

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

15 July 2018

Bulletin for the 8th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 465 149 271 315 335 459

INTROIT: Let me hear what God the LORD says, for He promises peace to His people, to His devout people. But let them not go back to self-confidence.

Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

Truth will sprout up from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven.

The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its produce.

Righteousness will go before Him that it may make His footsteps our pathway.

Psalm 85:8-13

COLLECT: O God, whose unfailing nurture provides for everything in heaven and earth, take away from us whatever is harmful, and give us whatever leads to our spiritual well-being; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Supper has always 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, they thereby declare that they believe that they are one in faith with those who commune with them. 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.**

READINGS: Amos 7:7-15 Amos and Amaziah.

Ephesians 1:3-14 God praised for His secret plan now revealed.

Mark 6:14-29 Herod's opinion about Jesus, and the death of John the Baptist.

SERMON: Ephesians 1:3-14 Why should we praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ! ⁴ For before He made the world, His love led Him to choose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love ⁵ He predestined us to be adopted as His own sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the good pleasure of His will. ⁶ He did this that His glorious grace, which He bestowed on us in His dearly loved Son, might be praised. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, because of God's rich grace. ⁸ He caused His grace to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ when He made known to us the mystery of His will. According to His good pleasure it was His purpose in Christ ¹⁰ to manage everything, both in heaven and on earth, in such a way that, when the right time came, He might summarise all things in Christ. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance. He who carries out everything exactly as His will plans it has predestined us according to His purpose. ¹² He did this that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might praise His glory. ¹³ When you heard the message of the truth, the Good News that you have been saved and when you became believers, you were also sealed in Him by the Holy Spirit, whom God promised. ¹⁴ That Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance until God redeems us to be His very own, that His glory may be praised.

Amos's Vision of the Plumb-line

Our First Reading today from Amos shows him having a vision (Amos's third vision), where the LORD Himself appears, standing next to a wall. To impress the vision on Amos, He asks the prophet what He sees. Amos sees a plumb-line in God's hand. The lead weight that the LORD is holding on a cord shows that the wall, once vertical, has now sagged out of plumb. A careful stonemason or bricklayer would tear it down and start his building over.

The meaning of the vision is clear. The LORD is picturing Himself as a mason laying brick or stone. The wall represents Israel, the people He created to receive His covenant. The plumb-line is His Law, the standard laid down at Mount Sinai for Israel's life as His covenant people. The Law reveals Israel's sin: the people are like a sagging, crooked wall, ready to be torn down. "*I shall not overlook them any longer,*" the LORD says (verse 8).

On their high places throughout the land and in the calf sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan, the people of Israel have been flaunting their unfaithfulness to the LORD. These shrines will be destroyed by the invading Assyrians. Israel's

leader, both in the nation's successful military campaigns and also in the people's abandonment of the Lord's Law, has been Jeroboam II. Therefore, the LORD says, "*I shall use a sword to rise up against the family of Jeroboam,*" (verse 9). Jeroboam's royal line will come to a bloody end.

This time the prophet remains silent and does not intercede for his people. The Lord has measured Israel, found His people wanting, and announced His decision: "*I shall not overlook them any longer*" (verse 8). Amos is not allowed to protest or intercede.

Jeroboam II completed his 41-year reign and died in 753 B.C., a few years after Amos finished his ministry. He was succeeded by his son Zechariah, who also "*did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam [I] son of Nebat,*" (2 Kings 15:9). After a six-month reign, Zechariah was assassinated, and the royal house of Jeroboam II - the dynasty of Jehu - came to its bloody end. No doubt Shallum, Zechariah's assassin, thought that he was acting to carry out his own plan to become the next king of Israel. Actually, his sword carried out the LORD's judgment announced by His prophets Amos and Hosea (Amos 1:4).

"*Through the Law we become conscious of sin,*" the Apostle Paul says (Romans 3:20). Too often God's people forget this first function of the Ten Commandments in their lives. If we live in daily repentance, we will constantly measure what we think, say, and do by the plumb-line of the Lord's law. Such daily self-examination will prevent any kind of self-righteousness, because the outcome will always be the same: our lives are "out of line," like a crooked wall ready to be torn down. Those who think that they can save themselves by keeping God's commandments are insolently asking to have their sinful lives measured by His all-seeing eye against the perfect vertical of His plumb line. His final righteous judgment will not spare them.

How can we escape the Lord's judgment? The perfect life of Jesus Christ fully measured up to His Father's holy standard, and that life was lived for us. When His Spirit gives us faith through Baptism and the Word, God writes down His verdict on the holy, loving life of Christ next to our names. Jesus lived and died in our place "*so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God,*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "*There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,*" (Romans 8:1).

Welcome to all worshipping with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!
 Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.
 Email him at paziebell@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.

COMING SERVICES

22 July 9 Pentecost	29 July 10 Pentecost	5 August
8.00am TMBA Bible Study and 9.00am HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC	10.00am Parish Service OAK HC	8.30am TMBA HC 8.30am OAK LR 9.30am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC
Sunday, 22 July		
READINGS: Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-44		
HYMNS: 391 191 188 (286 290) 511		
Sunday, 29 July		
READINGS: Genesis 9:8-17; Ephesians 3:14-21; Mark 6:45-56		
HYMNS: 517 854 151 320 287 513		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 17 July, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening Devotion: Gavin.

Saturday, **28 July**, 10.00am. Meeting at Troys Road to look at and discuss the AELC Rules as requested by the Minden congregation. Please make sure that each congregation has a representative present.

Bible Studies:

Friday, 20 July, 7.30pm GRN

Sunday, 22 July TMBA

Friday, 27 July, 7.30pm OAK/AUB