gloria Patri (alternative 2)

(each repeated weekly; Maundy Thursday–Pentecost Sunday, one each day)

Catechism

Receive this instruction from one of the church's catechisms:

Select Q&As from Heidelberg Catechism and Westminster Shorter Catechism related to the work of Christ to save us from our sin (1–2 questions daily)

Prayer for Illumination

As you read his word, ask God to enlighten your mind and heart:

Seven prayers from church history (repeated weekly)

Scripture Reading

Read this portion of God's word: . . .

Select readings from Old and New Testaments relevant to the season of Pascha to Pentecost: Old and New Testament readings about the work of Christ prior to Pascha week; then readings from Lamentations and the passion narrative during Pascha week; readings for Ascension and Pentecost occur on those respective Sundays

Prayer of Reflection

Say or sing this prayer to God:

Days 1–42

Liturgical prayers or praises from church history (repeated weekly): *Benedictus* | *Sanctus* | “Savior, When in Dust to Thee” (verse 1) | “By Thy Helpless Infant Years” (verse 2) | “By the Sacred Grievs That Wept” (verse 3) | “By Thine Hour of Dire Despair” (verse 4) | “By Thy Deep Expiring Groan” (verse 5)

Maundy Thursday–Resurrection Sunday

Liturgical prayers or praises from church history: Maundy Thursday: “Go to Dark Gethsemane” (verse 1) and “Follow to the Judgment Hall” (verse 2) | Good Friday: “Calvary’s Mournful Mountain Climb” (verse 3) | Holy Saturday: “Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle” (all verses) | Resurrection Sunday: “Hasten Early to the Tomb” (verse 4)

Ascension Sunday and Pentecost Sunday

Liturgical prayers or praises from church history: Ascension Sunday: “Bring Us, O Lord God, at Our Last Awakening” | Pentecost Sunday: “Come Down, O Love Divine” (all verses)

Prayer of Intercession

As you make your requests to God, pray this prayer:

More than fifty prayers from church history

Further Petition

- Personal
- Church
- World

Lord’s Prayer

In closing, pray the words that Jesus taught us to pray:

Traditional or modern version (repeated daily)

Benediction

Receive by faith this blessing from God:

Seven benedictions (repeated weekly): Numbers 6:24–26 | Romans 15:13 | 2 Corinthians 13:14 | Ephesians 3:20–21 | 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 | 2 Peter 1:2 | Jude 24–25

Postlude

In closing, say or sing this praise to God:

Doxology based on Psalm 72:17–19 (repeated daily)

As in *Be Thou My Vision*, the fixed order of the elements is to aid concentration, while the variety of content in the elements is to avoid boredom. The repetition of Scripture readings, prayers, creeds, praises, benedictions, and postludes (repeated every seven days or, in some cases, daily) encourages familiarity and memorization. If one follows this liturgy of worship each day and repeats it throughout the season of Pascha to Pentecost, then one will become well acquainted with the creeds of the Christian church and also historic (and seasonal) prayers throughout church history—some of which were written for corporate worship on the Lord’s Day, others of which were written for personal or family worship on any day, and still others of which were written for the season. After the set prayer of intercession, there is a time for further petitions covering personal, church, or world matters, as the individual or family desires. The Lord’s Prayer, which closes the time of intercessory prayer, may be said in the version with which one is most familiar. (The modern version is provided in the liturgy.) Each day’s liturgy closes with a scriptural benediction followed by a doxological postlude based on Psalm 72:17–19.

If one is using the liturgy for personal worship, then the rubric may be read silently, as if one is being led in worship. If one is using the liturgy for family worship, then the person leading may read the rubric aloud, while other family members might wish to read some of the prayers or Bible passages to ensure a collective participation. In either case, it is best practice to read the content of the elements *aloud*. This adds

a level of formality that will help concentration and deepen a sense of worship. The musical tunes for the three versions of the *Gloria Patri*, the two versions of the Doxology, and the postlude doxology based on Psalm 72:17–19 are indicated in Appendix 1. The ribbons serve to help the worshiper(s) (1) mark the day; (2) mark the appendix for the musical tunes for the hymns or psalms of adoration as well as the different versions of *Gloria Patri* and Doxology; and (3) mark the seasonal reading plan if one wishes to have a comprehensive view of the Scripture readings covered from Pascha to Pentecost. In practice, the daily worship time (allowing for the allocated Bible reading, usually a single chapter) will take about 15 to 20 minutes. On days when circumstances may restrict one's time more than other days, the liturgy allows for flexibility by dropping some of the elements, such as the meditation, the creed and/or catechism, and the postlude. If some days are missed in the week or season, then one may use the Lord's Day to catch up on the seasonal Bible readings in order to enjoy the full scriptural focus on the work of Christ.

