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

11th August Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 308 771 530 289 290 451

INTROIT: Psalm 34:1-8

Let me bless the LORD at all times; His praise will continually be in my mouth.

My soul will boast about the LORD; humble people will hear it and rejoice.

Magnify the LORD with me, and together let us exalt His name. I have been seeking the LORD, and He has answered me, and has delivered me from all my horrors.

People have looked to Him and have been radiant, and their faces have not been ashamed.

This poor man called out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them.

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who seeks refuge in Him.

COLLECT:

Gracious Father, Your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread, which gives life to the world. Grant that Christ, the bread of life, may live in us and we in Him, 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: 1 Kings 19:1-8	Elijah fed by God.
Ephesians 4:17-5:2	Be imitators of God.
John 6:35-51	Jesus the Bread of life.

1 Kings 19:1-8

¹ Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and especially that he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah saying, "May the gods deal severely with me and even worse than that if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like the life of one of them!"

³ When he was aware of this, Elijah set out and fled for his life. He came to Beer-Sheba, which belongs to Judah and left his servant there. ⁴ Elijah himself went into the wilderness a day's journey. He came and sat down under a broom tree and asked that he might die. He said: "It is enough now, LORD. Take away my life! For I am no better than my fathers."

⁵ He lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Then suddenly an angel was there, touching him. He told him: "Get up and eat!"

⁶ When Elijah looked, there, near his head, was a bread-cake on hot stones and a jar of water. So, he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him. He said: "Get up and eat! Otherwise your journey will be too much for you."

⁸ Elijah got up and ate and drank. Then, on the energy from that food, he travelled for forty days and forty nights, as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

¹⁷ So, I tell you and call on you in the Lord, not to live any longer like the Gentiles. Their minds are set on worthless things. ¹⁸ Their understanding is darkened. Their natural state of ignorance, caused by their closed minds, has made them strangers to the life that God gives. ¹⁹ Having become callous, they have given themselves over to a life of lust, to practise every kind of vice with a constant desire for more. ²⁰ However, that is not what you learned when you came to know Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus. ²² You were taught to strip off your old self, which follows your former ways of living and ruins you, as it follows the desires that deceive you. ²³ Instead, you were taught to be continually renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, which is created to be like God, truly righteous and holy. ²⁵ Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and **speak** the truth to his neighbour! For we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angrv without sinning! Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the Devil a foothold! ²⁸ He who has been stealing must not steal any longer! Instead, he must work hard, doing something good with his own hands, that he may have something to share with anyone in need!

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is helpful for building others up where they need it, that it may impart grace to those who listen! ³⁰ Do not grieve God's Holy Spirit, by whom you were sealed for the day when you will be set free! ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander, along with every way of hurting one another! ³² Be kind to one another and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you!

^{5:1} Therefore, imitate God, as His dearly loved children, ² and live in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us as a "**fragrant offering and sacrifice**" to God!

John 6:35-51

³⁵ Jesus told them, "I am the Bread of life. The person who comes to Me will certainly not be hungry and the person who believes in Me will certainly never be thirsty. ³⁶ However, I have told you both that you have seen Me and that you do not believe. ³⁷ Everything that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and I shall certainly not cast out the person who comes to Me, ³⁸ because I have come down from heaven, not that I may do My will but the will of Him who has sent Me. ³⁹ This is also the will of the One who has sent Me, that I should not lose anything of what He has given Me, but that I should raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and that I should raise him on the last day."

⁴¹ The Jews therefore grumbled because He said, "I am the Bread that has come down from heaven." ⁴² They asked, "Is this not Jesus, Joseph's son, whose father and mother we know? How can He now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus answered them, "Stop grumbling among yourselves! ⁴⁴ A person can come to Me only if the Father, who has sent Me, draws him, and I shall raise him on the last day. ⁴⁵ The prophets wrote: '**God will teach everyone**.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father. Only He who comes from God has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I tell you, the one who believes in Me has eternal life.

⁴⁸ "I am the Bread of Life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. ⁵⁰ This is the Bread coming down from heaven, that anyone may eat from it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live for ever, and the Bread that I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the world."

JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE Sermon for the 12th Sunday after Pentecost 2024 John 6:35-51

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 John 6:35-51:

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. Dear friends in Christ,

In John 6, Jesus declares several times that He is the Bread of life. Last week, we heard Jesus say, "*My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*" (John 6:32-33). And then He said, in the verse that concluded last week's Gospel and also begins today's, Jesus says, "I am the Bread of life. The person who comes to Me will certainly not be hungry and the person who believes in Me will certainly never be thirsty."

Now, why does Jesus use this phrase, "**the Bread of life**"? Well, keep in mind that Jesus had just miraculously fed a multitude of thousands of hungry people from just <u>five loaves of bread and two fish</u>. So, bread was on everybody's mind. Jesus wanted to direct those minds from not just the bread that fills the belly for a day but, more than that, to the <u>Bread that gives life to both body and soul for eternity</u> because that is the gift that Jesus had to give. Even today, He comes to us today, giving this Bread of life. It is something that we need, and Jesus gives it.

Jesus begins today by telling the crowd, "I am the Bread of life." Why does Jesus use the word 'bread'? *Because across all cultures, bread is universally seen as the staple of life*. It is that which gives life and sustains life. Without bread, which is kind of a shorthand for food in general - without bread, without food, without sustenance, we die. It's true in the *physical realm*. And when Jesus applies this term to Himself, it's true in the *spiritual realm* as well. Without the Bread of life, that is, without Jesus, <u>we die</u>. And it would be death forever, *apart from Christ*.

Therefore, we need the life that Jesus gives more than anything else in the world. Jesus is the only one who can give us this life and sustain it. That is why He says, "I am the Bread of life. The person who comes to Me will certainly not be hungry and the person who believes in Me will certainly never be thirsty."

This is why Jesus comes. He says, "I have come down from heaven, not that I may do My will but the will of Him who has sent Me." Note that and mark it well. Jesus Christ came down from heaven to do the will of His heavenly Father. This tells us that Jesus *is* the very Son of God, the eternal Son of God from before the foundation of the world, who at a certain point in human history came down from heaven and became incarnate, became one of us, in the flesh, for us men and for our salvation.

Sadly, the crowd back then didn't get it. They could only think of this man Jesus as the person who had grown up in the home of Joseph and Mary. How could He say, "I have come down from heaven"? But <u>that is the mystery of the incarnation</u>. And only God can reveal Jesus to us as the divine Saviour sent from heaven. Jesus says as much: "A person can come to Me only if the Father, who has sent Me, draws him." This happens as God's Word works repentance and faith in hearts so that we know we need a Saviour and discover that Jesus is the very one who meets that need. God's Word is at work in our hearts so that we know and feel our sins, recognise our need for forgiveness, and hear that Jesus gives us just that.

"I am the Bread of Life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. ⁵⁰ This is the Bread coming down from heaven, that anyone may eat from it and not die," Jesus says.

We can know and eat the best and healthiest food in the world. We can go on diets while eating high-fibre, whole-grain, and heart-healthy foods. We can even go gluten-free, but it doesn't matter. One day, we are all still going to die. What then? As the Apostle Paul asks, "*Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" (Romans 7:24).

Who will do this? <u>Jesus</u>. He's the one. "I am the Bread of Life," He says. That's why He came. And how does He give us this life? How does He meet our greatest need? Jesus tells us: "The Bread that I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the world." Jesus gives life to the world by giving His life for the world. This is the heart of the Gospel. Jesus gives His life, so that you and I and the rest of the world may have life.

Jesus did this on the cross, of course. There, He offered the perfect sacrifice that covers the sins of the whole world. "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*," John the Baptist proclaimed (John 1:29). This is God's supreme solution to our deepest and most pressing problem: our sin, which results in death and eternal damnation, under God's judgment. Jesus takes all that from

<u>us</u>. He gives His flesh into death, taking our place under that judgment. He lifts that load off our shoulders and takes it on His own. In His flesh, in His body on the cross, He bore our sins. And by His blood, the holy precious blood He shed on our behalf, our sins are forgiven. Cleansed. No longer held against us. Jesus atones for them all. We are free, at peace with God, for Christ's sake. Believe it. It's true. It's the truest and most freeing thing you'll ever hear.

