

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

24 July 2022

7th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 420 421 v:1-4 421 v:5-9 426

INTROIT:

I shall praise You with all my heart; I shall sing praise to You in front of the false gods.

I shall worship toward Your holy temple, and I shall praise Your name, because of Your mercy and because of Your truth. For You have made Your Word great, greater than Your entire name.

In the day when I called You answered me. You made me bold by strengthening my soul.

All the kings of the earth will praise You, O LORD, because they have heard the Words of Your mouth.

May they sing about the Ways of the LORD; for the glory of the LORD is great.

For, though the LORD is on high, He looks upon the lowly. Yet, He knows the haughty person from a distance.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will keep me alive. You will stretch out Your hand against the anger of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.

The LORD will take vengeance to protect me. Your mercy, O LORD, endures for ever. Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Psalm 138

COLLECT: O Lord, let Your merciful ears be attentive to the prayers of Your servants, and by Your Word and Spirit teach us how to pray, that our petitions may be pleasing before You; 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: Genesis 18:17-33 Abraham pleads with the LORD.

Colossians 2:6-19 Be strengthened in your faith as you have been taught.

Luke 11:1-13 Lord, teach us to pray.

Genesis 18:(17-19) 20-33

¹⁷ The LORD said: “Should I hide from Abraham what I am going to do, ¹⁸ since Abraham will certainly become a great and powerful nation, and **all nations of the earth will be blessed in him**? ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his family after him to keep the Way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what He has promised about him.”

²⁰ Then the LORD said: “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is certainly great, and their sin is very serious. ²¹ I shall go down and see whether everything that they have been doing is entirely as bad as the outcry that has come to Me against them. If not, I shall know it.”

²² Then the men turned away from there and went on toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.

²³ Abraham came closer and asked: “Will You really sweep away the innocent person with the guilty person? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty innocent people in the city. Will You really sweep them away? Will You not spare the place for the sake of the fifty innocent people who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing, to kill the innocent person with the guilty person and treat the innocent person and the guilty person alike! Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of the entire earth do what is just?”

²⁶ The LORD said, “If at Sodom I find fifty innocent people in the city, I shall spare the whole place for their sake.”

²⁷ Abraham answered: “Indeed now, although I am only dust and ashes, I have taken it on myself to speak to the LORD: ²⁸ Suppose there are five fewer than fifty innocent people? Will You destroy the whole city because of the five?” He said, “I shall not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

²⁹ Abraham spoke to Him yet again, “Suppose only forty are found there?” He answered, “I shall not do it for the sake of forty.”

³⁰ Then he said, “Please let the Lord not be angry but let me speak! Suppose thirty are found there?”

He answered, “I shall not do it if I find thirty there.”

³¹ He said, “Indeed now, I have taken it on myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there?”

He answered, "I shall not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."

³² He said, "Please let the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more! Suppose only ten are found there?"

He answered, "I shall not destroy it for the sake of the ten."

³³ When the LORD had finished speaking to Abraham, He left, and Abraham returned home.

Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)

⁶ Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him!

⁷ Be rooted and built up in Him and be strengthened in the faith, just as you have been taught, and abound in thanksgiving!

⁸ Beware that no one captures you through philosophy and empty deceit, as he follows human tradition and the basic principles of the world, rather than following Christ. ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

¹⁰ You have also been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In Him you have also been circumcised, by a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sinful nature, by the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² since you were buried with Him by baptism, by which you were also raised with Him, through the faith that is worked by God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ Although you were dead in sins and in your uncircumcised flesh, God has made you alive with Christ, forgiving us all our trespasses. ¹⁴ He has wiped out the written code, with its regulations, which was against us and opposed to us. He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed rulers and authorities and made a public show of them when He triumphed over them in Christ.

¹⁶ Therefore, let no one judge you in what you eat or drink or about a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath day! ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come, but the reality is that of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no one rob you of your prize by delighting in false humility and in the worship of angels! Such a person goes on in detail about his visions and is groundlessly inflated by his sinful human mind.

¹⁹ Such a person does not cling to the Head, from whom the whole body, which is supported and held together by its sinews and ligaments, grows as God causes it to grow.

Luke 11:1-13

¹ Once Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He had finished, one of His disciples asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples!”

² He told them, “When you pray, say: ‘Our Father in heaven,

‘May Your name be kept holy!

‘May Your kingdom come!

³ ‘Give us day by day our daily bread!

⁴ ‘Forgive us our sins! For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

‘Do not lead us into temptation!’”

