

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

14 August 2022

The 10th Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 502 197 376 177

INTROIT:

My soul has been longing for Your salvation. I have been waiting for Your Word.

My eyes have become weak from looking for Your Promise. I ask, "When will You comfort me?"

Although I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, I have not forgotten Your Prescriptions.

How many are the days of Your servant? When will You carry out judgment on those who are persecuting me?

Arrogant people have dug pits for me, which are contrary to Your Instruction.

All Your Commandments are sure. Help me! People have been persecuting me with falsehood.

They had almost brought me to an end on the earth, but I have not forsaken Your Directions.

Preserve my life according to Your mercy, that I may keep the Testimony from Your mouth!

Psalm 119:81-88

COLLECT: Merciful Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church by the sacrifice of Christ. United with Him in Holy Baptism, give us grace to receive with thanksgiving the fruits of His redeeming work and daily follow in His way; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS:

Jeremiah 23:16-29 Prophets must speak God's word faithfully.

Hebrews 11:17-12:3 Men of faith in the Old Testament witnessed to what God promised.

Luke 12:49-53 Jesus has come to bring fire on earth.

Jeremiah 23:16-29

¹⁶ This is what the LORD of hosts has said: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you! They are deluding you. They are speaking visions of their own hearts, not from the mouth of the LORD. ¹⁷ They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, “You will have peace.”’”

They have been telling everyone who follows his own stubborn heart, “No calamity will happen to you people!” ¹⁸ For who has been standing in the confidential circle of the LORD, that he could see and hear His Word? Who has been paying attention to His Word and listening to it? ¹⁹ Look! The high wind of the LORD! His wrath has burst out. A windstorm is swirling. It will whirl down on the heads of wicked people. ²⁰ The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and fulfilled what His mind has planned. In the last days you will understand it clearly.

²¹ “I have not sent these prophets. Yet they have been running. I have not been speaking to them. Yet they have been prophesying. ²² If they had been standing in My confidential circle, they would have been making My people hear My Words. Then they would have turned them back from their evil ways and from the evil that they have been doing.

²³ “Am I a God who is only near,” asks the LORD, “and not a God who is far away? ²⁴ Can anyone hide in secret places, so that I cannot see him?” asks the LORD. “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” asks the LORD. ²⁵ “I have heard what the prophets have been saying, who are prophesying lies in My name. They are saying, ‘I have had a dream! I have had a dream!’ ²⁶ How long will this continue in the hearts of the prophets, who are prophesying lies and who are prophesying the deceitfulness of their own hearts? ²⁷ They intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams, which they tell one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal. ²⁸ The prophet who has a dream should tell a dream, but the one who has My Word should speak My Word faithfully. What does threshed grain have to do with straw?” asks the LORD. ²⁹ “Is not My Word like fire?” asks the LORD, “and like a hammer that shatters a rock?”

Hebrews 11:17-40; 12:1-3

¹⁷ By faith, when Abraham was tested, he offered up Isaac. Yes, this man, who had received the promises, was offering up his only son, ¹⁸ about whom God had said, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹ He concluded that God was able even to raise him up from the dead. Moreover, figuratively speaking, he did get him back from the dead.

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning their future.

²¹ By faith, when Jacob was dying, he blessed each of Joseph’s sons and worshipped while he leaned on the top of his staff.

²² By faith, when Joseph’s end was near, he spoke about the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

²³ By faith, when Moses was born, he was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a good-looking child, and were not afraid of the king’s edict.

²⁴ By faith, when Moses had grown up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter ²⁵ and chose to be mistreated with God’s people rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he was paying attention to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, without being afraid of the king’s anger, because he persevered as a man who was seeing the One who cannot be seen. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, that the one who was destroying the first-born might not touch them. ²⁹ By faith they went through the Red Sea as through dry land, but, when the Egyptians attempted it, they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after the people had marched around them for seven days.

³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab did not perish with the disobedient people after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

³² What more, then, am I to say? For the time would run out for me if I were to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, and about David, Samuel and the prophets. ³³ They through faith conquered kingdoms, they enforced justice, they obtained promises, they shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ they quenched fierce fire, they escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness

they were made strong, they became powerful in battle, they turned foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again. Other people were tortured. They did not accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others experienced mocking and whippings and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, tempted, sawn in two and put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins. They were destitute, oppressed and tormented. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ Through faith, all these had good testimony given to them but did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better concerning us, that they might not be made perfect apart from us.

^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a large cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every impediment and the sin that so easily ensnares us and let us run with patient endurance the race that has been set before us! ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith! For the sake of the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such opposition against Himself from sinful men, that you may not become weary or discouraged in your souls.

