

DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKLEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA

30 July 2017

Bulletin for the 8th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 334 386 149 771

INTROIT: Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which will not be shaken, but will remain steady for ever.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds His people both now and for ever.

For the sceptre of the wicked man will not rest on the land allotted to righteous people, with the result that righteous people do not stretch out their hands to injustice.

Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts!

However, when people turn aside to their crooked paths, the LORD will lead them away with evildoers. May peace be on Israel!

Psalm 125

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love, that, receiving what You have promised, we may love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Deuteronomy 7:6-9 For you are a people that is holy to the LORD.

Romans 8:28-39 God works for the good of those who love Him.

Matthew 13:44-52 The kingdom of heaven

SERMON: John 14:1-8 Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

¹ "Let not your hearts be troubled! Believe in God and believe in Me! ² In My Father's house there are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go to prepare a place for you, I shall also come again and take you to be with Me, so that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to where I am going."

⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ If you have known Me, you will know My Father also; and from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father! Then that is enough for us."

God the Son in the Old Testament

Jake Zabel

Names have meaning. Throughout Scripture the names of individuals can reveal a lot about that person's character and about God.

I was studying some biblical names in the Old Testament and two of them struck my interest: Abijah and Ahijah.

"Jah" is shorthand for Yahweh (the LORD), which is the name of God given to Moses from the burning bush.

The 'i' is possessive suffix for the first person, thus translated as "my". 'Ab' is the Hebrew word for 'father'.

Thus the name Abijah means 'Yahweh is my father'. This a clear reference to the first person of the Trinity, God the Father, who we call 'Abba, Father'.

As for Ahijah, this name peaked my interest as 'ah' (pronounced ach) is the Hebrew word for 'brother'. Thus the name Ahijah means Yahweh is my brother.

This is profound, for the New Testament refers to the second person of the Trinity as the Son of the Father. Jesus, the Son, is also called our brother, for by His death and resurrection we have been adopted as sons of God through Holy Baptism. Thus, God the Father is now our father and God the Son is now our brother.

Jesus is our Lord and our God, and He is our brother. Here the Old Testament, through the name Ahijah, makes reference to Yahweh, our Lord and our God, being our brother. In the name Ahijah the Old Testament is making reference to the second person of the Trinity.

In addition to this, the name Abijah identifies Yahweh as our father, and Ahijah identifies Yahweh as our brother. In these two names the Old Testament identifies God as both our father and our brother, providing further evidence of the Trinity by identifying God as Father and Son.

Ahijah shows Yahweh to be my brother. For Him to be my brother we must share a father. Abijah identifies Yahweh as my father, showing that there are two persons in the one Godhead, Yahweh the Father, who is my father, and Yahweh the Son, who is my brother. Yahweh the Father is the father of Yahweh the Son.

These two names, Abijah and Ahijah, reveal some very interesting facts about Jesus. Firstly, that Jesus is the Son of Yahweh and hence Jesus is the Son of God. Secondly, that Jesus is Yahweh the Son and hence Jesus is God. Thirdly, Deuteronomy 6:4 teaches us that Yahweh is one, for it says, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD (Yahweh) our God, the LORD (Yahweh) is one." Yet Yahweh, who is one, is both my Father and my Brother. Thus Yahweh is both Father and Son; meaning that there are at least two members of the Trinity in the single Godhead of Yahweh. And fourthly, Jesus, who is God, is my brother, and I have become an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ.

The Kingdom of Heaven

In today's Gospel, we have Jesus telling three parables about heaven. Let's look at the first two.

The first parable tells us of a man who unexpectedly comes upon a treasure hidden in a field. It was a common practice for a wealthy person at that time to divide his wealth into thirds. One part he would keep in cash for carrying on business transactions. Another part

he would invest in precious stones and jewels, which he could easily take with him if he ever had to flee from an advancing enemy army. The third part he would bury in the ground somewhere, hoping to dig it up and reclaim it when he was able to come back home. Of course, such a person did not always come home, and his buried treasure's location might not be known to anyone else. Evidently, the man in this parable happened to find such a treasure. He very likely was not even looking for it. When he came upon it, however, he recognised its value. Without hesitation, he sold all his possessions so that he could buy the field and the treasure it contained.