And what is the result? Now we have life. New life. Eternal life. Jesus says, "I am the Bread of life. The person who comes to Me will certainly not be hungry and the person who believes in Me will certainly never be thirsty." And again: "everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life." And again: "I am the living Bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live for ever."

Everlasting life. How good does that sound? Well, if it were just an endless continuation of the heartaches and sorrows, we suffer now in this vale of tears, <u>that would not be so great</u>. But the life that Jesus gives is much better than that. It will be life with no more tears, sorrow, sin or death. This is the eternal life that Jesus gives, and we have the sure hope of it <u>even now</u>.

We even get a tantalising taste of it now, in the blessings Jesus showers upon us: That we know God *now*. That we have the joy of the Lord *now*. *Now*, we have the peace that passes all understanding, standing guard over our hearts and minds. We have a new ability to love and forgive others now, to put off the old self and to put on the new self, and to walk in love, as we heard Paul speak about in our Second Reading today from Ephesians. Sealed with the Holy Spirit, dearly loved children of our heavenly Father, and new persons in Christ. <u>All this belongs to</u> the new life we have now, the life Christ freely gives us.

And this is the life that will overcome the grave. The body we lay in the grave will rise one day, on the day when Christ returns, that is, on the Last Day. Notice how Jesus repeats this promise in today's reading. He says: "This is also the will of the One who has sent Me, that I should not lose anything of what He has given Me but that I should raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and that I should raise him on the last day." And again Jesus says: "A person can come to Me only if the Father, who has sent Me, draws him, and I shall raise him on the last day."

Did you catch that? Several times: "I shall raise him on the last day." Jesus here is talking about the bodily resurrection on the day when He returns. Our physical bodies will be raised up glorious, perfect, and no longer subject to disease or death. When? On the Last Day. This is our great hope: the return of Christ and the resurrection of the body. That is what we confess in the Creed. We believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."

The Bible teaches, throughout, the physical, bodily resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, and these repeated promises of Jesus in our text today are prime examples. Jesus will raise and give life to our dead bodies on the Last Day, which in turn will be the first day of our new life everlasting in a restored creation, a renewed heaven and earth where righteousness will be at home. We shall dwell with God, and see God, along with all the saints from ages past, all the believers of all time, in perfect fellowship and harmony and superabundant joy! What a hope! What a thing to look forward to! This is the life that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has won for us and given to us, <u>purely out of His grace and mercy</u>. Trust in Jesus. The gift is yours.

"I am the Bread of life. The person who comes to Me will certainly not be hungry and the person who believes in Me will certainly never be thirsty." Here is Jesus' promise for you today. It is a promise made by our Saviour, and as we all know, *Jesus always keeps His promises*. Amen.

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

The Lord's Supper has <u>always</u> been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, <u>they thereby declare that they believe that they are one in faith</u> <u>with those who commune with them</u>. Since people cannot honestly hold two differing confessions at the same time, they cannot honestly commune with those whose confession is in conflict with their own. If any do this nevertheless, they deny their own confession, and so deny Christ Himself (2 Cor. 6:14-18). We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with the AELC, or are not familiar with the *AELC Statement of Faith*, to refrain from communing today. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor after service.

PRAYER FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Lord God, we rejoice that we are Your children because of Your constant love and mercy. We are what we are purely by Your grace. You have made us Your own, and fulfilled all Your rich promises to us. You give power and strength to Your people. Therefore hear our prayers as we come to You, not in our own name or goodness, but in the name and by the merits of Jesus Christ.

We praise You for the glorious Gospel of Your grace. We rejoice to know that You have kept Your word by sending Your Son Jesus Christ when the right time came, to give His flesh, and to rise again on the third day so that through Him we may never taste death.

We thank You for the apostles' sure witness to Christ's resurrection in Your holy Word, on which our faith can stand firm. Fill us with love and faith in our risen Lord, so that we may live in a joy that words cannot fully express, and that we may confidently wait for eternal fellowship with You in the life to come.

