

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
23rd June Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 147 524 865 616

INTROIT: Psalm 124

"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side," Israel should say, "if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when human beings rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive when their anger blazed against us.

Then the waters would have engulfed us. The stream would have swept over our lives.

Then the raging water would have swept over our lives."

Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us up as prey to their teeth!

Our lives have escaped like a bird from the snare of the hunters. The snare is torn, and we have escaped.

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who has made heaven and earth.

COLLECT: Almighty God, in Your mercy guide the course of this world so that Your Church may joyfully serve You in godly peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Ziebell can be contacted via phone/text at 0407 583922.

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

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@gmail.com. Pastor is usually in his office Tuesday-Wednesday for anyone who would like to call in. Other days of the week are set aside for visits.

READINGS:

Job 38:1-11 The Lord answered Job out of the windstorm.

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Paul asks the Corinthians to accept his ministry of the Gospel.

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms the storm.

Job 38:1-11

¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the windstorm:

² "Who, then, is making My purpose dark by talking without knowledge?

³ Please get yourself ready for action like a man, that I may question you! Then you must instruct Me! ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell Me, if you know how to discern it! ⁵ Who determined its dimensions? Surely you know! Or who stretched a measuring line over it? ⁶ On what were its bases

sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ while the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God were shouting for joy? ⁸ Who shut off the sea with doors when it burst from the womb and came out, ⁹ when I made clouds its garment and very thick cloud its infant-wrappings, ¹⁰ when I marked out My limits for it and set its bars and doors in place, ¹¹ and when I said, ‘You may come as far as this but no farther, and here your proud waves will meet opposition’?

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

¹ As men who are working with God, we also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: “**At a favourable time I have heard you and on the day of salvation I have helped you.**” **Look! Now is the favourable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation.**

³ We do not lay any kind of obstacle, to avoid discredit on our ministry. ⁴ Rather, in everything we commend ourselves as the ministers of God: in great endurance, in troubles, in calamities, in difficulties; ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots; in hard work, in sleepless nights, in hunger; ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love, ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonour, through bad report and good report; as deceivers and yet true; ⁹ as unknown and yet well known; as **dying** and, you see, we go on **living**; as **chastened and yet not killed**; ¹⁰ as made sad but always rejoicing; as beggars but making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing everything.

¹¹ O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you. **Our hearts have opened wide.**

¹² We are not being narrow in our feelings for you, but you are being narrow in your hearts toward us. ¹³ Treat me as I am treating you! I am speaking to you as my children. You, too, should open your hearts wide!

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ That day, when evening came, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us go over to the other side!”

³⁶ They left the crowd and took Him along in the boat just as He was. There were other boats with Him. ³⁷ A violent windstorm came up, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that the boat was already filling up. ³⁸ Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping on the cushion. They woke Him and asked Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are drowning?”

³⁹ When He had been wakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Be quiet! Be silenced!”

The wind stopped, and it became very calm.

⁴⁰ He asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹ They were very afraid and kept saying to one another, “Who is this, then, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

“BE QUIET! BE SILENCED!”

Sermon for the 5th Sunday after Pentecost 2024

Mark 4:35-41

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel from before Mark 4:35-41: **That day, when evening came, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us go over to the other side!”**

³⁶ **They left the crowd and took Him along in the boat just as He was. There were other boats with Him.** ³⁷ **A violent windstorm came up, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that the boat was already filling up.** ³⁸ **Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping on the cushion. They woke Him and asked Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are drowning?”**

³⁹ **When He had been wakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Be quiet! Be silenced!”**

The wind stopped, and it became very calm.

⁴⁰ **He asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”**

⁴¹ **They were very afraid and kept saying to one another, “Who is this, then, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Being a Christian does not mean that we shall be free from troubles in this world. Indeed, Jesus says that in this world, we shall have trouble.¹ And trouble comes in all different shapes and sizes. Maybe it’s financial troubles, bad health, bad relationships, broken families, loneliness, despair, or depression. Sometimes, our problems become so much that we even begin to ask ourselves, “*Where is God in all this? Why isn’t He watching over me? Doesn’t He care?*” And when we are told to wait patiently for the Lord and trust that He certainly does care, we think to ourselves, “*Really?*”

¹ John 16:33

Today, from the account of Jesus rebuking the wind and sea, we find that we most certainly do have a Lord who cares for us. We truly do have One who says to the storms of our life - even to real, physical storms - **“Be quiet! Be silenced!”** Jesus is in the boat with us – and will calm all our fears.

