Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church

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

9th June Third Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 785 204 183 839 165 159

INTROIT: Psalm 130

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If You, LORD, should observe iniquities, O Lord, who would stand? But with You there is forgiveness, so that You may be feared.

I am waiting for the LORD; my soul is waiting, and in His Word I am putting my hope.

My soul is waiting for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him there is very great redemption, and He Himself will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

COLLECT: Almighty and eternal God, Your Son Jesus triumphed over the prince of demons and freed us from bondage to sin. Help us to stand firm against every assault of Satan, and enable us always to do Your will; through Jesus Christ, 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 <u>paziebell@gmail.com</u> or to the church office at <u>ddaelc@gmail.com</u>. 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: Genesis 3:8-15 The consequences of the Fall into sin.

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 The glory to come far exceeds our troubles.

Mark 3:20-35 Questions about Jesus' power.

Genesis 3:8-15

- ⁸ At the time of the day when there was a breeze, the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden and hid from the presence of the LORD God among the trees in the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?"
- ¹⁰ The man said, "I heard Your voice in the garden and was afraid, because I was naked. So, I hid."
- ¹¹ He said, "Who has told you that you are naked? Have you eaten fruit from the tree from which I have commanded you not to eat?"

- ¹² Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it."
- ¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "**The snake deceived me, and** I ate."
- ¹⁴ Then the LORD God told the snake: "Because you have done this, you are cursed, more than every domestic animal and every wild animal. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I shall make you and the woman hostile to each other and shall make your descendants and her Descendant hostile to each other. He will **crush** your head and you will crush His heel."

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

- ¹³ Furthermore, since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what Scripture has said, "I have believed and therefore I have spoken," we also believe and therefore we speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the One who has raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and will make us stand before Him with you. ¹⁵ For all things are for your benefit, that God's grace may spread to more and more people and may cause thanksgiving to increase greatly, to the glory of God. ¹⁶ That is why we are not discouraged. Rather, even though our outward person is wasting away, our inward person is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary trouble is producing for us an utterly extraordinary and eternal weight of glory. ¹⁸ We do not look at the things that are seen but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal.
- 5:1 For we know that, if the earthly tent in which we live is demolished, we have a house from God, not made by human hands, eternal in heaven.

Mark 3:20-35

- ²⁰ Then Jesus came into the house. The crowd gathered again, so that Jesus and those who were with Him were not even able to eat bread. ²¹ When His family heard about it, they came out to take charge of Him. For they were saying, "He has gone out of His mind!" ²² The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem began to say, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "It is by the ruler of the demons that He is driving out the demons."
- ²³ Jesus called them to come to Him and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a family is divided against itself, that family will not be able to stand. ²⁶ If Satan has risen up against himself and has been divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. ²⁷ Rather, no one can go into the strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he will plunder his house. ²⁸ Truly, I tell you, all the sins that the sons of men commit will be forgiven and all the blasphemies that they utter. ²⁹ However, anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven but is guilty of an eternal sin."

- ³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."
- ³¹ Just then His mother and His brothers came. They stood outside and sent someone to Him to ask Him to come out. ³² A crowd was sitting around Jesus and they told Him, "Look! Your mother, Your brothers and Your sisters are outside, looking for You."
- ³³ He answered them, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" ³⁴ He looked around at those who sat in a circle around Him and said, "Look! Here are My mother and My brothers. ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother."

WHOSE OPINION COUNTS? Sermon for the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost, 2024 Mark 3:20-35

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 3:20-35:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

At one time, "Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told Him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:27–29)." Speaking on behalf of the disciples, <u>Peter correctly</u> identified Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

It would be easy to imagine Jesus asking the same thing today because, from our text, we encounter people expressing an opinion about Him. Actually, our text shows *two* different opinions about Jesus. One is a temporary misunderstanding about Him; the other is a hardened rejection of Him, and both opinions are *negative*.

By extension, what people think about Jesus will also shape their thoughts about His followers. And so today, as we see people expressing these negative views about Jesus, we realise that people will have similar negative views about His followers, which we need to be prepared for. People will say negative things about us. But simultaneously, we shall discover another opinion about Jesus' followers. So the question for us is: Whose opinion should we value more? Whose view do we pay more attention to, because it does make a difference.

