

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

22 August 2021

13th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 147 259 197 266

INTROIT: The fool has been saying in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt. They have been acting abominably. There is no one who does good. The LORD has been looking down from heaven on the descendants of Adam to see if there is anyone who understands and who seeks God. Everyone has turned aside. Together they have become corrupt. There is no one who does good. There is not even one.

Have all evildoers no knowledge? They devour my people as if they were devouring food. They have not been calling on the LORD.

There they have been trembling in terror. For God is with the generation of righteous people.

You people frustrate the plan of the poor person, but the LORD is his refuge. If only the salvation of Israel would come from Zion! When the LORD turns back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice! Let Israel be glad!

Psalm 14

COLLECT: Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error, that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Isaiah 29:-11-19 "They honour Me with their lips, while their hearts are far from Me."

Ephesians 5:22-33 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Mark 7:1-13 Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees.

SERMON: Mark 7:1-13 DIRTY HANDS, CLEAN HEARTS

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

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

Only blind fools do not cry for mercy

Contrary to what you may think, mankind loves living in darkness more than light. This means that mankind likes blindness more than being able to see. And so, contrary to what you may think, mankind feels comfortable being blind. When we are blind, we cannot see, and when we cannot see, we are then able to turn a blind eye to things that bother us.

But what is even more comfortable than being blind is this: not knowing that you are blind. That is to say, ignorance is bliss. When a person is blind - and they don't know they are blind - they are comfortable. It is quite calm when a person is able to be blind to their sins and oblivious to the realities of life. For example, it is quite comforting to be blind to things such as global cyber threats, worldwide sex-trafficking, and worldwide infectious diseases. It is comfortable being blind to numerous abortions conducted in our country every week. It is comfortable being blind to the breakdown of the family and the attacks upon the institution of marriage.

But perhaps the most comfortable thing to turn a blind eye toward is ourselves. Indeed, we do not like to look into the mirror of God's Law to see the reality of our sinfulness. We like to ignore our selfishness, stupidity, and self-absorption. And so, we like being blind - it is easier that way. With blindness, darkness becomes our friend and our reality.

Now, if we are honest, mankind actually fights to stay blind. For example, we turn the disturbing nightly news off when tragedies are reported. We avoid parts of the Bible that make us feel uncomfortable. Churches where the preacher is too blunt, well... the pews are empty. The cry is, "tell me that I am special, give me a trophy, a hug, and pull the covers over my head. Tell me that everything is o.k.! Keep me comfortable in the dark with my eyes closed."

This is the cry of blindness. The spiritually blind love darkness and love their comfort while believing that everything is going to be all right. They do not see reality nor perceive the Kingdom of God.

Considering all of this, though, there is a great irony in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18, where we hear about a blind man named Bartimaeus. He is a beggar on the side of the road. Now, even though Bartimaeus was blind physically, he was not blind spiritually. His eyes were wide open! Even though he was along the side of a road in the dust and shadows that day, he was in the light because he was near Jesus. And his mouth? Well, that was open too. He cried out, "Lord, have mercy!"

You see, Bartimaeus knew that he was not o.k. and that he needed mercy and compassion from Christ.

Have you noticed that we sing the words of blind Bartimaeus every single week in our church services? It is called the 'Kyrie.' When we sing blind Bartimaeus' words, we are acknowledging two simple things. First, we are acknowledging that we are beggars in need, just like Bartimaeus, and second, we are crying out for mercy to Jesus, just like Bartimaeus. We cry out for mercy because we know that Jesus is the only one who can help us.

And so, the point being we are not blind when we cry out for mercy to Christ. We are actually seeing reality when we know that we are a spiritual beggars in need of Christ's mercy.

Unfortunately, though, when the beggarly Christian Church cries out, "Lord have mercy," the rest of the world will often yell back, "Shut up, you weak beggarly fools." You see, just as blind Bartimaeus was rebuked by those around him, we too may be scrutinised, ridiculed, or mocked for our cry of mercy and compassion.

The world does everything it can to believe that it is fine in the dark, but the Kyrie comes along and ruins it all. The blind world says, "I'm o.k.; we're o.k. We are comfortable and can do this on our own."

The Kyrie says, "I'm not o.k.; I am a beggar. I am not comfortable, and I cannot do this on my own. Jesus have mercy on me."

When we sing the Kyrie, we are not upholding the world's darkness. We are not playing to the same tune of the world. We are not stumbling in the world's silly games played at night.

We sing the Kyrie because we have faith. We are not in darkness. Christ opened our eyes of faith when we were baptised out of the darkness and into the light. He opens our eyes of faith again and again and again by His spoken Word. And with our eyes opened, we no longer sit by the side of the road, like an empty-handed beggar, but are ushered to His Holy Supper to receive grace upon grace.

Recover your sight; your faith has made you well! Take and eat; take and drink. You are baptised. You are forgiven. You are not blind in Christ, nor do you belong to the darkness of the world.

Behold Christ; live in reality and rest in the comfort of His forgiveness, life, and salvation, not the blindness of the world.

COMING SERVICES

29 August 14 Pentecost	5 September 15 Pentecost	12 September 16 Pentecost
10.00am OAK HC AELC Service	8.30am OAK LR 8.00am TMBA Bible Study & 9.00am HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.30am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 8.30am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC
Sunday, 29 August		
READINGS: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; Ephesians 6:10-20; Mark 7:14-23		
HYMNS: 498 329 357 177 287 598		
Sunday, 5 September		
READINGS: Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-10; 14-18; Mark 7:24-37		
HYMNS: 505 450 161 (294 291) 430		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR ANY CHANGES TO OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE

Sunday, 29 August. AELC Service at Oakey. Please place your collection in envelopes marked back to your own congregation. Loose offering will go to the parish treasury. Also, please provide something for a shared lunch. A short parish meeting will also be held to discuss the service schedule, plus a couple other minor issues. Copies of the schedule with some ideas were handed out a while ago. If you do not have a copy, it is available in the members section on the AELC website. Other schedule ideas will also be welcomed for discussion on the day.

Bible Studies:

Thursday, 26 August, 10.00am at Lowood.

Friday, 27 August, 7.30pm at Oakey. (Aubigny, Oakey, Greenwood combined).