

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

28 February 2021  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

**HYMNS:** 456 385 349 84

**INTROIT:** You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him! Be afraid of Him, all you descendants of Israel! For He has not despised or detested the misery of the Wretched One; and He has not hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him for help, He heard.

My praise comes from You in the great assembly; I shall fulfil My vows in the presence of those who fear Him.

Humble people will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise Him. May your hearts live for ever!

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of the nations will worship before You.

For the kingdom belongs to the LORD, and He rules over the nations.

All the prosperous people of the earth have been eating and worshipping; all those who go down to the dust will kneel before Him, even he who has not kept himself alive.

Descendants will serve Him; a coming generation will be told about the Lord. They will come and tell about His righteousness to a people yet to be born. For He has accomplished it! Psalm 22:23-31

**COLLECT:** O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power, defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; 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 17:1-7, 15-16 God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham.

Romans 5:1-11 Peace with God through faith.

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus' sorrow for Jerusalem.

**SERMON:** Mark 8:27-38 YOU ARE THE CHRIST!

## Holy Despair

How quickly we cast about for an excuse when we are caught in a sin. We would like to be able to throw out a plethora of reasons why we should not be held accountable for our transgressions. We grasp at anything at all; our companions: “he made me do it,” our birth: “I have those genes,” our circumstances: “I was raised in a bad neighbourhood,” lack of freedom: “I had no choice,” lack of time, “I didn’t get around to it,” etc. You know all the excuses, because you have used them all. None of them are adequate. Excuses are just that; excuses. They neither undo what was done or do what was left undone, neither do they pay for our transgressions.

We can’t make the water go back over the dam. We cannot clean the slate. And yet, we are constantly trying to make expiation for our own sins. It will never work. We are left with a kind of holy despair, which rejects the path of self-righteousness and self-justification. It despairs of its own holiness and goodness and casts itself on the righteousness, justification, holiness, and goodness of another, that is, God’s own Son, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities (Is 53:5).

David experienced that holy despair in which there is hope only in the righteousness of another when he prayed, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions” (Ps 51:1). Why should God have mercy on me? What in me attracts God’s compassion for me? What have I offered Him that He needs? What merit could I set before Him in exchange for His mercy? None. David attempts no such exchange. If God is to have mercy on him, it must be a price given by God Himself.

God’s mercy becomes ours because God has steadfast love. Our transgressions are only blotted out because God has an overflowing mercy toward us. Everything is dependent on Him. This is why David would be so certain of God’s forgiveness in the midst of His holy despair of his own righteousness. He had a holy One who had mercy on him.

Those who suffer the Davidic trial of falling into holy despair will also be lifted up by the mercy of the God who does not want to leave us in that despair, but wants us also to share in His holy joy. There is nothing the devil hates more than that we would rejoice and revel in the forgiveness of sins with a God who rejoices over that one sinner who repents (Lk 15:6, 9). Our laughter in the face of our sin is the laughter shared with God and the laughter of true and complete spiritual relief. This is not the silly “holy laughter” of the charismatic charlatans, but the delighted relief of those who have felt the sentence of death against them commuted by a gracious God for the sake of Christ. The despair of our righteousness is a holy despair which depends upon the righteousness of another, Christ.

## **Indian Court Orders 15-Year-Old Must Abort Baby**

*Madras High Court rules teenager must have an abortion in order for the preborn child to be free from birth - a central idea in the false religion of Hinduism.*

A court in India is ordering a 15-year-old girl to undergo an abortion to kill her unborn child against her will. The reasons given? Well, the father of the child is in prison, and the court believes the young woman “would not be able to care for herself” and, therefore, if the baby had a choice, “it would not wish to be born.”

The justice who decided the case further explained, “While we do celebrate life, the foremost spiritual prayer is that there should be liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.” In other words, because of his religious (Hindu) beliefs, this justice believes the child is better off dead than alive and therefore must be killed. What an evil worldview! Also, it’s a reminder that everyone holds a worldview, and it will determine how they act.

Religion that isn’t founded on the truth of God’s Word - like Hinduism - devalues human life and leads to atrocious evils (often perpetrated against the most vulnerable: women, children, and those with disabilities). Why? Well, because we aren’t “basically good” and all religions aren’t equal. We’re all sinners, with evil, sinful, selfish hearts (Jeremiah 17:9), and we’re at enmity with God (Romans 3:23; 8:7). There aren’t many different ways to heaven (contrary to what 65% of Gen Z, today’s young people, believe) or different paths of truth. There is only one:

*Jesus said to him, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6)*

*There is also salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among human beings by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)*

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5)*

*He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not believe in the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him (John 3:36)*

Any worldview that isn’t based in the truth of God’s Word and the saving and life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ will lead to brokenness, hurt, and sin. We see this in various world religions, including humanism, secularism, and atheism (the dominant religions in the West), as well as in various religions or movements that claim the name of Christ but twist and distort His Word to suit their evil passions.

This example in India is a very tragic reminder that there is no neutrality. Hinduism isn’t a “neutral” religion - it is a false religion that has real, eternal consequences for millions of people. That’s why every single person needs to receive the free offer of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. And that’s why Christians go unto all the world and proclaim the life-changing message of Jesus.

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 46333604 or 0407583922.

Email him at [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaelc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaelc@gmail.com).

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://www.aelc.org.au)

**Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.**

## COMING SERVICES

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES	Sunday, 7 March 3 Lent	MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES
Wednesday, 3 March, 7.00pm Marburg.	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR	Wednesday, 10 March, 10.30am Lowood.
Thursday, 4 March, 7.30pm Greenwood.	10.30am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	Thursday, 11 March, 7.30pm Aubigny
<b>WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY, 3-4 March</b>		
HYMNS: 61 78 70 48 v.3		
<b>Sunday, 7 March</b>		
READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 2:13-25		
HYMNS: 504 54 188 (779 294) 75		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 3 March, 10.00am. Women's Guild at pastor's place. *Opening devotion:* Leanne. *Bible Verse:* favourite verse from Genesis. *Item of Interest:* Bring along a photo/cutting/real plant.

Tuesday, 9 March, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Darryl.

Saturday, 13 March, 10.00am. CoC/Sem meeting at Marburg.