It had been a strenuous day for Jesus. When evening came, the Lord was ready to be alone with His disciples and away from the crowd. He was tired, but He also knew there was someone desperately in need of His help on the other side of the lake, namely, a man with an unclean spirit living among the tombs. This poor soul *“had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones”* (Mark 5:4-5). So, **“that day, when evening came, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us go over to the other side!”** ³⁶ **They left the crowd and took Him along in the boat just as He was. There were other boats with Him.** ³⁷ **A violent windstorm came up, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that the boat was already filling up.”**

Jesus and His disciples were on the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee was really more like a big lake, but because of its location - situated in the Rift Valley - winds can come down from Mount Hermon and sweep across the water, whip up waves in a hurry, and the Sea of Galilee can act like a sea when a storm develops suddenly.

“Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping on the cushion” when **“a violent windstorm came up.”** So furious were the waves that they threatened to swamp the boat. The storm was extraordinary, as shown by the reaction of the disciples. Experienced fishermen though they were, they could not control the boat and feared for their lives. Will they make it? Or will this be the end for them? But wait! They remember who’s in the boat with them. It’s Jesus, their Master and Teacher. And what have they seen Jesus do up to this point? These disciples have seen Jesus do some amazing things. They have seen Jesus heal diseases and cast out demons. So maybe He can help. But He’s asleep! So **“they woke Him and asked Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are drowning?”** The disciples have known their Master to be a caring man of God, *willing and able to help people in need*, so this doesn’t make any sense - that He would sleep right through this urgent crisis, that He would not care about, and do something about their deep distress.

Perhaps sometimes, you feel like these disciples. Perhaps, in the storms of life, you have to wonder where God is in this. Doesn’t He know what I’m going

through? Why doesn't He do something about it? He's got the power. I know He loves me. At least, I think He does. So why is He letting me suffer like this? *Don't you care, Lord?*

That was how the disciples felt. But once Jesus wakes up, He shows that He really does care and will not let them perish. **“He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Be quiet! Be silenced!” The wind stopped, and it became very calm.”** Jesus speaks, and it is so. God's Word is “performative” - it does not merely state something, but it accomplishes or brings about that which it declares. Here Jesus is demonstrating authority over nature itself, over the created order, and *only God can do that*.

Jesus exercises this power in connection with His care. He has care and concern for His followers, and He has the power and authority to do something about it on their behalf. This is comforting and encouraging. Jesus is not going to let His disciples perish. They will live because Jesus is exercising His authority on their behalf. He speaks, and they are saved. The Word of the Lord makes things happen.

Well, maybe you are not out on the lake, so this exact scenario does not fit your situation. But you have other threats to your well-being. You have other dangers you face, both physical and mental, threats to both body and soul. Illness, disease, disability. Danger on the highways or workplace. It's the human condition. Some of it we bring on ourselves. Some of it, others do to us. And some of it, we don't know how it happened; all we know is that it hurts. And there's one thing we all face sooner or later: the grave. Death. It has its way of touching all of us - first, indirectly, as we mourn the loss of loved ones and see ourselves surrounded by death. Eventually, our name will be called. How are we going to get out of that?

Here's how. ***It's because Jesus is in the boat with us***. It may seem at times like Jesus is sleeping and that He does not care. Sometimes, it may feel that way. But rest assured, when those waves come so hard and so close that you feel like there's no hope, there is still hope. Jesus will speak to all the threats that threaten to overwhelm you - Jesus, your Lord and Saviour, will say to the devil's accusations and to the death that would swallow you up - Jesus will speak His authoritative word and say, **“Be quiet! Be silenced!”** Jesus will say, *“Shut up, devil! You have no room to talk! My shed blood has covered those sins. They are washed away and forgiven.”* Jesus will say, *“Be muzzled, death! My resurrection has turned the tables on you. You will not have this one. She is baptised. You will not have him, either. He is one of mine. They will live forever in my kingdom.”*

“The wind stopped, and it became very calm.” And yet, there is another calm still to be bestowed. It is the calm that Jesus will give to His disciples. Because right now, they don’t know what to make of all this. If the storm distressed them, this power display by Jesus absolutely astonishes them. **“He asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”** ⁴¹ **They were very afraid and kept saying to one another, “Who is this, then, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”**

The disciples are starting to realise that they are in the presence of One whose power goes far beyond anything they have witnessed before. **“Who is this, then, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”** they ask.