⁵ He also asked them, “Which of you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and ask him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,’ ⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has just come to my house, and I have nothing to set before him’? ⁷ If he answers from inside: ‘Stop bothering me! The door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything,’ ⁸ I tell you, although he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet, because he persists, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

⁹ “I also tell you: Keep asking! It will be given to you. Keep searching! You will find. Keep knocking! The door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who continues to ask receives, and he who continues to search finds, and to him who continues to knock the door will be opened.

¹¹ “Which father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?

¹³ Therefore, if you, although you are wicked, know how to give your children good gifts, how much more will your Father from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S PRAYER
Sermon for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost, 2022
Luke 11:1-4

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 Luke 11:1-4: **Once Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He had finished, one of His disciples asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples!”**

² **He told them, “When you pray, say: ‘Our Father in heaven,**

‘May Your name be kept holy!

‘May Your kingdom come!

³ **‘Give us day by day our daily bread!**

⁴ **‘Forgive us our sins! For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**

‘Do not lead us into temptation!’”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

“Once Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He had finished, one of His disciples asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples!”

Jesus’ disciples had already observed the very active prayer life of their Master. Now, in answer to that disciple’s request, He taught the prayer that has come to be known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” We find a slightly longer version of this prayer in Matthew 6, part of the Sermon on the Mount (v. 9-13).

While we are all familiar with the Lord’s Prayer, and surely, we pray it every day, let us begin today by making a few comments about prayer in general.

We begin by realising that prayer is something so simple for Christians of all ages to do. We even teach our children to pray from a very young age.

When we pray, we are simply “*speaking to God in words and thoughts*” as Luther says in his Small Catechism. Psalm 105:1 says, “*Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name.*” We talk to God, who wants to hear *everything* that is on our minds. Prayer really is that simple.

It is unfortunate then that while many of us have grown up with prayer, sometimes we *forget* what a profound gift God has given to us in such a simple package, and we lose appreciation for prayer.

So, to help us appreciate prayer a little more, let's look at something that happened, recorded for us in 1 Kings 18. There, we read of a confrontation between the prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal. In a nutshell, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest. Each side would prepare a burnt offering but not burn it. Instead, each side would pray for their god to set the burnt offering on fire. Elijah let the prophets of Baal go first.

So, the prophets of Baal prayed all day, and nothing happened. Then, it was Elijah's turn. Elijah prayed a short prayer, and the fire of God not only consumed the sacrifice but it also consumed the altar and left a smoking crater in its place. The people were impressed and killed the prophets of Baal.

While we could glean much from the entire account in 1 Kings 18, today, let's just focus on the *prayer practices* described in this confrontation between the prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Listen first to the intensity and the sincerity of the prophets of Baal as they call on Baal to ignite the sacrifice.

The prophets of Baal *“took the bull that had been given them, prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon. They kept saying, “Baal, answer us!” However, there was no sound and no one answered. They danced with limping steps beside the altar that they had made.²⁷ At noon Elijah mocked them. He said: “Shout louder! For he is a god. For he is thinking deeply or he is excreting or he is on a journey. Perhaps he is sleeping and must wake up.”²⁸ So, they shouted louder and slashed themselves, as they usually did, with swords and long spears, until blood gushed out on them.²⁹ In the afternoon they raved on until the time for the evening sacrifice. However, there was no sound. No one answered and no one paid attention”* (1 Kings 18:26-29). Notice the intensity of the prayer of the prophets of Baal. *They prayed all day.* They shouted as loud as they could. They even mutilated themselves. Nothing happened. These prophets were very sincere. They worked hard and long. Nevertheless, nothing happened. Neither the quality nor the quantity of prayer means a thing when you are praying to a god who is not there.

As evening approached, it was Elijah's turn. He not only prepared a sacrifice, but he also totally drenched the sacrifice in water. *“When it was time to offer the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah approached. He said: “LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel, that I am Your servant*

and that I have done all these things at Your Word! ³⁷ Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that these people may know that You, LORD, are God and that You Yourself have turned their hearts back again!" ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench." (1 Kings 18:36-38). Elijah's prayer was short and to the point. There was no crying out. There was no bodily mutilation. The prophets of Baal had prayed all day. Elijah prayed for less than a minute. The prophets of Baal got nothing. Elijah received fire from the LORD. It is better to pray a simple prayer to the true God than it is to pray an impressive prayer to a false god. Given that there were 450 prophets of Baal and only one Elijah, we can also say that it doesn't make any difference how many people pray. When you pray to a false god, you are praying to someone or something that does not exist. There is no one there to hear your prayer. How can there possibly be an answer?