Give us Your Spirit's power to remain strong in our faith, in spite of all the doubt and ridicule of our age. Keep us each day in repentance for sin, in humble reliance on Your mercy, and in the peace of Your forgiveness. Give us such love for You that we may devote our whole lives to serving You in cheerful obedience.

Pour Your Holy Spirit's power on the Church, that it may take Your Gospel to others, and proclaim Jesus Christ to them as their only hope of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Defend Your Church from its enemies and from all false teaching, that it may know no other Gospel than the one You gave it once and for all.

We pray for our country. Give us leaders in all walks of life who respect Your commandments, promote what is good, and oppose what is evil, so that our citizens may live in harmony, peace, and uprightness, and show concern for the good of all.

We pray for our homes. Give all parents a burning desire to teach their children to know, love, and respect You in Jesus Christ. Enable all families to live together in peace, love, and true wisdom. Forgive all our shortcomings, and break down hardened hearts.

Hear the prayers of the suffering, the bereaved, the needy, the homeless, the wounded, the worried, and the despairing. Lead them in mercy out of all that distresses them. Deliver us from every evil of body and soul, and at our last hour mercifully take us from the troubles of this life to Yourself in heaven.

Give us these things, O Father, and whatever else is necessary for us, in the name of Jesus, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Beware of False Prophets

At one point in His Beatitudes, Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets! They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ferocious wolves.¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. People do not pick grapes from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles, do they?¹⁷ In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.²⁰ Therefore, you will know them by their fruits.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father, who is in heaven. ²² Many will ask Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, in Your name driven out demons, and in Your name performed many miracles?' ²³ Then I shall tell them frankly, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who do what is evil!' (Matthew 7:15-23).

Jesus reminds us that we must be on the alert for false prophets.

But do we really need to be 'that' alert; after all, we are good and wise Christians. Do we really need to be 'that' attentive; after all, wouldn't we consider that the AELC is one, if not, the most conservative Lutheran Church in Australia?

Aren't things going okay for us? We don't have much to argue about or to wrestle with. Everything appears to be running smoothly. Besides, don't we have a pastor who is on the alert for any false doctrine that would try to embed itself in our church? Surely, no catastrophe will come upon us. All will be well with us - no need to sound the alarm and get people too worked up and too intense.

We must understand that it is this kind of mindset that leads to the destruction of the church. You see, a lazy, apathetic, and naive mindset, as we just described, is not only what has led to the destruction of many churches over the ages, but it is also what has led to the destruction of many modern-day churches. You see, Jesus does not say, "All of you Christians, beware of false prophets, that is, unless you are a part of the AELC. If you are a part of the AELC, you don't have to take My words too seriously."

The call of Jesus to be aware of false teachers has no exception clause. It is a call for all Christians of all generations and various churches to beware of false teachers. It is a call for every single person - regardless of age, status, or sex - to be alert to false preachers peddling poisonous theology.

False prophets come into churches without an invitation or respect for a church's doctrine. They come uninvited. They just show up, and they spare no one. That is how false doctrine works. It works like yeast - it is small and tiny, but through time, it leavens the whole lump. It spreads and takes over churches, often without being noticed.

Furthermore, false prophets don't care about what the church calls itself (for example, the AELC) or as solid as it may be. They don't care about a conservative confession of a church as steadfast as it may be. They simply don't care. In fact, false prophets can come right out of the pews and pulpits of existing churches. That is right; false prophets can come right out of our seminaries, pulpits, and pews - from within the walls of the church. And so, this is why Jesus tells you and me to beware of false prophets.

But again, (truth be told), Jesus's words ruin things for you and me. Bluntly stated, we often want the church to be at ease. In other words, we naturally desire to see the church as a friendly place of safety, security, and ease.

Now, safety, security, and friendships are certainly not bad, and they do occur in the church. However, please hear this loud and clear: the church is not primarily a social group, resort, or club - it is not the church at ease. Instead, the church has always been and always will be the church militant. The church is always at war. The church is always under threat and always will be.

