

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

29 April 2018
Bulletin for the 5th Sunday of Easter

HYMNS: 461 181 170 279

INTROIT: Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary!
Praise Him in His mighty sky above!
Praise Him for His powerful deeds! Praise Him for His abundant
greatness!
Praise Him with the blast of the trumpet! Praise Him with the
harp and lyre!
Praise Him with the tambourine and circle-dance! Praise Him with
stringed instruments and wind instruments!
Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Praise Him with crashing
cymbals!
Let everything that has breath **praise the LORD! Praise the
LORD!**

Psalm 150

COLLECT: O God, You make the minds of Your faithful people to
be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have
commanded and desire what You promise, that, among the
many changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true
joys are found; 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: Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian

1 John 4:1-11 Let us love one another, for love comes
from God

John 15:1-8 I am the vine; you are the branches

SERMON: John 15:1-8 The call to produce fruit

¹ “I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Gardener. ² He takes out every branch in Me that does not bear fruit and prunes every branch that bears fruit, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I shall remain in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you, unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the Vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like the branch and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burnt. ⁷ If you remain in Me, and My Words remain in you, ask for what-ever you wish! It will be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and become My disciples.

Watch out for false teachers

From God’s point of view, the issue of spiritual teachers (John calls them spirits in 1 John 4:1-6) is of enormous importance. The Father sent His Son to our doomed and dying planet to rescue its inhabitants. The spiritual power from heaven that connects lost sinners with their Saviour is invested in Word and sacrament. He decided to entrust His church with these powerful means of grace and commissioned believers to be His agents in the business of rescuing people. “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them... and teaching them,” said the risen Lord. These means are sufficient for the task: “The holy Scriptures... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,” said Paul (2 Timothy 3:15). Jesus said, “Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved,” (Mark 16:16).

Word and sacrament need to be brought to people, since no one is born with them. Since all Christians begin their spiritual lives as spiritual babies, they need spiritual leadership and sound teaching to help them grow. And so, Jesus raised up a team of spiritual leaders, trained them carefully, and then sent them out to recruit and train other leaders who will teach. Alas, Satan sees the Word of God for what it is - a deadly blow to his control of the people of the world, and so he recruits and trains a counterforce of spiritual liars who seek to infiltrate the church and, knowingly or unknowingly, unravel God’s truth. So subtle and crafty is the evil one that many of his agents actually think they are working for God.

It is fashionable today to be tolerant. After all, who wants to be called intolerant? And yet, some spiritual teachings are deadly, for they lead away from Christ and His cross. If some doctors today were treating people with leeches and bloodletting to rid the body of foul “humors,”¹ they would be a health menace. The state would deny them a license to practice medicine. If an engineering team were designing a huge

¹ In the Middle Ages it was believed that a person’s health and disposition were the result of a balance of four fluids in the body. These fluids were called humors, from the Latin word humor, meaning “moisture.” The fluids were blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile.

new bridge that was to be built of concrete without reinforcing rods, it would be too dangerous to use. The state would never grant a construction permit.

Here, then, is the dilemma for believers. They wish simply to tune in to God, but when they listen for Him, they hear a babble of voices all claiming to speak for Him. Every believer in all times has to confront the same terrible problem - who is telling me the truth? How can I tell? Whom do I listen to? Here the state cannot and should not get involved. Each believer has the heavy responsibility to choose whom he or she will listen to.

It was happening already at John's time. Spirits (spiritual teachers) were drawing people away from their Saviour. John's advice to the believers: test them. How? Since you can't read their minds or look into their hearts, listen to what they say. Evaluate their confession, that is, their position, their teachings. Their appearance, style, buildings, personalities, and number of adherents are all irrelevant. What are they teaching people? They may have charm, pizzazz, connections, and charisma, but what matters is their confession.

John gives two touchstones of truth. Every true spiritual teacher confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh. This is not the entire Christian message, of course, but it is at the heart of the Christian message and thus is the prime target of Satan and his antichrists. This confession involves the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which expresses God's very identity, and it involves the doctrines of the two natures of Christ, that He is true God and true man in one person.

Every true teacher places this sacred truth at the centre. All non-Christian cults deny it, and thus they betray themselves as carriers of the disease of the spirit of antichrist. As bad as it was in John's time, things got much worse for the Christians in Asia Minor. In the 300s and 400s, most of Christendom was plunged into terrible conflict. A strain of anti-Christian virus called Arianism, which denied Jesus' full divine nature, swept through many of the eastern churches. It was to combat this virus that heroes of faith composed the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which exist for one great purpose: to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

The religious scene today is overrun with false spirits that deny the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, and the incarnation. Obviously, the non-Christian philosophies of Buddhism and Hinduism want nothing to do with the biblical Christ, and neither do Judaism, Islam, the Unitarian/Universalists, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Most university theology and philosophy departments are hostile to the idea that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. John's point is that there is great risk if we let these people teach us about God. We must therefore recognise them and avoid them as our spiritual teachers.

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!
 Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.
 Email him at paziebell@gmail.com
 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 May 6 Easter	10 May Ascension Day	13 May 7 Easter
	Thursday	
8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC	7.30pm OAK HC	8.00am TMBA Bible Study & 9.00am HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC
Sunday, 6 May		
READINGS: Acts 10:44-48; 1 John 5:1-8; John 15:9-17		
HYMNS: 101 322 420 (177 333) 197		
THURSDAY, 10 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53		
HYMNS: 169 771 114 789 330 152		
Sunday, 13 May		
READINGS: Acts 1:12-26; 1 John 5:9-15; John 17:11b-19		
HYMNS: 96 186 239 (282 286) 643		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 2 May. 10.00am. Women's Guild at Oakey. Opening Devotion: Margaret. Key Word: Husband. Item of Interest: Something beginning with "C."

Friday, 4 May, 7.00pm. Family Evening at Aubigny. Pizza etc is provided for a gold coin donation (usually start eating around 7.20), followed by games and activities, a devotion and hymns. The evening finishes with supper about 9pm, please bring a plate. Contact Jane Sippel 0488722074 for more info.

Saturday, 5 May, 10.00am. Combined CoC/Seminary Committee meeting at Troy's Road, Toowoomba. Please forward any agenda items to the secretary, Ian Manz at igm64@hotmail.com