

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

17 September 2017
Bulletin for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 266 258 264 195

INTROIT: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and, all my inmost being, bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits!

He forgives all your iniquities. He heals all your diseases.

He redeems your life from the pit. He crowns you with mercy and compassion.

He satisfies what adorns you with good things, so that you renew your youth like the eagle.

The LORD carries out acts of righteousness and of justice for all who are oppressed.

He has made known His ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to become angry, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always accuse, and will not keep on being angry for ever.

He has not treated us as our sins deserve, and has not paid us back according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103:1-12

COLLECT: O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that what we ask for in faith we may obtain; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Genesis 50:15-21 Joseph is reconciled to his brothers.

Romans 14:1-12 We belong to the Lord.

Matthew 18:21-35 The parable of the unforgiving servant.

SERMON: Matthew 18:21-35 No limit to forgiveness

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked Him, “Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother when he keeps sinning against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered him, “I tell you, not up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

²³ “That is why the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴

When he had begun to settle accounts, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

²⁵ Since this slave could not pay the debt, the master ordered that he should be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment should be made. ²⁶ Therefore the slave fell on his knees and bowed low before him, and asked: ‘Be patient with me, and I shall pay everything back to you!’ ²⁷

The master of that slave felt compassion for him, freed him, and forgave him his debt.

²⁸ However, when that slave had gone out, he found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii. He took hold of him and began to choke him. He said, ‘Pay what you owe!’ ²⁹ Therefore his fellow slave fell down and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I shall pay you back!’ ³⁰ However, he refused. Instead, he went off and put him into prison until he should pay back what he owed. ³¹ Therefore when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very sad and went and told their own master everything that had happened. ³² Then his master sent for him and told him: ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have pitied your fellow slave as I had also pitied you?’ ³⁴ His master was angry and handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back all that he owed.

³⁵ “That is also what My Father in heaven will do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.”

God disciplines, Satan tempts

What can we say of the trials and tests that come into our lives? Luther put it well in his explanation of the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Lead us not into temptation):

God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

God does not attempt to lead anyone into sin. He does, however, permit trials to come into our lives to keep us close to Him. Job is one notable example of this, and Joseph is another. God assures us that He will govern these trials so that they work out for our eternal welfare. Speaking through the Apostle Paul He says, “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose,*” (Rom. 8:28). He also assures us that they are signs of His love for us. ⁴⁷ *It is for discipline that*

you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness,” (Hebrews 12:7-10). He promises us that He will sustain us as we go through them (1 Cor. 10:13; Is. 41:10; 43:1-2) and that He will deliver us from them (2 Tim. 4:18).

The devil, however, tempts us to sin. He tempted Eve to doubt God’s Word or God’s goodness. He tempted David to pride so that he counted the number of troops in his army (1 Chron. 21). He tried to tempt Jesus to sin, but failed (Matt. 4:1ff.). He stalks us as a lion stalks its prey (1 Peter 5:8). He looks for the optimum time of weakness. He knows our weaknesses better than we do. He knows the best ways to exploit them. His purpose is to lead us away from God, into sin and everlasting damnation. He has allies. He attempts to lure us or deceive us through the ungodly world (1 John 2:15-17). He has an ally within us. It is our own sinful flesh (James 1:14).

By ourselves, we are no match for the devil. Yet our comfort is that God’s Son, Jesus, became flesh and took the battlefield against Satan on our behalf. Jesus conquered him, paid for our sins in full, broke the devil’s power over us, and empowers us to say no to the devil and yes to God’s will. When we think of the devil’s temptations, then, we will soberly recognise our weakness and helplessness. We will also, however, have the confidence that Jesus’ victory over Satan is our victory through faith.

HALLELUJAH! SING TO JESUS

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Hallelujah! Sing to Jesus,
His the sceptre, His the throne;
Hallelujah! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark, the songs of peaceful Zion
Thunder like a mighty flood:
“Jesus out of every nation
Has redeemed us by His blood.”

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

| 24 September 16 Pentecost | 1 October 17 Pentecost | 8 October 18 Pentecost |
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| 8.30am OAK PR JZ 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN PR JZ | 8.00am Bible Study & 9.00am TMBA PR JZ 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB PR JZ | 8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK PR JZ 10.00am GRN PR JZ 10.30am AUB HC |
| Sunday, 24 September | | |
| READINGS: Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:12-14, 19-30; Matthew 20:1-16 | | |
| HYMNS: 332 324 473 346 OAK & GRN: 197 209 341 339 | | |
| Sunday, 1 October | | |
| READINGS: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Philippians 2:1-18; Matthew 21:23-32 | | |
| HYMNS: 36 357 434 346 TMBA & AUB: 197 209 341 339 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tonight, 7.30pm. Choir practice at Oakey.

Friday, 6 October, 7.00am. Family Evening at Aubigny with a Reformation theme. All are welcome to attend. Vicar Zabel will be holding a Reformation themed activity for youth aged children. For more information, please contact Jane Sippel, 0488 722074.

Pastor will be away from 16 Sept – 6 October, attending the ULMA conference in the USA, and visiting pastors of the ACLC. In case of an emergency while pastor is away, please contact Pastor Ohlson on 53596802, or Vicar Zabel on 0458251132.