And so, just as there is safety inside the walls of a castle, with the King, there is safety and security within the church because the church is the bride of King Jesus. But again, because there is safety and security within the church, this does not mean that we are at ease. Never forget that the devil always seeks to kill, steal, and destroy your faith. The ideologies of the world are always opposed to the church. And to boot, false prophets come to deliberately and cleverly twist the truth of God's Word. Wretched doctrine always seeps into the church to replace the Word of Truth. This is why Jesus tells you and me to be alert, attentive, and mindful of false prophets.

Churches at ease will 'not' exist 50 years from now. They won't make it. A church at ease is like a house built upon sand - unaware that it is founded upon shifting sands. Typically, a church at ease is more consumed with petty squabbling, gossip, and complaints within the church and community than it is with being alert for false teaching. And so, like a house built on the sand, a church at ease will not stand but fall when the waves and winds of false doctrine slam against it.

Therefore, we are not to be a church at ease, for Christ has not called us unto apathy, laziness, and foolishness. Instead, we are His militant church. He has called us to be aware of false prophets and wretched theology that may invade the church and lead us away from the simple message of Christ-crucified.

Children's Message:

Were you listening to our story about Elijah in the First Reading? Do you remember who Elijah is? Remember how God gave Elijah a great victory over the false prophets of Baal. But in the story we read today, it didn't sound like Elijah was very happy. After his great victory over the false prophets, the wicked Queen Jezebel sent him a message to say that she was going to put him to death.

Do you know what Elijah did? He ran away! He ran as far away as he could. He even ran out into the middle of the desert, all alone. And finally, he fell down under a tree and he prayed. And do you know what he said? "*It is enough now, LORD. Take away my life! For I am no better than my fathers*" (1 kings 19:4). Well, he must have felt rather bad!

Let's think a little more about Elijah's prayer.

When you learn to ride a bike, you will often stumble and fall. You may even fall off and skin your knees! Perhaps you get so frustrated trying to learn to ride that you say, "Enough!" You have had enough of falling off your bike and the pain that goes with skint knees.



But there is also another time when you might say, "Enough!" Let's say your favourite food is ice cream.



You sit down and eat a whole bowl. But every time you empty the bowl, it keeps getting filled back up. Eventually, you are so full from eating that you have to say, "Enough!" This time, though, you don't say "Enough" because you are sad, but because you are very happy that you have eaten all the ice cream you can handle!

I know sometimes you're sad, like when you fall off your bike. And you may say you've had enough and you don't want bad feelings anymore. But do you know when we all feel like the child eating all that ice cream? When we remember that Jesus took all bad things onto Himself. We remember that Jesus took our sin and our sadness and our guilt and our death on Himself, and He died for us. And that means we have a whole new life! Do you know how much good Jesus is giving us now? So much that we can't even count it! We say, "*That's enough, Lord Jesus! What you've done for us is all that I need!*"

Thank You, Jesus, for fulfilling Your mission to save me. You have done enough for me, and now heaven belongs to me. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

18 August 13 Pentecost	25 August 14 Pentecost	1 September 15 Pentecost
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 LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG LR
Sunday, 18 August		
READINGS: Proverbs 9:1-10	Ephesians 5:6-21;	John 6:51-69
HYMNS: 499 357 364 (839 291) 416		
Sunday, 25 August		
READINGS: Isaiah 29:11-19;	Ephesians 5:22-33;	Mark 7:1-13
HYMNS: 464 259 266 152	2	
Sunday, 1 September		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:	1-2, 6-9; Ephesians 6:10-20;	Mark 7:14-23
HYMNS: 520 329 326 458		

Tuesday, 13 August, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Aubigny. Opening devotion: Don.

Saturday, August 24, 7.00pm, YAY (Young Adults and Youth) is on at Aubigny. The hall will be open for games and socialising from 6:30pm. All young adults and youth are most welcome to attend. Please remember to bring your Bible and something for supper.

Pastor is taking holidays from August 19 to September 2. If there is an emergency during this time, please contact your elders.

There will be NO Bible Studies through August.