

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

21 July 2019

Bulletin for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 500 153 331 392

INTROIT: Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud! Be gracious to me and answer me!

When You said, "Seek My face!" my heart said to You, "Your face, O LORD, I shall seek."

Do not hide Your face from me! Do not turn Your servant away in anger! You have been my Help. Do not cast me off or abandon me, O God of my salvation!

When my father and my mother have abandoned me, the LORD will take me in.

Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies!

Do not surrender me to the will of my oppressors! For false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

Surely, I am convinced that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait eagerly for the LORD! **Have courage! Let your heart prove to be strong!** Wait eagerly for the LORD!

Psalm 27:7-14

COLLECT: O Lord, grant us the Spirit to hear Your Word and know the one thing needful, that, by Your Word and Spirit, we may live according to Your will; 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 18:1-14 The Lord promises Abraham and Sarah a son

Colossians 1:21-29 Continue firmly in your faith

Luke 10:38-42 Jesus visits Mary and Martha

SERMON: Colossians 1:21-23 Jesus has provided reconciliation between God and us

God wants us to be sure of our election

Can we be sure of our election? Absolutely! Christians can and should be certain of their election. Peter wrote, "*Therefore be even more eager, fellow-Christians, to be certain that your calling and election are secure!*" (2 Peter 1:10). The question is, "From where does the certainty for election come? Can we be sure of election because we know the mind of God?" No, for God's foreknowledge of the world remains a mystery, hidden from us. The Formula of Concord states:

Therefore, there is no doubt that before time began God foresaw precisely and with utter certainty and still knows which persons among those who have been called would believe or not believe. Likewise, God foresaw and knows who among the converted will persevere and who will not, who will return after falling away and who will be hardened in their apostasy. So God undoubtedly knows and remembers the number of those on both sides. However, because God has kept this secret for His own wisdom and has not revealed anything regarding it to us in His Word (much less commanded us to inquire into it with our own speculations) but has instead earnestly warned against such inquiry (Rom. 11:33), we should not pursue the matter with our own speculations. We should not make our own deductions, form conclusions, or brood about this matter, but instead we should cling to His revealed Word to which He directs us. (FC SD XI:54, 55)

We can be sure of our election from the Scriptural teaching that Jesus died for all. The message of the Gospel that Jesus died for all people gives the individual assurance: "God has elected me to salvation." It is true that faith is an evidence of election. As Paul wrote in Romans 8:30, "*He also called those whom He had predestined.*" Yet we are not to look inward for the assurance of our election. Rather, we are to look outside of ourselves, at God's justification of the whole world in Christ. It is stated thus in the Formula of Concord:

Therefore, if we want to consider our eternal election to salvation profitably, we must always firmly and rigidly insist that, like the proclamation of repentance, so the promise of the gospel is *universalis*, that is, it pertains to all people (Luke 24:47). We should concern ourselves with this revealed will of God, follow it, and devote our attention to it, because the Holy Spirit bestows grace, power, and ability through the Word, through which He calls us.... Thus, Luther says, "Follow the order of the Epistle to the Romans. Worry first about Christ and the gospel, that you may recognize your sin and His grace, and then fight your sin, as Paul teaches from the first to the eighth chapters. Then, when you come under the cross and suffering in the eighth chapter, this will teach you of foreknowledge in chapters 9, 10, and 11, and how comforting it is." (FC SD XI:28, 33)

God's election is a wonderful assurance of salvation. We rob ourselves of this comfort by looking inside of ourselves for evidence we are one of the elect or by trying to peer into the hidden counsel of God. We find comfort in election by focusing on the universal redemption of the world by Christ. The words of the song we learned as children put it well: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Concerning these matters, the Formula of Concord states:

Therefore, if people wish to be saved, they should not concern or torture themselves with thoughts about the secret counsel of God - whether they are chosen and preordained for eternal life - with which the accursed Satan is wont to attack and trouble upright hearts. Rather, they should listen to Christ, who is the "Book of Life" and the book of God's eternal election for all God's children to eternal life [Phil 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 20:15]. For He testifies to all people without distinction that God wills all people who are burdened and weighed down with sins to come to Him, so that they may be given rest and be saved [Matt. 11:28]. (FC SD XI:70)

Our election to eternal life does not rest upon our righteousness or virtues but solely on Christ's merit and the gracious will of His Father, who cannot deny Himself [2 Tim. 2:13], because He is changeless in His will and essence. (FC SD XI:75)

The doctrine of election is a doctrine of comfort. Those who find no comfort in the doctrine are misusing it. As stated in the Formula of Concord:

Accordingly, whoever conveys this teaching concerning the gracious election of God in such a way that troubled Christians gain no comfort from it but are thrown into despair by it, or in such a way that the impenitent are strengthened in their impudence, then it is undoubtedly certain and true that this teaching is not being presented according to God's Word and will but rather according to reason and at the instigation of the wicked devil. For, as the Apostle testifies, "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" [Rom. 15:4]. However, any interpretation of Scripture that weakens or removes our hope and encouragement is certainly contrary to the will and intent of the Holy Spirit. (FC SD XI:91, 92)

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

28 July 7 Pentecost	4 August 8 Pentecost	11 August 9 Pentecost
8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC 9.00am MINDEN LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC & Bible Study	8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR
Sunday, 28 July		
READINGS: Genesis 18:17-33; Colossians 2:6-19; Luke 11:1-13		
HYMNS: 503 422 421 (839 840) 426		
Sunday, 4 August		
READINGS: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21		
HYMNS: 388 239 386 (159 283) 345		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOWNES PARISH

MARBURG PARISH

Thursday, 25 July, 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood. Please bring along something for a shared lunch.

Sunday, 4 August. Bible Study after the Divine Service. Please bring something for 'brunch.'