The first opinion about Jesus that we find today is that of His own family members. Now, you would think that Jesus' family members would be so proud of Him as He blesses people, heals their diseases, and so on. But no. Here's what Mark records:

"Then Jesus came into the house. The crowd gathered again, so that Jesus and those who were with Him were not even able to eat bread. ²¹ When His family heard about it, they came out to take charge of Him. For they were saying, "He has gone out of His mind!"

His own family says, "**He has gone out of His mind!**" <u>They think He's gone crazy</u>. Jesus is so busy teaching the Word of God, healing diseases, delivering people from demons, and forgiving sins that He doesn't even have time to eat, so His family thinks He's lost His mind. He's gone over the edge. <u>He's acting like a crazy person</u>.

Well, what do you think? Do you think Jesus is out of His mind for taking all this time to do all these things? He's eager to help others, to put them and their problems first. A normal person doesn't do that. Jesus ought to slow down, take it easy and think of Himself. He shouldn't go overboard on this religious business. That's what many people today would say, isn't it? Well, they were saying that back then, too. "He has gone out of His mind!"

But is He? Or is He really in His right mind, and it's others who do not get it? I think that's the case. That's certainly the viewpoint of the Bible. Jesus' mindset is the right one. Jesus had come to do the will of God. He did have in mind the things of God, not the things of men. While man's mindset is to serve oneself, to look out for number 1, and to have your best life now, Jesus' mindset was different. He said so Himself, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross - knowing that that is what it would take to accomplish the mission on which He was sent, to redeem sinful mankind and to usher in the kingdom of God, and that meant bestowing the blessings of the kingdom even early on in His ministry - preaching, teaching, healing, casting out demons, forgiving sins - the very things He is busy doing in our text for today. There is no doubt Jesus is in His right mind, very much so!

But His family members don't get that, at least not yet. The Apostle John reports in his gospel that at this time, "not even His brothers believed in Him" (John 7:5). Of course, that would change later on. Jesus' brothers would believe in Him and come to faith. In fact, a couple of them, James and Jude, would become prominent leaders in the early church. But not yet. At this time, they are still operating with the mindset of the world, and so they think Jesus is acting a bit silly in the head.

By extension, if people think this way about Jesus, they will likely think similar thoughts about Jesus' followers, which continues even today. Maybe you've experienced some of this. Maybe even from members of your own family. Have people ever thought you're a bit crazy for spending so much time at church? Do they think you've gone a little overboard on religion? Do they look at you a bit funny

because you're not available for other activities on Sunday mornings, whatever they may be, because you reserve that time on Sunday mornings for God?

See, people today who don't get it may say the same thing about you as they said about Jesus: "He has gone out of His mind!" "She is way too much into religion." But see, this is just a way for them to distance themselves from the call of God on their lives. God would also call them to repentance and faith, but that can make people uncomfortable. And you remind them of that. So, they may have some negative opinions about you. Well, get used to it. It comes with the territory. So be it.

The first opinion we find in our text directed toward Jesus, which can also apply to His followers, is "He has gone out of His mind!" The second opinion about Jesus that is expressed is even more hostile. "The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem began to say, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "It is by the ruler of the demons that He is driving out the demons."

"He is possessed by Beelzebul," or, in other words, "He is demon-possessed." These opponents were accusing Jesus of being in league with the devil himself. They are really grasping at straws here. To imagine that Jesus can cast out demons by being given power by the devil - as though this is some subtle trickery Jesus is doing to deceive people, just doesn't make any sense on the face of it. Jesus says so: "How can Satan cast out Satan?" and so on.

No, the truth is that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. He came to tie up the strong man and to plunder his possessions. He came to deliver poor souls from the devil's oppression and to bring them over into the kingdom of God.

