

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY,

23 May 2021
Pentecost Sunday

HYMNS: 164 121 116 123

INTROIT: O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

You Yourself know when I sit down and when I rise. You have understood my thoughts from far away.

You have been measuring up my path and my lying down and been familiar with all my ways.

For before there is any statement on my tongue, look! O LORD, You know it completely.

You have encircled me behind and in front and laid Your hand on me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is unattainable. I cannot reach it.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I climb up into heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there.

If I lift up the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will grip me hard, and the light around me will become night," even the darkness will not be dark to You, and the night will shine like the day. For darkness is like light to You.

How difficult Your thoughts are for me, O God! How numerous their total amount is!

Psalm 139:1-12 & 17

COLLECT: O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; 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: Ezekiel 37:1-14 God's Spirit brings life to dry bones.

Acts 2:1-21 The coming of the Holy Spirit, and Peter's Pentecost sermon.

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15 Jesus promises to send the Spirit as an Advocate.

SERMON: Acts 2:1-21 FULL TO OVERFLOWING

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

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@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.

DO NOT LOOK WITHIN YOURSELF

We live in a time where teachers, parents, coaches, counsellors, culture, and even advertising slogans try to convince us that we are awesome and have power within. Consider some of the phrases that are out there: “You can do it!” “You can do anything you set your mind to.”

These kinds of slogans have one thing in common. They seem to point us inward to our own resources and skills. Indeed, these phrases tend to point a person’s eyes inward - toward their abilities and power within.

While it may be true that some jobs in life require some good old grit and sweat from within a person or a certain set of skills, it should be clearly noted that this is not how Christianity works. If any think Christianity is about looking inward for greatness, they could not be further from the truth about Christianity. Christianity is the exact opposite.

When we focus too much on the Christian and not enough on the Christ, we begin to look at ourselves as the centre of the Christian faith. And when we look at ourselves, well... we end up fixating on our own so-called spiritual abilities and powers. Looking at our spiritual abilities and powers, though, we begin to collapse inward on ourselves, which results in the destruction of the Christian faith. You and I can never be the centre of the Christian faith, for there is no greatness in our hearts but only sin and darkness.

Tragically, there are thousands of people sitting in pews this morning knowing that they do not have greatness within. They know because they are failing at life. They have failing marriages, struggling jobs, unruly kids, low finances, and poor health - to name a few. Life has beaten them up, and they know it. However, they do not talk about their problems because everyone else around them seems to be doing great. But nonetheless, they drag themselves into the church every single week.

Once in the church, the pastor gets into the pulpit and rightly points out all of their problems. He boldly preaches that families are falling apart; husbands are not listening to their wives enough, wives are spending too much money, kids are not obeying authority, and so forth. Basically, the pastor tells the people in the pew that God’s people are not obedient enough. And the people in the pew will agree. But here is the main problem. The pastor may have correctly pointed out the problem of the sinful

heart in his parishioners, but once he has done this, he then points the people not away from their sinful hearts but *back* to their sinful hearts. The pastor points them back to themselves to fix their problems by resorting to one of the many terrible slogans that we hear in our culture. Obviously, the pastor will not use secular slogans but will Christianise the pagan slogan to sound spiritual. “With faith, you can do it!” “You can do anything you set your faith upon.”

Now, in case you don’t know, this is insanity! This is spiritual abuse! This is wretched theology. This is complete heresy; however, people keep coming back week after week after week to these pathetic and Christless churches!

Our relationship with God - no matter how good or bad you think you have it - cannot be based on you. If it is based on you and not on Jesus, then your salvation is only as good as you can be. And frankly, the Scriptures do not paint a pretty picture of your corrupt hearts. And faith?

Faith without Jesus is not real saving faith. Faith must always have an object; faith must always connect to, cling to, and rest upon Jesus. Faith clings outward to Jesus, not inward upon yourself.

So, what this means is that we must confess that our Christian faith is not based on looking inward towards our internal abilities, but rather, we look outward to Jesus - our Mediator.

When you look inward to yourself, what you see are lives full of sin. In other words, looking inward at yourself does not lead to forgiveness, life, and salvation but leads to sin and everlasting darkness. Bluntly stated, “I” am not the solution to “my” problems and sin. Jesus is.

Listen to Martin Luther on this, “*The Gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection but at God Himself as He promises, and at Christ Himself, the Mediator*” (Luther’s Works, vol. 26: Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1-4).

The nature of the Christian faith is that God has snatched us not only out of the darkness but has snatched us away from ourselves and has placed us outside of ourselves so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, or works.

We are not anchored to ourselves and our abilities in this Christian faith, but we are anchored outside of ourselves to Christ and His Gifts. We are anchored to the promises of God, which cannot deceive. Hope is not found in the Christian but is found in and delivered by the Christ. Christianity is not about you, but it is about Christ who is for you. “*Christ was handed over because of our offences and was raised for the sake of our justification*” (Romans 4:25).

COMING SERVICES

30 May TRINITY SUNDAY	6 June 2 Pentecost	13 June 3 Pentecost
Mission Day Festival		
10.00am MARBURG HC (AELC Service) 9.30am OAK LR	8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.00am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.00am TMBA Bible Study & 9.00am HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 30 May		
READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-8; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; John 3:1-17		
HYMNS: 501 140 219 (138 287) 139		
Sunday, 6 June		
READINGS: Genesis 3:8-15; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35		
HYMNS: 159 204 386 (791 286) 175		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, 30 May. Trinity Marburg will be hosting an AELC service. This will also be a Mission Day service with the collection received going towards helping to pay for the continual running costs of the AELC website. Please also bring along something for a shared luncheon after service.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Friday, 28 May, 7.30pm AUB/OAK at Aubigny.

Please take home today a copy of the latest Newsletter.