Luke 12:49-53

⁴⁹ “I have come to set fire on the earth, and how I wish it had already been kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how troubled I am until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you but rather, division. ⁵² For from now on there will be five in one family who have been divided, three against two, and two against three. ⁵³ A father will be divided against a son, and a son against a father, a mother against her daughter, and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

FIRE, TROUBLE, AND DIVISION
Sermon for the 10th Sunday after Pentecost, 2022
Luke 12:49-53

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, Luke 12:49-53: ⁴⁹ **“I have come to set fire on the earth, and how I wish it had already been kindled!** ⁵⁰ **I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how troubled I am until it is completed!** ⁵¹ **Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you but rather, division.** ⁵² **For from now on there will be five in one family who have been divided, three against two, and two against three.** ⁵³ **A father will be divided against a son, and a son against a father, a mother against her daughter, and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus is often portrayed in pictures as being gentle, meek, and mild. As the words *“I am the Good Shepherd”* reverberate through our minds, we have visions of Jesus out in the fields watching over His sheep. We see Him walking with a lost sheep gently slung over His shoulders and so on. We also picture Him sitting among the children or even with a small child sitting on His lap. This is the soft and cuddly Jesus everyone loves, non-offensive and easy to take.

There’s one problem, though. The Jesus we have just described is a Jesus *who does not exist* - not in that one-dimensional kind of a form, at least. The Jesus we are meeting today in our text is not one that fits the popular image of Jesus: a soft and soothing speaker who spins out platitudes that people like to hear. No, this is the Jesus who really was and is. In our text today, Jesus says: **“I have come to set fire on the earth, and how I wish it had already been kindled!** ⁵⁰ **I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how troubled I am until it is completed!** ⁵¹ **Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you but rather, division.”**

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild”? Hardly! This is more like “angry Jesus, bleak and wild!” Here we meet an intense, fiery Jesus. Yet this is the same Jesus who is our Saviour. So let’s listen now as our Lord speaks to us of “Fire, Trouble, and Division.”

First, Jesus says, **“I have come to set fire on the earth, and how I wish it had already been kindled!”**

The image of a blazing fire is, in Scripture, almost entirely a negative one. Fire is often a sign of judgment, God’s end-time judgment. Of course, Jesus did not come primarily to bring fire and judgment on the earth but to bring healing in His wings.¹ He came to bring salvation. But judgment and fire are the consequence, the result, the inevitable fallout when men reject and scorn God’s one-appointed way of salvation.

John chapter 3 puts it like this: *“For God has not sent His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world may be saved through Him.”*¹⁸ *The person who believes in Him is not condemned, but the person who does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God’s only Son”* (v. 17-18). The primary aim is salvation, but when men reject the Saviour, the consequent result is that they stay stuck in their sins and condemnation.

So here in Luke chapter 12, when Jesus says, **“I have come to set fire on the earth, and how I wish it had already been kindled!”**, He is speaking of the fiery end-time judgment that He Himself will bring to pass when He comes again in glory on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead.

Before then, however, Jesus has something else to do, and that is actually something that would happen to Him. It is a baptism. He says, **“I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how troubled I am until it is completed!”** What is this “baptism” that Jesus speaks of here? He says He is troubled by it, and it has not yet been completed. Yet hadn’t Jesus already been baptised, in the Jordan River, at the start of His public ministry? And that baptism did not seem so distressing at the time.

But think about it again. When Jesus was baptised at the Jordan, that baptism *did* set Him on a distressing course, a course that was not yet completed. Do you remember why people were being baptised at the Jordan in the first place? It was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People came confessing their sins.

¹ Malachi 4:2

When Jesus came out to be baptised by John, He had no sins of His own. Yet He was baptised. This showed the distressing course that Jesus was setting out on. For at His baptism, Christ, the sinless Son of God, was identifying with us poor sinners, taking our sins upon Himself. As John saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, “*Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29). A heavy load was laid on Jesus at His baptism. He took it up willingly for us, and He would take that load of our sin all the way to the cross.

Jesus Christ, true God, and also true man - a man with true feelings and emotions. And so, this way of the cross - this stressful baptism of suffering that Jesus was undergoing - this was no walk in the park. Indeed, it hurt deeply. “**How troubled I am!**” He had cried out. The Greek word here for trouble has the idea of “being pressed hard together.” Can you sense the extreme pressure Jesus was feeling? Jesus was really stressed out! This was a very stressful experience, this baptism of suffering, and it would only get more stressful as Jesus headed to Jerusalem. Think of the agony Jesus would endure in Gethsemane on the night He was betrayed.

“**I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how troubled I am until it is completed!**” This baptism would be accomplished, completed, and brought to its conclusion. Again, the Greek wording is helpful. The word for “**completed**” here means to reach the goal, to finish the course. It’s the same word that’s used when Jesus cries out on the cross, “*It is finished!*” It is accomplished, and the goal has been reached. For on the cross, Jesus’ baptism of suffering would be completed. There He would reach the goal and finish the course. Mission accomplished. Sins atoned for. The price has been paid; our debt has been covered, paid in full, by Jesus’ holy blood. The victory is total, the triumph complete. Sin, death, and hell - all vanquished. Forgiveness, life, and salvation are ours.

