

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

11 September 2022

The 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 442 317 418 604

**INTROIT:**

Let my cry for help come near into Your presence, O LORD! Make me perceptive according to Your Word!

Let my plea for favour come before You! Rescue me according to Your Promise!

Let my lips pour out praise! For You teach me Your Prescriptions.

Let my tongue sing about Your Promise! For all Your Commandments are righteous.

Let Your hand become my help! For I have chosen Your Directions.

I have been longing for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your Instruction is my delight.

May my soul live, that it may praise You! May Your Decisions help me!

I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Search for Your servant! For I do not forget Your Commandments. Psalm 119:169-176

**COLLECT:** Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us, that we may not be lost for ever, but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS:**

Ezekiel 34:11-24 The Lord God will seek them out.

1 Timothy 1:5-17 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Luke 15:1-10 There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

*Welcome to all worshipping with us today!*

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at [paziebell@gmail.com](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaalc@gmail.com](mailto:ddaalc@gmail.com).

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

## **Ezekiel 34:11-24**

<sup>11</sup> For this is what the Lord GOD has said: “Look! I Myself shall search for My sheep and look after them. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd cares for his flock when he is among his scattered sheep, so I shall look after My sheep. I shall rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a cloudy and very gloomy day. <sup>13</sup> I shall bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land. I shall be a shepherd to them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the inhabited places of the land. <sup>14</sup> I shall look after them in good pasture, and their grazing-land will be on the mountain-heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing-land and graze in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I Myself shall shepherd My sheep and I Myself shall let them lie down,” declares the Lord GOD.

<sup>16</sup> “I shall search for the lost ones, bring back those that have been scattered, bandage the injured ones and strengthen the sick ones. I shall destroy the ones that are fat and the strong. I shall shepherd them with justice.

<sup>17</sup> “As for you, My flock, this is what the Lord GOD has said: ‘Look! I judge between individual sheep and between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup> Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink water that has settled that you must make the rest of the water muddy with your feet?’ <sup>19</sup> Must My sheep feed on what you have trampled with your feet and drink what you have made muddy with your feet?’”

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD has said to them: “Look! I, yes, I Myself, shall judge between a fat sheep and a lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you shove with your sides and shoulders and butt all the weak animals away with your horns until you have scattered them to the outside, <sup>22</sup> I shall save My flock, that they may not be something to plunder any longer. I shall judge between one sheep and another.

<sup>23</sup> “I shall appoint one Shepherd over them, My Servant David, and He will shepherd them. He will take care of them and He Himself will be their Shepherd.

<sup>24</sup> I Myself, the LORD, shall be their God, and My Servant David will be the Prince among them. I Myself, the LORD, have spoken.

## **1 Timothy 1:5-17**

<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this command is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience and from sincere faith. <sup>6</sup> Certain people have deviated from these and have turned to meaningless talk. <sup>7</sup> They want to be teachers of the Law but understand neither

what they are saying nor the things about which they are speaking so confidently.<sup>8</sup> However, we know that the Law is good if someone uses it lawfully.<sup>9</sup> He knows this, that the Law has not been laid down for a righteous person but for those who are lawless and insubordinate, for ungodly and sinful people, for those who are unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers, for those who kill their mothers, for murderers,<sup>10</sup> for those who are sexually immoral, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers and for whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,<sup>11</sup> which conforms to the glorious Good News of the blessed God, which has been entrusted to me.

<sup>12</sup> I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has made me strong. For He has considered me to be trustworthy and has appointed me into the ministry,<sup>13</sup> although I used to be a blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man. However, I have received mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.<sup>14</sup> The grace of our Lord has also been exceedingly abundant, along with faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.<sup>15</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the chief.<sup>16</sup> However, for this reason I have received mercy, that Christ Jesus may demonstrate all His patience in me, the chief of sinners, as an example to those who are going to believe in Him for eternal life.<sup>17</sup> To the King eternal, the immortal, invisible and only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever! Amen.

## **Luke 15:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> All the tax-collectors and other sinners were coming to Jesus to hear Him.<sup>2</sup> However, the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled and said, “This Man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> He told them this parable:<sup>4</sup> “Which man among you who has a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the other ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until he finds it?<sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and is glad.<sup>6</sup> He goes home, calls his friends and neighbours together and tells them, ‘Be happy with me! For I have found my lost sheep.’<sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.

<sup>8</sup> “Or which woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house and look for it carefully until she finds it?<sup>9</sup> When she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Be happy with me! For I have found the coin that I lost.’<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

**JESUS RECEIVES, REJOICES OVER, AND RESTORES SINNERS**  
**Sermon for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, 2022**  
**Luke 15:1-10**

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 15:1-10: **All the tax-collectors and other sinners were coming to Jesus to hear Him.** <sup>2</sup> However, the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled and said, “This Man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> He told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Which man among you who has a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the other ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and is glad. <sup>6</sup> He goes home, calls his friends and neighbours together and tells them, ‘Be happy with me! For I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.

<sup>8</sup> “Or which woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house and look for it carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> When she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Be happy with me! For I have found the coin that I lost.’ <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

The 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke is a high point in the travel narrative of Jesus, who was journeying toward Jerusalem, where He would be crucified. Along the way, Jesus took the opportunity to preach the Good News and told His hearers, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*” (Luke 14:35). Jesus reached out again and again with the Good News so that all might receive His gracious invitation.