Since the beginning of time, it has been God's plan to fill heaven and earth with the praise of his name. By grace, we have been swept up into this plan through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ. This liturgy of daily worship from Pascha to Pentecost aims to help us worship God by meditating on the great work of his salvation as revealed in the person of his Son.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. (Ps. 145:5)

PART 2

PRACTICE OF
DAILY WORSHIP
FROM PASCHA
TO PENTECOST

Day 1

Meditation

Reflect on these words about the passion of the Lord Jesus:

The threefold misery of men introduced by sin—ignorance, guilt and the tyranny and bondage by sin—required this conjunction of a threefold office. Ignorance is healed by the prophetic; guilt by the priestly; the tyranny and corruption of sin by the kingly. Prophetic light scatters the darkness of error; the merit of the Priest takes away guilt and procures a reconciliation for us; the power of the King removes the bondage of sin and death. The Prophet shows God to us; the Priest leads us to God; and the King joins together and glorifies us with God. The Prophet enlightens the mind by the Spirit of illumination; the Priest by the Spirit of consolation tranquilizes the heart and conscience; the King by the Spirit of sanctification subdues rebellious affections. Francis Turretin

Call to Worship

Hear God call you to worship through his word:

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;

say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock."
For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
Jeremiah 31:10–11

Adoration

Say or sing these words of a passion hymn:

"Comfort, comfort all my people;
speak of peace," so says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness,
groaning from their sorrows load.
Speak to all Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover,
that their warfare now is over."

All their sins our God will pardon,
blotting out each dark misdeed;
all that well deserved his anger
he no more will see or heed.
They have suffered many a day;
now their griefs have passed away.
God will change their aching sadness
into ever-springing gladness.

John the Baptist's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling people to repentance
for the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;

let the valleys rise to meet him
and the hills bow down to greet him.

Then make straight the crooked highway;
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
ready for his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now over earth is spread abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that his word is never broken. Johann Olearius

Reading of the Law

Hear God's law as his will for your life:

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 22:37-40

Confession of Sin

Confess your sins to God:

Almighty God,
unto whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden—
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may perfectly love you,

and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer (1552)*

Assurance of Pardon

Receive these words of comfort from God:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matthew 11:28–30*

Apostles' Creed

Confess what you believe about the Christian faith:

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the
Virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Praise

Say or sing this praise to God:

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. *Gloria Patri*

Catechism

Receive this instruction from the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q. 12. According to God's righteous judgment we deserve punishment both now and in eternity: how then can we escape this punishment and return to God's favor?

A. God requires that his justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of this justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.

Q. 13. Can we make this payment ourselves?

A. Certainly not. Actually, we increase our debt every day.

Prayer for Illumination

As you read his word, ask God to enlighten your mind and heart:

Merciful Lord, the comforter and teacher of your faithful people, increase in your church the desires which you have given, and confirm the hearts of those who hope in you by enabling them to understand the depth of your promises, that all of your adopted sons may even now behold, with the eyes of faith, and patiently wait for, the light which as yet you do not openly manifest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Ambrose*

Scripture Reading

Read this portion of God's word: Isaiah 40

Prayer of Reflection

Say or sing this prayer to God:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited,
and redeemed his people;
and has raised up a mighty salvation for us,
in the house of his servant David;
as he spoke by the mouth of his holy Prophets,
which have been since the world began;
that we should be saved from our enemies,
and from the hands of all that hate us;
to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers,
and to remember his holy covenant;
to perform the oath which he swore to our forefather
Abraham,
that he would give us;
that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear;
in holiness and righteousness before him,
all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his
ways;
to give knowledge of salvation unto his people,
for the remission of their sins,
through the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the Dayspring from on high has visited us;
to give light to them that sit in darkness,
and in the shadow of death,

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit:

As it was in the beginning,

is now and ever shall be,

world without end. Amen. Benedictus

Prayer of Intercession

As you make your requests to God, pray this prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made, and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent—create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from you, the God of mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer (1552)*

Further Petition

- Personal
- Church
- World

Lord's Prayer

In closing, pray the words that Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name;

your kingdom come;

your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.

Benediction

Receive by faith this blessing from God:

The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you
and give you his peace. Numbers 6:24–26

Postlude

In closing, say or sing this praise to God:

His Name for ever shall endure,
last like the sun it shall;
Men shall be blessed in Him, and blessed
all nations shall Him call.

Now blessed be the Lord, our God,
the God of Israel,
For He alone does wondrous works,
in glory that excel.

And blessed be His glorious Name
to all eternity;
The whole earth let His glory fill.
Amen, so let it be. Based on Psalm 72:17–19