Jesus’ baptism of suffering means our baptism from death into life. For when we were baptised, we were joined to Christ and His baptism. The holy cross was signed onto us. We were marked as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. Now we belong to God and to His family, the church. Now you and I are heirs of heaven, for we shall share in Christ’s resurrection. Now, by faith in Christ, our life is different from the dead-end course of the world all around us.

But that does make us different. And being different, being the distinctive people of God in a hostile world - that sets us apart. It sets us at odds with those who hate God, who don’t believe in the one true God, who don’t follow Christ, and who therefore *don’t like us.* The dividing lines are being drawn. Jesus anticipates those

dividing lines of faith and unbelief when He says, **“Do you think that I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you but rather, division.”**

This has been a long division, a very long division indeed. We read about it in the New Testament, where many people come to faith in Christ, but many others reject the faith, either persecuting it outright or else perverting the faith through false doctrine. That sort of division continues even to this day. Praise God that we have been led by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus Christ, our Saviour, the only One who can rescue us from the fire of God’s judgment! However, many others scorn Jesus and assail His ways, and it is not always through outright persecution. Sometimes it is through a subtle watering down of the faith, and sometimes it is through their apathy, indifference, and neglect, which lead people to say “no” to Christ.

So the dividing lines are falling, and they cut right through the hard heart and stubborn unbelief of man. Those dividing lines can even cut through a family. Jesus says: **“For from now on there will be five in one family who have been divided, three against two, and two against three. ⁵³ A father will be divided against a son, and a son against a father, a mother against her daughter, and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”**

Maybe you know of families like that. Maybe you’re in a family like that. Some family members believe in Christ and gladly take part in His church, while others in the family couldn’t care less. They have no interest in Christ. They want nothing to do with His church. It’s tough when you’re in a family like that. But we shouldn’t be too surprised that it happens. Jesus told us in advance that that is exactly what would happen, as He says right here in our text.

Fire, trouble, and division. When the fallout reaches you, don’t be shocked, but do take shelter. When fire, trouble, and division hits, find refuge in the cross of Christ and the promises of God. When feeling all stressed out, remember the great distress that Jesus endured for us. Through His distressing baptism of suffering, Christ has accomplished our eternal salvation. Since we have been baptised into Christ. In Him, we have peace, a peace that the world cannot give, a peace that the world cannot take away. Through fire, trouble, and division, this Jesus is ours. Yes, this is the Gospel of the Lord! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty and everlasting God, since nothing is hidden before You, and since all hearts are laid bare before You, give us true humility, reverence, and repentance as we now come before Your throne of grace. Do not remember our many sins, but only Your kindness and constant love in Jesus Christ our Lord. We praise You for fulfilling Your eternal election of grace by sending Your Son Jesus Christ to shed His blood, the blood of the covenant, as our Saviour from sin. We praise You for giving us Your Holy Spirit to renew and help us day by day, to produce the results of Your grace.

Rule us by Your Holy Spirit that we may not give way to the evils of idolatry, sexual impurity, unbelief, and other great and shameful sins. Give us a living faith, which will enable us to stand firm at all times, and keep us from grumbling, doubt, or despair. Strengthen us whenever we are tempted, so that we may successfully resist Satan's power.

Help us all to believe Your Word and to heed its warnings, so that we may always do what is right, and live in the faith that leads to eternal life. Increase our hope of seeing Your glory.

We thank You for Your countless blessings in our lives. Help us to use them faithfully and responsibly as good stewards of Your varied gifts, as people who are grateful for all Your love.

Bless Your Church, O Father, so that Your name may be hallowed and Your kingdom may come. Continue to lead Your people to Jesus Christ their rock, and refresh them with the water of life. Equip Your people to proclaim Your truth with wisdom, love, and boldness, so that many more from all nations may call on Your name and be saved.

Convince the people in our country that righteousness makes a nation great, and that sin brings disgrace. Keep its people in Your care, so that honesty, uprightness, truth, and high moral principles may flourish, and all lawlessness, evil, and defiance of authority may be put down. We ask Your special blessing on all who govern, that they may have wisdom to rule according to Your direction.

Guard and protect our homes. Unite parents in mutual love and godliness. Enable them to rule their children well and bring them up in truth and righteousness.

We pray for those who are sick in body, mind, or spirit, for all who are in any danger; for all who are experiencing worry, doubts, disappointments, or defeat. Help them in their troubles, and save them, for Your mercy's sake.

Heavenly Father, You did not even hold back Your Son, but gave Him up for us all; with Him freely give us all things and hear our prayers. And to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honour and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Who said being a Christian is easy!