Sadly, the sinful human imagination has come up with all sorts of false gods. Many of these false gods were quite cruel. A review of the worship practices of the false gods found in the Bible exposes a wide variety of cruel practices. The prophets of Baal merely cut themselves. Other false religions sacrificed human beings to false gods. Some even burned their own children alive as a show of faithfulness to their false gods. It is hard work to worship a false god.

As sad and tragic as these false religions are, there are a couple of things we can take from them. First, it is a true and precious privilege to share our thoughts and feelings with the sovereign God of all things. It is worth any sacrifice to speak with Him and receive His blessing. Second, there is something broken between us and God that blocks that sharing. Even the most primitive cultures recognise that this is a fallen world, and we are an unworthy people. But the really sad misconception that all false religions have is that *there is something we can do to fix the brokenness that we have with God*. That is the reason that many religions require such extreme sacrifices and other rituals before their god will listen to them. They truly believe that their sacrifice will bring them into a right relationship with God so that they can speak with Him.

The sad reality though, is that there is nothing we can do to fix our relationship with God. We are sinners through and through. We are sinners before we are even born, and our daily sins only increase our condemnation before God. We have no right to pray to God. In fact, we have no right to any blessing from Him.

If this is the case, then how can Jesus tell us, **“When you pray, say: ‘Our Father in heaven,**

‘May Your name be kept holy!

‘May Your kingdom come!

³ ‘Give us day by day our daily bread!

⁴ ‘Forgive us our sins! For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

‘Do not lead us into temptation!’”

The answer is in the very One who instructs us to pray. The One who teaches us to pray is the One who set His face to go to Jerusalem. He set His face to go to Jerusalem in order to tear down the wall of sin that had made us enemies of God. He tore down that wall by offering Himself up as a sacrifice to make the payment that our sin required. Jesus allowed His enemies to nail Him to a cross so that He could offer those same enemies a place in His family. With His suffering and death on the cross, He made us His brothers and children of our heavenly Father. This is a certainty because Jesus did not remain in the grave after He died but rose from the dead and ascended to rule at the right hand of the Father.

The difference between the false religions of the world and the one, true religion can be summed up in this way: the false religions teach us to pay the sin debt we owe... in some cases even to the point of sacrificing our children, while the true religion is Jesus Christ the Son of God sacrificing Himself to pay the sin debt we cannot pay.

Dear friends, Jesus invites us to pray boldly to God the Father as dear children talk to their dear Father. He can extend this invitation to us because He has shed His blood to break down the wall of sin that stood between us and God the Father. Jesus offers to make us children of God. The Holy Spirit gives us the faith that takes Jesus up on that offer. Through the Holy Spirit’s gift of faith, we are the children of God, the heirs of His Kingdom, and He gives us the right to pray boldly to God the Father.

Jesus teaches us to pray. The throne room of heaven lies open before us. Our heavenly Father is ready to listen to whatever we have to tell Him. The privilege of prayer is there for all who believe. It is one of the many gifts God gives to us with His presence here in time and forever in eternity. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty and merciful God, we praise Your holy name. We praise You for Your witness to Yourself in your glorious creation, with all its wisdom and its wonders, and in all the blessings that come to us through them. We thank You, Father, for giving us a clearer and fuller message of Your truth in the Holy Scriptures. By the Spirit who inspired them, make us living stones in Your temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Above all, centre our lives in Your Son, whom You have sent as the living Word, to con-vey to all people Your full grace and truth.

We praise You that Your Son became a human being like us. We praise You that He has given us His life of perfect obedience to redeem our lives, and to set His example before us. We praise You that He has died to take on Himself our sins; and that He has risen to give us unending life. We praise You for making these blessings of Christ our own through Baptism and the gift of faith.

Grant that we may grow in them day by day, so that we may always be clothed with His righteousness and live the new life. By Your Spirit, help us to put to death the desires of our sinful natures, to put away all hatred and bitterness, to conquer all evil habits, and to live in fellowship with You.

Spirit of the living God, we praise You for bringing the Church into existence. By Your gracious pow-er, renew it daily in faith and life. Move Your people to offer their whole selves to their Lord and to pro-claim His saving love.

Give saving faith to the nations of the earth, that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and live before You in obedience. Bless our country Australia with leaders whose consciences are guided by Your voice, and with citizens whose minds are fixed on doing Your will.

Bless all who are in some special need of Your help. Remember, in particular, those who are sick, or suffering physical or mental distress. Touch them with Your healing love, and show them what great things You have prepared for them.