The dealer in costly pearls made it his business to search far and wide for the finest possible pearls. When he found a pearl more perfect in size and shape and colour than he had ever seen before, he just had to have that pearl. So he also sold all his possessions in order to buy that single perfect pearl.

The buried treasure and the costly pearl both represent the kingdom of God or Christ the Saviour, who established that kingdom and rules over it with the gospel. That kingdom is more precious than anything else in the world, and only those who are received into that kingdom can correctly evaluate their other possessions. Those who recognise God's kingdom as the ultimate good will judge their other possessions on the basis of their usefulness in supporting and extending Christ's kingdom. That is the main purpose we are to serve in this world.

Some people of today may come upon the pearl of great price while they are searching for pearls of much lesser value among the writings of the great thinkers and philosophers of this world. They do not even know that the perfect pearl exists. Once they have found it, however, and the Holy Spirit has convinced them of its value, they realise that the gospel of Christ is in a class by itself, that it is the only way of salvation for sinners.

Today the treasures of Christ's kingdom are available for all people in the sacred Scriptures. No book is easier to get than the Bible, and year by year it is becoming available in more and more translations in more and more languages. Yet many regard it only as a strange, ancient book that is difficult to understand. Without reading it themselves, they believe those who tell them that the Bible is obscure and full of contradictions. They don't realise that God's Word is a lamp unto their feet and a light for their path and that even a child can understand the fundamental message of Scripture: I am a sinner, but Jesus died for my sins. He forgives me freely and invites me to share the glories of heaven with Him and all believers. Everything else in the Bible is comprehensible to us only as we keep this central truth in mind and relate all the rest of the Scriptures to it.

Just as the two men in these parables sold everything they had in order to purchase what they had found, so the kingdom of God must be bought for all of us. But the price is much more than we could possibly pay. The whole world would not be payment enough for a single soul. The filthy rags of our own personal righteousness could not even begin to make a down payment. The only possible solution was for someone else to pay the price for us, and the only one who could do that was God's holy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The price He paid was His own holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. Now He offers us all the blessings of His kingdom for time and for eternity as gifts of His grace. He bought and paid for these blessings in full, not for Himself but for us. And we do not lose these treasures when we share them. The more we give them away, the more richly we possess them ourselves.

Welcome to all with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

COMING SERVICES

6 August 9 Pentecost	13 August 10 Pentecost	20 August 11 Pentecost
8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK PR JZ 10.00am GRN PR JZ 10.30am AUB HC	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA PR JZ 10.00am GRN HC 10.30am AUB PR JZ
Sunday, 6 August		
READINGS: Isaiah 55:1-5;	Romans 9:1-13;	Matthew 14:13-21
HYMNS: 498 304 442 (284 286) 621		
Sunday, 13 August		
READINGS: Job 38:4-18;	Romans 10:5-17;	Matthew 14:22-33
HYMNS: 272 310 791 (839 840) 458 OAK & GRN: 403 153 155 36		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 2 August, 10.00am. Women's Guild in Oakey. Opening Devotion: Narelle Zischke. Key Word: Hold. Item of Interest: Small Clock

Friday, 4 August, 7.00pm. Family Evening at Aubigny. Pizza etc is provided for a gold coin donation (Usually start eating 7.20). The evening finishes with supper about 9pm, please bring a plate. Contact Jane Sippel 0488722074 for more info.

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation draws near, the time has come to begin preparations for this celebration. On Sunday the 29th of October, we will be holding a combined AELC Reformation Day service at St John's Aubigny. Pastor Ohlson will be the guest preacher, and Pastor Ziebell intends on presenting a short paper after lunch. If anyone has any suggestions on how else we can celebrate, please let pastor know (hymn singing evening, sacred concert, etc).