Clearly our Christian life is always a work in progress. That is, unlike our salvation that is always complete and entirely God's gift, our Christian life from day to day is lived out under the cross. Jesus defines our life under the cross especially in the verses of Mark 8:34-38. There Jesus tells each and every one of His followers that just as He carried a cross of pain and of struggle and ultimately of death, so too will we. The essence of that cross is a life in which each of us strives to deny self out of love for Jesus, strives against "I want" and "I think" in favour of "What does God want?" and "What does His Word say?" It is a life devoted to the kind of loving service that Jesus lived for me - a life that puts Him and His Word first, everyone else next, and me last.

That such a life is a struggle, difficult, and often painful should be immediately obvious. In our fallen nature each says, "Me first!" We manage to suppress that impulse to an exclusive self-service (which is really self-worship) only with difficulty. We still have our sinful nature inherited from Adam and Eve. That nature is never converted and only dies when we go from earth to heaven at the moment of death. For every impulse of the Christian nature created at conversion, that sinful nature has an opposing response.

We note that response in just about every good impulse that we have to live a life devoted to Christ. The Christian in me delights to hear God's Word and is eager to follow it. The sinful nature replies, "*Not now; not so much; don't take it all that seriously!*" The Christian in me is eager to serve and to help anyone and everyone I am able to help solely because it is pleasing to God and beneficial to those I serve. The sinful nature protests, "*I help my neighbour in the expectation that he will help me.*" The Christian in me strives to live an outwardly and inwardly chaste and decent life simply because it wants to reflect gratitude for the purity God gives in Baptism. But the sinful nature is willing to behave decently - at least in public only because it craves respect from those around me, especially those who can be useful to me or only because it does not want the painful consequences of getting caught in outward shame and disgrace. And as for those who do me wrong, the Christian in me is eager to forgive, just as God has so freely and willingly forgiven me. But the sinful nature says, "*They had best watch out for the day when I shall repay them with interest! At the very least they should expect nothing good from me.*" Jesus' words in the Sermon on

the Mount in Matthew 5-7 are in sharp contrast to what our sinful nature has in mind. Read those chapters with care and see if you can find a single verse that is easy, that doesn't go against the grain of our fallen nature! Being a Christian in head and heart requires a miracle that only God can perform through the gospel. Being a Christian in life is no easier; it too requires a miracle inspired by the totally self-giving love of Christ for us, as St. John sums it up so well: *"We love because He first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. For no one who fails to love his brother, whom he has seen, can love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ This is also the Commandment that we have from Him, that he who loves God should also love his brother"* (1 John 4:19-21).

The word brother here, as so often in the Bible, refers to all those near or far who I can see are in need of help that I am able to provide. And the Greek word for love is that kind of love that seeks the ultimate good of those who are loved. It is not mere affection or liking; Greek has a different word for that. Love in this verse (as in that great love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13) is a love that is a choice made to seek the best interest of the one loved; it is a choice to serve, whether or not the service can be repaid or is even appreciated.

Paul puts the sharpest possible point on that kind of love. He tells us, as Jesus does in the aforementioned Sermon on the Mount and as Solomon said as well (Proverbs 25:21), that such a love is to be active in service to all; it is to be active even in service to those who without cause from us are our enemies. He sums it all up so completely and so perfectly: *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21). Again, let the one who thinks the Christian life is an easy one read the whole of Romans 12 and see if there is anything in it that comes naturally or easily!

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.

COMING SERVICES

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

21 August 11 Pentecost	28 August 12 Pentecost	4 September 13 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC & Bible Study 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC	10.00am GRN HC AELC Service
Sunday, 21 August		
READINGS: Isaiah 66:18-23;	Hebrews 12:4-29;	Luke 13:22-30
HYMNS: 26 187 410 (333 292) 178		
Sunday, 28 August		
READINGS: Proverbs 25:2-10;	Hebrews 13:1-17;	Luke 14:1-14
HYMNS: 503 287 v. 1-3 343 (840 291) 206		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDIES for AUGUST:

Marburg/Lowood. Thursday the 25th at Lowood.

Aub/Oak/ Grn. Sunday the 14th.

Toowoomba. Sunday the 21st.

FUTURE AELC SERVICE DATES:

September 4 at Greenwood.

October 30 at Toowoomba.

Renovation work is soon to commence on the church hall in Toowoomba. Once work is completed (which should be in a couple months, depending on weather etc), Bethlehem Toowoomba would like to hold a concert later in the year, in thanks to all who have supported the project. The concert will be held on a Sunday afternoon, with a date yet to be finalised. Therefore, they are looking for items. If you as an individual, or even as a group, would like to perform (skits, jokes, musical items, singing, anything!!), please contact Barry Zischke on 0427 600073, or bjzisc@gmail.com.