O God, Creator, Saviour, and Advocate, help us during our days on earth to let Your light transform every area of our lives, and, when death comes, keep us for Your eternal kingdom. These things we ask in the precious name of Jesus Christ, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and rules, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: SEEKING THE LORD'S DIRECTION

Is it wrong to seek the Lord's direction for the day-to-day questions of our lives? Is it wrong to seek His will on matters of vocation, marriage, and the like? Is it wrong to pray about these things and expect some kind of an answer? It is certainly not wrong to pray about the decisions that we have to make in life. The Scriptures everywhere encourage us to do that. Jesus invites us to do that with boldness and confidence, perhaps most beautifully when He teaches us His own prayer as we have as part of our Gospel for today, Luke 11:1-4, and in Matthew 6:9-15. St. Peter tells us, "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7).

But when we pray, we are not asking God to make His will known to us apart from the Scriptures. Instead, we are bringing our every concern to Him in the confidence that He will hear us as He has promised. We give Him thanks for the choices He has given us in our everyday lives, and we pray for His blessing as we strive to make those choices in the light of His Word and to the glory of His name. Thus, we pray for God's blessing on a decision about our vocation in life. We weigh our options. We consider what the Scriptures have to say about working as for the Lord. We weigh what the Scriptures say about the use of earthly wealth for the support of our family, for aiding the poor, and for supporting the work of spreading the gospel. We call to mind the Bible's warnings against greed, the love of money, and pride. We think about how we shall balance work time, family time, and leisure time with time to help others and to serve the church. And then we make our decision. The decision often will not be one between good and evil, but between good and good. Whichever choice we make, we seek the honour of God and the well-being of those around us. We commend our choice to God and ask His blessing on it; but we do not torment ourselves trying to guess what lies hidden in the mind of God. God has revealed His mind in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are sufficient.

In the same way we pray for God's blessing on all our earthly choices. And we strive to live so that in our choices we follow the Word of the Lord through St. Paul: "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship*" (Romans 12:1). In the remainder of Romans 12 the apostle gives us an excellent summary description of just such a life of worship. St. John tells us,

“This is love for God: to obey His commands” (1 John 5:3). That is exactly what Jesus Himself tells us, *“If you love Me, you will obey what I command”* (John 14:15). Our goal is to live in such a way that we glorify God in all the choices for which we seek His blessing. That is what St. Paul is speaking of when he says, *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31). Yes, even when we seek the counsel and advice of others, something altogether appropriate and proper, we weigh what they advise in the light of God’s Word. Indeed, the best counsel that we can get from others is exactly that counsel which has its roots in God’s Word. It is no small blessing from God when we have friends or family members, pastors or teachers who can help us make decisions with God’s Word as the ultimate guide.

In sum and again - God’s Word is sufficient. Those who seek some other guide for doctrine and life are looking for God where He has not promised to be. It makes no difference whether the something else is a church, human reason, emotions, will, or even a conscience uninformed by the Word of God. Anything that competes with the Scriptures ultimately replaces the Scriptures, which are *“useful so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Welcome to all worshipping with us today!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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

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

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

Weekly Sunday School lessons are also now available in the Members section.

If there are any late changes to be made to divine services due to covid lockdowns, these will be listed immediately on the website. If you are unsure, please contact pastor.

COMING SERVICES

**PLEASE ALWAYS CHECK YOUR BULLETINS FOR ANY LATE CHANGES –
THEY CAN HAPPEN!!!**

| 31 July 8 Pentecost | 7 August 9 Pentecost | 14 August 10 Pentecost |
|--|---|---|
| 8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB 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 & Bible Study | 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am O/A/G HC combined at Greenwood followed by Bible Study 9.00am LOWOOD LR |
| Sunday, 31 July | | |
| READINGS: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21 | | |
| HYMNS: 520 388 384 (847 286) 459 | | |
| Sunday, 7 August | | |
| READINGS: Genesis 15:1-6; Hebrews 11:1-16; Luke 12:22-40 | | |
| HYMNS: 305 200 14 (80 292) 620 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, 30 July, 10.00am. COC/Sem meeting at Marburg. Please ensure there is representation from all congregations – these meetings are important. Please place any agenda item through your rep.

Pastor is preparing to start the next confirmation class, beginning early August. If any parents have children of confirmation age, please contact him so he can get the class organised.

Pastor would like for readers in our bookclub to begin meeting. For those reading, can you please see me with suitable days and times that would suit, so we can set a time and place?

BIBLE STUDIES for JULY:

Mar/Lowood. Thursday, 28, 10.00am at Marburg.

Aub/Oak. Friday, 29, 7.30pm at Aubigny.

FUTURE AELC SERVICE DATES:

September 4 at Greenwood.

October 30 at Toowoomba.