Dear friends, Jesus has delivered you from the domain of darkness and the devil and transferred you, brought you over, into the kingdom of light and life. How has Christ done this? *By stomping on the devil's head, even as Satan struck Him in the heel*. In other words, by the cross. Those nail-scarred feet bear testimony to the devil's bite when Jesus was nailed to the cross. But at the same time, Jesus was delivering the death-blow to the devil's head, winning our forgiveness and undoing death, precisely by His sacrificial death on our behalf.

When Jesus said, "It is finished," it really was. The devil's end, his crushing defeat, was accomplished. The goal had been reached. Satan has no more room to make accusations against you because Jesus' blood has forgiven your sin. And with sins forgiven, death is undone. The risen Christ holds the keys of death and Hades. Jesus is the stronger man who has tied up the strong man, the devil, and plundered his house. Forgiveness, freedom, and final resurrection are yours in Christ.

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¹Colossians 1:13

So despite these negative evaluations of Jesus, and likewise about His followers, there is one opinion we haven't considered yet, and that is Jesus' opinion of those who come to listen to Him.

We read in our text: "³¹ Just then His mother and His brothers came. They stood outside and sent someone to Him to ask Him to come out. ³² A crowd was sitting around Jesus and they told Him, "Look! Your mother, Your brothers and Your sisters are outside, looking for You."

³³ He answered them, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" ³⁴ He looked around at those who sat in a circle around Him and said, "Look! Here are My mother and My brothers. ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother."

Now, it is Jesus' opinion about His followers - that is the only opinion that counts. That is the One we should pay attention to. This is the One we should put stock in and heed - what Jesus says about us, not what the world says about us. And what Jesus says is that those people who come to listen to Him, to gather around Him, to be ministered to by Him - Jesus says of us: "Here are My mother and My brothers."

35 Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother."

It's like what Jesus said about Mary of Bethany when she sat at His feet and listened to His gracious words. Jesus told her she had chosen the one thing needful, the better part.² Likewise, here in our text, Jesus commends those who gather around Him to hear His voice, and He calls them His family, His brothers and sisters.

Yes, Jesus is saying that about you today - about you, me, and all of us who are gathered here to receive the gifts Jesus has for us and to listen to His voice. That is God's will for us; that is His good and gracious will: that we come to Jesus to hear and believe and be saved, for He has the words of eternal life.

So, when we do come here and receive from our Saviour, Jesus says we are really His true family. He calls us His brothers and sisters. I'd say that's pretty good. And quite frankly, I'd put more stock in what Jesus says than in what the world says. Why? Because His Word is truth! Amen.

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

² Luke 10:42

PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we praise You for creating all things by Your power, and for sustaining the earth and all who live on it. Let us never forget Your witness to Yourself in Your creation.

Father, we praise You for revealing Yourself to us in Your Word, and for showing us Your holy will. We thank You for the inspired writers of Your wise and true Word, for through them You have shown us Your forgiving love and given us rich promises that give us hope. We praise You for Your grace in Christ Jesus, by which You have provided us our escape from Your judgment on our disobedience. Pour out Your Spirit on us so that we may grow in knowing You.

We praise You for leading us from death to life through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Your Son. By Your love for us, move us to love You and those about us with a love that isn't mere words, but that is real and active. Give us sympathetic hearts for those in need, that we may share with them the things You have given us. Grant that through our love they may learn to know Your love and praise You.

We thank You that You have prepared salvation for all people, and that through the Gospel You invite all to Your kingdom. Give us opportunities to pass on Your invitation to salvation to people whom we meet in our lives, that they also may respond to Your mercy with thankful hearts. Send forth Your messengers into every corner of our world, so that the lost may rejoice in Your mercy.

Almighty Lord, guide all to whom You have given authority in our country. Bless our society with pure motives, noble goals, and moral strength. Give all Australians the desire to live before You in loving trust and obedience. Frustrate any attempts to silence Your Word or to cast it aside.

Bless our homes, and make them places of true learning and love, that all who live in them may find peace and joy in harmony with You and with one another. Be the Helper of all who in fear and doubt. Remind them of Your gracious love and care for them.

We pray for Your special protection and help for the sick, the sorrowful, the aged, and the lonely. We pray especially for those in our congregation who are unwell. Comfort all who have suffered material loss, and the loss of dear ones. Meet their needs with Your mercy, and show them the wonderful things You have prepared for all Your children.