Yes, who can do that, but God? Now, we have come to the bottom line of this story. It’s about who Jesus is. The more time the disciples spend with Jesus, the more they see Him do, the more they hear Him speak, the more they realise this is no ordinary teacher. The realisation is beginning to dawn on them who this man might be. Could He be the Messiah? Is He the Christ? Jesus is revealing Himself to be just that.

But still, they will discover even more about this man Jesus. They will learn what kind of a Messiah He is. Not just a glory king, but a King who will suffer for their sins, to do the will of the Father who sent Him. It doesn’t make sense by the world’s standards, but it does by God’s. Here is One who can command the waves, and yet He willingly goes to the cross to suffer and die. Why? ***Because this is the way, the only way, that the storms of life - and death - can be stilled.*** This is the only way there can be true peace, peace with God so that we can safely make it to our harbour. Here is Jesus, the very Son of God, the Word of God by whom all things were made, and He does this suffering and dying *for you.*

And this is how you can keep calm now when all about you is storming and howling. Because Jesus is in your boat. He will not let you perish. Things may look bad at times, but in the big picture of things, you know you’re going to make it. You know that in the end He will bring you safely home. Jesus is saying to you today, to your fearful heart, **“Be quiet! Be silenced!”**

You have a Saviour in your boat. The disciples, you and me – we’re all in the same boat. With Jesus. And that’s a good place to be. **“Be quiet! Be silenced!”** He speaks to the wind and the waves. **“Be quiet! Be silenced!”** He speaks to our fearful hearts, and guess what? **“It became very calm.”** Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty God, eternal Lord and Creator of all things, You are our light and our salvation; You are all we ever need. We, Your children, come before You in prayer, and ask You to place Your hands on us in blessing.

Bless us with sincere faith in Your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that we may believe in Him with all our hearts, trust in Him alone for salvation, and have the assurance of everlasting life through Him. Renew us through our baptism day by day, as we live in hope and wait for our complete salvation in the new creation.

Keep us in Your fatherly care in this world, which has been ruined by sin. Guard us in all times of danger, and protect us in every peril. Keep us safe, by Your grace, that we may never lose our faith because of our sins and frailty. Grant that we may keep growing in faith and spiritual understanding. When death approaches, make us strong by Your sure promises, and finally give us the joy of Your eternal presence, complete redemption of our bodies, and resurrection to life eternal.

Fill Your Church with Your grace and power, O Lord, so that the light of Your truth may shine throughout the world. May all people know Your will and rejoice in Your salvation. Equip our pastors to be Christlike in mercy and love, and true leaders of Your people. Give us true joy as we serve You and one another, living in newness of life.

Hold Your hand of blessing over our land. Preserve us from war, earthquake, destructive storms, famine, disease, violence, tyranny, persecution, treachery, and rebellion. Guide those in government, business, education, and entertainment, so that they may live in the knowledge that You are Lord, and no other god may share Your glory.

Be gracious to all our homes and families. Enable children to grow in body, mind, and spirit, enjoying favour with God and man. By Your Spirit equip all parents with Christian faith and insight, and the constant desire to obey Your will.

Be merciful on all who suffer sickness, sorrow, the weakness of age, the weariness of hard work, separation from loved ones, uncertainty about the future, broken relationships, or any other burden. Give them Your rich peace. Show Yourself to be a God always ready to help, and give faith, trust, courage, and hope to all in need.

We pray for these things to You, heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, is the one God, to be praised for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Do Not Become Discouraged

When we look at our nation, it is easy to get quite discouraged. For example, we are almost at a trillion dollars in debt as a nation. House prices are through the roof – not to mention a shortage of housing to begin with! Real inflation is sitting around 3-4%. Socially, things are also chaotic – you can't turn the television on without getting blindsided by woke ideology. But things are not as bad as they seem.

