

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

18 February 2018

Bulletin for the First Sunday in Lent

HYMNS: 57 part 1 341 345 57 part 2

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.

The intimate advice of the LORD is for those who fear Him, so that He causes them to know His Covenant.

Psalm 25:1-10, 14

COLLECT: O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church, that, following our Saviour, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; 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: Genesis 22:1-18 Abraham prepares to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

James 1:12-18 God cannot be tempted to do evil, and He does not tempt anyone.

Mark 1:9-15 Jesus is tempted by Satan.

SERMON: James 1:12-18 Even in trial and temptation, our heavenly Father is still with us

¹² Blessed is the man who patiently endures when he is tested, because, when he has passed the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him! ¹³ No one should say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"! For God cannot be tempted to do evil, and He does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ Each person is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Next, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and, when sin has run its course, it gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my dear fellow-Christians! ¹⁷ Every act of giving that is good and every gift that is perfect comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow. ¹⁸ As He planned, He gave birth to us by the Word of truth, so that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Christ's followers bear the Cross

The word cross is used by some to describe any problem a Christian has. It is used to describe sickness, family problems, and such. The Bible uses the word cross in a narrow way. It refers to what Christians suffer for the sake of the gospel. Paul instructed new Christian converts on his first missionary journey, "*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God,*" (Acts 14:22). Paul's own life was evidence of this. He had to flee from Antioch and Iconium because of plots against him. At Lystra, Paul was stoned and left for dead.

Jesus told His disciples, "*If anyone wants to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me!*" (Mark 8:34). Following Jesus involves suffering persecution for His sake. When Jesus sent the twelve apostles out on their ministry, He told them to expect persecution. He said, "*You see, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.... be on your guard against men! For they will hand you over to councils and will flog you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings because of Me, to testify to them and to the Gentiles. You will also be hated by all people because of My name. Nevertheless, he who endures to the end will be saved,*" (Matt. 10:16-18, 22).

Jesus did not say that all people would love Christians. He said all people will hate them. This is because the world hates Jesus. Unbelievers look at the Gospel with a mind corrupted by sin and with a will in rebellion against God. Sinners by nature have no love for Jesus. Thus, they also have no love for those who belong to Jesus.

Christians sometimes think that God should spare them from the cross. They think that since God loves us and is almighty, He should keep us from suffering persecution for the sake of the gospel. Peter had to deal with this attitude in the Christians scattered

throughout Asia Minor. He wrote, “¹² *Dearly loved people, do not be astonished at the fiery ordeal among you, by which you are being tested, as though something strange were happening to you!*” ¹³ *However, rejoice in as far as you share in Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also rejoice and be very glad when His glory is revealed!... if anyone suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed, but should glorify God for that name!”* (1 Peter 4:12-13, 16). The psalmist Asaph was troubled by what he saw in this world. He observed that the wicked seemed to prosper in this life. On the other hand, believers seemed to suffer for their faith. Asaph was only able to put things in their proper perspective when he remembered the eventual end of an unbeliever under God’s judgment and the eventual glory of a believer in heaven (Ps 73:1-24).

Luther was well acquainted with suffering for the sake of the gospel. He wrote: For no one can believe how the devil opposes and obstructs their [the first two petitions] fulfilment. He cannot bear to have anyone teach or believe rightly. It pains him beyond measure when his lies and abominations, honoured under the most specious pretexts of God’s name, are disclosed and exposed in all their shame.

...Therefore, we who would be Christians must surely expect to have the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies and must expect that they will inflict every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where God’s Word is preached, accepted, or believed, and bears fruit, there the holy and precious cross will also not be far behind. (LC Third Part:62, 65)

What will be our attitude toward those who persecute us, especially to those who will continue along the path that leads away from God. As our nation continues its deadly assault on morality, where abortions are allowed, homosexuality is a person’s free choice etc., and now even euthanasia is receiving a renewed push to become legal, when we stand up to oppose such abominations, we can expect persecution. What are we to do? Jesus said, “*I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for those who are persecuting you,*” ⁴⁵ *that you may be the children of your Father in heaven!”* (Matt. 5:44-45). Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). In the face of slander, a Christian offers prayer. In the face of evil, a Christian offers forgiveness. The strength for doing this comes from God’s love for sinners. Only God’s love can move us to forgive those who persecute us.

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

21 February 2 nd mid-week Lenten Service	25 February 2 Lent	28 February 3 rd mid-week Lenten Service
7.30pm OAK Vespers	9.30am OAK HC Parish Service celebrating the 25 th Anniversary of the AELC	7.30pm AUB Vespers
Wednesday, 21 February		
READINGS: Hebrews 5:7-9; Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:21-32; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 26:33-35; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:33-38; Luke 22:35-38; Matthew 26:31-32; John 18:1; Matthew 26:30; Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46		
HYMNS: 69 73 323 48 v.1		
Sunday, 25 February		
READINGS: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; Mark 8:27-38		
HYMNS: 465 194 440 (287 291) 437		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tonight, 7.30pm. Parish AGM at Oakey.

Next Sunday, 25 February. Could each family please provide something for a shared lunch? Also, please place your offering in envelopes marked back to your own congregation. Any loose offering will be forwarded to the CoC, to go towards any future mission work of the AELC. Please make time to say hello to our visitors from Sweden.

Saturday, 3 March, 10.00am. CoC/Seminary Committee meeting at Marburg. Please forward any agenda items to Ian Manz: igm64@hotmail.com

The members of St Paul's Lutheran Church, Greenwood, would like to thank all who donated toward the recent storm appeal. It was very much appreciated. Work to fix the cladding will begin shortly.