Father, hear our prayers, and if there is anything else we should have asked for, grant it for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has saved us, and pleads for us. Amen.

Article: You'll Be My People; I'll Be Your God

As we know from the Old Testament, the Israelites often behaved badly. Even though they were set apart to be God's own possession, they would get tied up in worshipping pagan gods. Needless to say, the Lord God would then use neighbouring nations to discipline Israel. At one time, it was the nation of Babylon that disciplined Israel.

Now, during the severe discipline, the Lord God would often speak wonderful Gospel promises to the people of Israel. (And so, do not let anyone try to convince you that the Old Testament is just full of Law and not Gospel.) One such example of the profound Gospel spoken to the people of Israel and Judah is written in Ezekiel 36:22-28. Look up this passage for yourselves, but here it is paraphrased. Listen to what the Lord God promises, "For here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's Godwilled, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You'll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You'll be my people! I'll be your God!"

Now, one thing that is important to notice is this: who is going to do this? Who is going to accomplish all of this? Who is going to make this happen? The nations of Israel and Judah? No! It is the Lord God who will do this. In fact, as you look through this whole section of the Book of Ezekiel, God uses the first person "I" some 34 times to talk about how He is going to deliver them, cleanse them, cause them to walk in His commands, and so forth. And so, make no mistake about it, our Lord God is active, mighty, and powerful to cleanse sins, give new hearts, and transform minds. In fact, when one reads the verses of Ezekiel Chapter 36, it is quite difficult not to see this as a prophecy speaking of New Testament Baptisms.

How so? In Holy Baptism, you are not taken out of Babylon but taken out of the Kingdom of Darkness. Furthermore, in baptism, you are sprinkled clean, given a new heart, and given the Holy Spirit so that you will not be alone but have God. In baptism, you become God's own possession. And like the words from the Old Testament book of Ezekiel, baptism is not your work but the work of God to you and upon you.

There is a problem, though. Every generation tries to dim the Gospel's brightness because it seems too good to be true. Furthermore, one of the fundamental problems within Australian Christianity is that we have this peculiar notion that we are masters and commanders of our spiritual destiny. We hold to the idea that we have a free will. And so, when the Gospel is presented as too bright and too good - when the Gospel is presented as too onesided, well... we protest. When we hear that the Lord God does all the heavy lifting and leaves nothing for us, we get agitated because that kind of Gospel leaves no room for us to get our foot in the door. It leaves no room for us to participate in our salvation and contribute our best efforts. Perhaps we function this way because a foreign dictator has never ruled us. In other words, it is easy to believe that we can do whatever we want when we want when we've never truly felt what it is like to be trapped under another person's thumb. We've never been deported to a foreign pagan country to live under that country's language, customs, and power. In other words, our nation's spirituality can be quite cocky and arrogant; we tend to show off our so-called free will, as if we have done mighty things before God by our own reason and strength.

But the fact of the matter is this: even though we live with tremendous freedom in Australia – at least for the time being – spiritually speaking, we are no different than Israelites of the Old Testament living under a foreign ruler. For example, apart from the Lord God's intervention in our lives, we are spiritually blind, stumbling in sin within the Kingdom of Darkness. Apart from the Lord God, our hearts are like stone – actually, it is much worse than that – apart from the Lord God, our hearts are in open rebellion against God and His divine statutes. Apart from the Lord God, we cannot and will not believe in God, obey God, or abide in the Lord God, which is the reason why the Lord God has to first act upon you and me.

And so, the point is this, we Christians should be able to say with bold confidence: "If it were not for the Lord God almighty intervening in my life, I would be nothing but a poor miserable damned sinner in the foreign Kingdom of Darkness destined to a hell that I deserve." And we should be able to go on and say, "But the Lord God snatched me from the Kingdom of Darkness, washed me, forgave me of my sins, gave me His Spirit, and made me His own. He had every reason not to do this, yet He did this for me – the chief of sinners. And for that, I am forever grateful. I do not deserve this and

certainly cannot take any credit for it. I was dead, but now I am alive. I was blind, but now I see. I was deaf, but now I hear."