Perhaps things are better when we look at the Church. Tragically, though, things are not any better when we look at churches here in Australia. Religious service attendance in Australia has never been practised by the majority. Some of the highest rates of attendance were recorded in the 1950s after World War II, at the time of the baby boom (44% in 1950). Today, according to the National Church Life Survey, around one in five Australians (21%) reported attending religious services frequently, i.e., at least monthly. Among frequent attenders, 13% attended weekly or more often. A further 30% of Australians were infrequent attenders: this is made up of 12% who go once or a few times a year and 18% who attend less than yearly. Around half of all Australians (49%) reported that they never attend religious services. And so, as we look at the church, things are not good but bad. But again, things are not as bad as they seem.

How can it not be as bad as it seems? After all, everything seems to be falling into decomposing rubble, like a rotting tree, yet we need not worry. The reason why? Many leaders in the Christian church and the state preach in pulpits and podiums that everything will turn out fine. They are saying that nothing bad will ever happen to you. That is right; contrary to all appearances, they tell you that what you see isn't that bad. They are telling you that you will be safe and secure - no harm will come upon you.

But deep down, you and I know that they are lying. We would like to believe them, but deep down, we look around and know they are wrong. We know beneath these leader's imaginary words that they are just a bunch of scared people, just like us. But again, with all of this said, things are not as bad as they seem.

Let's go back to the time of Jeremiah. Things were not good in the nation of Judah. During the time of Jeremiah, the nation of Israel had been split into two kingdoms – the northern kingdom was called Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah. Long story short, several years earlier, a mighty nation called Assyria invaded Israel and deported many Israelites. The Israelites were scattered

across the Assyrian Empire to suppress resistance and keep control. Fast-forward to the time of Jeremiah. During Jeremiah's time in Judah, they faced a similar threat. The mighty nation of Babylon had already deported many citizens in Judah, and it was about to happen again. Also, on the horizon, the Babylonians would soon enter Jerusalem and destroy the Temple. Needless to say, the people were under the thumb of Babylon, waiting to be crushed and ground into rubble. The nations of Israel and Judah were like fallen trees – they were like rotten decomposed stumps. But again, things were not as bad as they seemed.

So, this begs the question, why were things not as bad as they seemed?

We often put our trust in rulers, the government, leaders, institutions, and systems to save us and help us feel secure. The problem is that rulers, the government, leaders, institutions, and systems are powerless to deliver salvation to us. Psalm 146:3-4 says to us, *“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.”* In fact, as history has shown us time and time again, rulers die, governments topple, and religious institutions crumble. They don't have what it takes for when they die. Their projects, promises, and great plans die with them. But again, things are not as bad as they seem.

Returning to Jeremiah, he says something profound that we must note. He says, *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely”* (23:5-6).

What Jeremiah is telling the people of Judah is that despite everything they see, there is assurance and hope. That is to say, Jeremiah does not lie to them as the other lying prophets did. Jeremiah was not preaching an 'Everything will turn out fine' sermon. Furthermore, he is not trying to prop up the failing rulers and the toppling government or peddle false and empty promises of salvation in an institutional program. Instead, Jeremiah announced that amid the fallen trees of Israel and Judah – in the midst of the decaying stumps - there was a sprouting branch.

It is important to pause here for a moment and understand exactly what Jeremiah is saying. He uses a metaphor of a dead stump and a new sprouting branch. In other words, he is not saying that the dead stump of Israel and Judah will sprout into a brand-new tree. As history will show us, things are about to get much worse for the nation of Judah. Instead, Jeremiah is telling the people that

there is a new shoot – a new growth – a branch that is growing up amid the chaos, decay, and blunder. Jeremiah speaks into the failed states of Judah and Israel; he speaks over the lying pastors; and he speaks into the impending doom of Babylon’s invasion and says that a truly righteous ruler – a King – is coming. The coming King will have royal power and will make use of that power and authority to take care of His kingdom with wisdom and power. That king is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Yes, you heard that correctly; the branch, the sprout, and the new shoot are referring to Jesus Christ.

