

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

1 October 2017

Bulletin for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 36 357 434 346

INTROIT: I am lifting up my soul to You, O LORD.

O my God, I trust in You. Let me not be put to shame! Let my enemies not gloat over me!

Certainly, **no one who waits in hope** for You **will be put to shame**. Those who act treacherously without any reason will be put to shame.

Make Your ways known to me, O LORD! Teach me Your paths!

Lead me in Your truth and teach me! For You are the God who saves me. I wait in hope for You all day long.

Remember, O LORD, Your compassionate and merciful deeds! For they have existed from eternity.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my rebellious acts! According to Your mercy remember me, because of Your goodness, O LORD!

The LORD is good and upright. Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

He leads humble people in what is right, and teaches humble people His way.

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth for those who keep His Covenant and His Testimonies.

Psalm 25:1-10

COLLECT: Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honour and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 If a wicked person turns away from his wickedness... he will save his life.

Philippians 2:1-18 Look to the interest of others.

Matthew 21:23-32 Jesus and the elders; Parable of the man with two sons.

SERMON: The two classes of people in the parable of the two sons

“What do you think of this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today!’

²⁹ “He answered, ‘I do not want to.’ Later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ “The father went to the other one and told him the same thing. He answered, ‘I shall, sir’, but he did not go.

³¹ “Which of the two did what the father wanted?”

They answered, “The first.”

Jesus told them, “Truly, I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.” ³² For John came to you teaching you the way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. The tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. However, even when you had seen that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

God alone gets the Credit for Converting Sinners

The old saying goes, “You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” We could paraphrase this old saying somewhat, and say, “Only God can make a saint out of a sinner, or a believer out of an unbeliever.” There are a number of reasons why this is true. In the first place, all people are by nature spiritually blind, dead, and the enemies of God. Left to ourselves, given an eternity, we never would come to God, love Him, or believe in Jesus as our Saviour. The Formula of Concord states:

For, as Dr. Luther says, in comments on Psalm 90, “In temporal and external affairs, which concern nourishment and bodily needs, the human being is clever, intelligent, and up to a point industrious, but in spiritual and divine matters, which concern the soul’s salvation, the human being is like a pillar of salt, like Lot’s wife, indeed like a block of wood or a stone, like a lifeless statue, which needs neither eyes nor mouth, neither senses nor heart, inasmuch as this human being neither sees nor recognises the dreadful, fierce wrath of God against sin and death but instead abides in a sense of security willingly and knowingly and as a result runs into a thousand dangers and finally into eternal death and damnation.”

But before people are enlightened, converted, reborn, renewed, and drawn back to God by the Holy Spirit, they cannot in and of themselves, out of their own natural powers, begin, effect, or accomplish anything in spiritual matters for their own conversion or rebirth, any more than a stone or block of wood or piece of clay [Isa. 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6; Rom. 9:19-24] can.

For although they can control their bodies and can listen to the gospel and think about it to a certain extent and even speak of it (as Pharisees and hypocrites do), they regard it as foolishness and cannot believe it. They behave in this case worse than a block of wood, for they are

rebellious against God's will and hostile to it, wherever the Holy Spirit does not exercise His powers in them and ignite and effect faith and other God-pleasing virtues and obedience in them. (FC SD 11:20, 21, 24)

Luther described people in conversion as merely passive. By this he meant: Human beings in and of themselves or on the basis of their own natural powers are not capable of anything and cannot help with their own conversion. He holds that conversion is not just in part, but totally and completely a product, gift, present, and activity of the Holy Spirit alone, who accomplishes and effects what is done through His own power and might, working through the Word in the mind, will, and heart of the human being *tanquam in subjecto patiente* [as in a subject acted upon] (that is, because the human being does and effects nothing but only endures what is done). This happens not like a picture being etched in stone or a seal being pressed in wax; these things do not know or feel or will anything. (FC SD 11:89)

The Bible makes it clear that God alone is responsible for a sinner's conversion. Jesus said, "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him,*" (John 6:44). Paul described our conversion in these words: "*For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves,*" (Col. 1:13). To the Philippians, Paul spoke of faith as "*granted to you*" (Phil. 1:29). To the Corinthians, he wrote, "*God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ,*" (2 Cor. 4:6). Just as God created light where there was none, so God creates faith where there was only unbelief. This teaching, that God alone is responsible for a sinner's conversion, we call divine monergism.

It is this teaching of Scripture that the confessions reflect when they say:

Holy Scripture ascribes conversion, faith in Christ, rebirth, renewal, and everything that belongs to the actual beginning and completion of these things, not to the human powers of the natural free will - neither totally, halfway, somewhat, nor in the slightest and smallest bit - but rather ascribes all this *in solidum* (that is, completely and totally) to divine activity and to the Holy Spirit alone. (FC SD II:25)

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

8 October 18 Pentecost	15 October 19 Pentecost	22 October 20 Pentecost
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	8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC
Sunday, 8 October		
READINGS: Isaiah 5:1-7;	Philippians 3:4b-14;	Matthew 21:33-46
HYMNS: 62 791 75 842 (364) 509 OAK & GRN: 318 312 313 317		
Sunday, 15 October		
READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-9;	Philippians 4:4-13;	Matthew 22:1-14
HYMNS: 71 386 221 (398 65) 391 TMBA & AUB: 318 312 313 317		

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.

Saturday, 7 October, 1.30pm. Seminary Committee meeting at Troys Road, Toowoomba.

500th Anniversary of the Reformation Celebrations:

Sunday, 22 October, 7.30pm. Reformation Hymn Singing Evening at Trinity Oakey.

Sunday, 29 October, 10.00am. AELC Reformation Day Service at St John's Lutheran Church, Aubigny, followed by a shared lunch and afternoon session, concluding at 2.30pm.

Tuesday, 31 October, 7.30pm, Trinity Oakey. Shared tea (could each family please provide cold meat, salad etc) followed by a Vespers Service beginning at 8.30pm.