But it does not stop there. Since the Lord God not only cleansed you, gave you His Holy Spirit, and delivered holy impulses to you but also caused you to walk in His Word, all the good that you are permitted to give and receive does not belong to your reason or your strength but to the Lord's grace. Never forget that the Lord God has made you holy through His Word and Sacraments and then prepares good works for you to walk in. Indeed, never forget that you abide in Him as His work of art. And so, everything good in your life – the good that you are able to give and receive, the food that you eat, the shelter you rest under, the clothes you wear, and the protection you have are all a sheer gift to you because of the Father's divine goodness.

While there is much that we may have earned in this life – our educational degrees, our salary, our homes, our reputations, our wisdom, our pensions, and so forth – all of this is only possible because the Lord God has been gracious to you and me. All of this is a sheer gift that we have been given, for if the Lord were to withdraw His gracious hand for even a moment, all would perish – all would fall away.

Indeed, Ezekiel 36:22-28 is profound good news. The Lord God cleanses His people. He removes the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh. He delivers His Spirit, rescues, and claims, and it is no different for you and me today. Everything that you have been given is a sheer gift, not a reward for your faithfulness, not a prize for your generous disposition, and not a medal for your heroic prayer life. Instead, the Lord God restored you to a right relationship with Him through baptising you into the life, death, and resurrection of His beloved Son because of His rich mercy and abundant grace. This is the Good News of the Gospel that Ezekiel proclaims to you and me this day.

Children's Message:

Sometimes you just have to believe even when you can't see something. Our Second Reading for today came from 2 Corinthians. And in that reading from 2 Corinthians, Paul said that we don't look to the things that we can see but to the things that we can't see.

Have any of you ever seen Jesus in person? Right here, face to face? I never have. I haven't shaken His hand. I haven't talked to Him face to face. No one here this morning has ever actually seen Jesus. You haven't either. But we're all here to worship Him. We believe He's here with us even though we can't see Him, because in His Word, the Bible, He tells us He is.

Sometimes believing Jesus is with us is hard, though. What are some of the saddest times you can think of? Maybe losing a friend, getting sick, getting hurt, or because someone you love has died. We know Jesus loves us, and so sometimes we think, "If Jesus loves me, and if Jesus is here, He wouldn't let sad stuff like this happen to me." So when things like these do happen, we wonder if Jesus is still with us.

But He is! How many of you have sung the song "Jesus Loves Me! This I Know"? Remember these words?

Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong.



We all have Bibles. Can you remember some things the Bible says about how Jesus loves us? Especially when the Bible tells us of Jesus dying on the cross and then rising again - that has to be one of the things we remember most! Jesus is alive! Even though we can't see Him, He is with us always, even when sad things happen. He is strong when we are weak. He takes good care of us.

I believe that. I'm sure you do, too. When you are felling a little sad, remember, "Jesus loves me! This I know."

Thank You Jesus for caring for me. When I feel sad, remind me again of just how much You love me! Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

16 June 4 Pentecost	23 June 5 Pentecost	30 June 6 Pentecost
8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 16 June		
READINGS: Ezekiel 17:22-24	4; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10;	Mark 4:26-34
HYMNS: 507 564 267 (79 293) 511		
	Sunday, 23 June	
READINGS: Job 38:1-11;	2 Corinthians 6:1-13;	Mark 4:35-41
HYMNS: 147 524 865 (54	842) 616	
Sunday, 30 June		
READINGS: Lamentations 3:2	22-33; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 1	3-15; Mark 5:21-43
HYMNS: 462 68 368 (416	330) 427	

Tuesday, 11 June, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Trinity Oakey. Opening devotion: Barry.

Saturday, 22 June, 7:00pm. YAY (Young Adults and Youth) is on at Aubigny. All young adults and youth are invited to attend. Please bring your Bible and something for supper. The hall will be open for games and socialising from 6:30pm.

BIBLE STUDIES for JUNE:

Wednesday 19 June, 7.30pm at Greenwood.

Thursday 20 June, 10.00am at Lowood.

Sunday 23 June, after service at Marburg.

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