Whether it is ancient Israel or Judah on the verge of being destroyed, or whether it is us in the 21st century feeling as if everything is going to slip away in our country, or if it is us in the church thinking that the institutional church may not see better days – hear what Jeremiah has proclaimed: **in the midst of the failed projects, fallen governments, dying institutions, false political promises of the world, there is a Righteous Branch.** There is a new sprouting branch. That Righteous Branch sprouted in Bethlehem that Christmas long ago. Indeed, the Righteous King came that Christmas long ago to establish a kingdom that has no end. The Righteous King was born into the chaos, rubble, and struggles of an unstable world to accomplish eternal salvation for you, for me, and for the entire world. And so, whatever comes your way, whether good or bad, know today that you do not need to put your trust in rulers, the government, leaders, institutions, and systems to save you and help you feel secure.

Things are never as bad as they seem because you have Christ, and Christ has you. He is the Righteous Branch, and you belong to His eternal Kingdom. He is the One who rules despite what we see going on in this world. And so, come what may, you have Christ. It is the sprouted righteous branch for you.

This country may very well fail, or it may not. The AELC may not survive, or it may. The Church in Australia may diminish in numbers, or it may not. Any one of our church buildings may close its doors, or it may not. We may see worse days ahead, or we may not. But none of that matters because we do not put our trust in what we see. We do not put our faith in rulers, the government, leaders, institutions, and systems to save us and make us feel secure, but we trust in Christ, who established His Kingdom through His birth, life, death, and resurrection. We trust in Jesus, who rules at the Father’s right hand and is coming back for us on the Last Day.

Children's Message:

Looking at the picture on this page, what do you see? It's a picture of the earth and stars. Do you know who made them? Yes, it was God. God made our planet and all the other planets and stars out there. Now, you know what they are, but can you explain how God made all these things? No? Don't feel bad; I can't either!



And neither could a man named Job. Some bad things happened to Job, and he was wondering why God was doing the things He was doing. So God asked Job, "Can you explain how I made the earth or the stars?" Job couldn't answer God. He couldn't explain how God made all these things either. We can see the stars in the sky, and we can watch the sun rise in the morning, and we see other beautiful things that God made for us, but we can't really understand how God did it all.

But you know what? That's okay! We don't have to be able to explain how God made everything. God is way smarter than we are! He can do a lot of things that we can't understand. That's part of what it means for God to be God! God wants us to trust that since He is smarter than we are, He knows how to do things that we can't understand.

And that's really good news! Because sometimes bad things happen to us too, don't they. We get hurt. People that we love get sick or even die. And when these things happen, sometimes we wonder why God is allowing it all to happen. We want to understand why God is doing what He's doing. And when that happens, God wants us to remember that He's smarter than we are and that He knows exactly what He's doing, even if we can't understand it.

When bad things do happen, God especially wants us to remember He loves us! How do we know God loves us? Yes! God who used His wisdom to create the world also sent Jesus to us to die for our sins and give us eternal life in heaven. That's hard to understand too, isn't it? But it's true! Jesus died, and we get to live forever. That's how much God loves us.

This is all so wonderful to know! No matter what's happening in our lives, we can trust that God knows exactly what He's doing with us and that He's doing it because He loves us!

Dear God, help me to trust in You, and to always remember that You know what You are doing! Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

30 June 6 Pentecost	7 July 7 Pentecost	14 July 8 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
Sunday, 30 June		
READINGS: Lamentations 3:22-33; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43		
HYMNS: 462 68 368 (416 330) 427		
Sunday, 7 July		
READINGS: Ezekiel 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 12:1-10; Mark 6:1-13		
HYMNS: 498 217 375 (150 847) 457		
Sunday, 14 July		
READINGS: Amos 7:7-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29		
HYMNS: 124 149 327 (839 840) 512		

BIBLE STUDIES for JUNE:

Friday 28 June, 7.30pm Oak/Aub at Oakey.

The cost of the LSB hymnbooks will be \$70.00 for either edition (regular, soft cover, or larger hardcover). Each congregation is responsible for its own orders, so those who have placed orders, please give your money to your treasurer, who will then let pastor know how many to order.