Again today, Jesus issued the same invitation. Jesus “**welcomes sinners.**” That message comes through *loud and clear* in our Gospel reading today. And when

Jesus receives sinners, He rejoices over them, that they've been found and brought back. And not only does Jesus receive sinners, and not only does He rejoice over them, but He does one more thing. He restores these sinners to His service. That comes through in the Second Reading for today, from 1 Timothy 1. Jesus receives, rejoices over, and restores sinners.

Jesus **“welcomes sinners.”** How much comfort this gives, especially to those whose hearts are constantly weighed down by sin! However, these words were actually said as a criticism of Jesus. Jesus' opponents said that about Him. The **“Pharisees and the scribes grumbled and said, “This Man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”** Why were they saying this? Because they had noticed that people who they were looking down upon as sinners were coming to Jesus to hear what He had to say - and Jesus wasn't turning them away! That's what they would have done, but Jesus didn't.

It was the **“tax-collectors and other sinners”** who were drawing near to Jesus, and the Pharisees and the scribes thought that was disgraceful. Tax collectors were considered especially bad for a couple of reasons: They were working for the pagan Roman Empire who was occupying their land, and they had a reputation for being corrupt, lining their own pockets. A good religious teacher should not associate with such low disreputable people like that. There were other bad people who were drawing near to hear Jesus, too, and so the Pharisees and scribes said with a sneer, **“This Man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”** Notice, they don't even refer to Jesus by His name but call Him **“This Man.”** You can hear the disgust and the disapproval dripping from their lips.

**“This Man welcomes sinners.”** What the scribes and Pharisees meant as an insult, Jesus turned around and wore as a badge of honour. The Pharisees and scribes were missing the point. They were missing what God was doing there. If they did understand, then they would have been rejoicing because what God was doing there in Jesus receiving those sinners was precisely the purpose of His coming! That was the mission that God the Father had sent His Son on, namely, to seek and to save the lost<sup>1</sup>, to bring them back home. That should have brought joy to their hearts, not condemnation.

To bring that home, then, Jesus tells a couple of parables that illustrate the point. The first one is about a shepherd who goes out to search for one lost sheep.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke 19:10

**“When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and is glad”** that he has found the lost sheep, who would not have been able to survive on its own. He picks up that sheep and carries it back to the flock. When he gets home, he **“calls his friends and neighbours together and tells them, “Be happy with me! For I have found my lost sheep.”**

Jesus is trying to convince these scribes and Pharisees that what He is doing should be a cause for rejoicing, not grumbling. He lays it out straightforward: **“I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.”** *“If heaven is rejoicing over sinners who repent and are brought back home”* - which is what Jesus has been doing – *“if heaven is rejoicing, how come you aren’t? In fact, not only are you not rejoicing at Jesus finding sinners, but you also don’t even admit that you yourselves need to repent. You Pharisees and scribes don’t realise that you are sinners just like the tax collectors are!”*

The second story is much like the first. This time it’s a lost coin. Jesus says, **“Or which woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house and look for it carefully until she finds it? 9 When she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Be happy with me! For I have found the coin that I lost.’”** Same point. *“Heaven is rejoicing over one lost sinner who repents, yet you Pharisees and scribes aren’t rejoicing. You’re complaining.”* What’s wrong with this picture?

Indeed, what’s wrong is that the Pharisees and the scribes could not see themselves in the picture. They hadn’t been searching for lost sinners as Jesus had. They aren’t rejoicing with Jesus when He does find them. And they don’t even see themselves as sinners in need of repentance. Instead, they make themselves feel good by looking down on the bad people and looking down on Jesus for receiving such lousy sinners.

Dear friends, where do we see ourselves in the picture Jesus paints? Do we see ourselves above the bad people, so proud of our own goodness that we make ourselves feel good by comparing ourselves to the lowlifes? Would we get a little uncomfortable if someone with a disreputable past was to find their way into our church because they’ve heard Jesus is here and that He welcomes sinners? Most of all, do we recognise that we ourselves are sinners who would be lost, without any hope, unless Jesus had come and rescued us and brought us back home? Because that is indeed the truth. Even if we have not fallen into

blatant, easy-to-recognise shame and vice, even if we have lived a reasonably respectable life, we still must confess, “*I, a poor helpless sinner.*” For God judges not only our outward actions but also our inner hearts and our secret sins in thought, word, and deed. There is no escaping the label of ‘sinner.’ If you think you’re not, you’re just kidding yourself, but you’re not fooling God.

So, here’s the good news: Jesus has come to seek and save sinners just like you and me! He has welcomed the tax collectors and other sinners, and He will welcome us sinners, too. The thing to do with sins is not to deny them but to confess them. The Apostle John writes, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9). God always does what is just and righteous. God is faithful to His promises and always keeps His Word. Recognise that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness. Jesus had come precisely to give us the forgiveness we needed. He did this by going to the cross for us. That is where Jesus carried out the big rescue job. He laid our sins on His shoulders and carried them to the cross. There the innocent Son of God died for poor miserable sinners like you and me. By His holy blood, our sins are forgiven. By His victorious resurrection from the dead, we have life in His name, new life and eternal life.

Now some sins are rather blatant, and the sinners are easy to recognise. Back in Jesus’ day, that included those crooked tax collectors. St. Paul has a list of sinners in the Second Reading today from 1 Timothy. He mentions “*those who are lawless and insubordinate, ...ungodly and sinful people, ...unholy and irreligious, ...those who kill their fathers, ...those who kill their mothers, ...murderers, ...those who are sexually immoral, ...homosexuals, ...kidnappers, ...liars, ...perjurers and for whatever else is contrary to sound teaching*” (1 Tim. 1:9-10). And certainly, God’s Law needs to be applied to unrepentant sinners like these, who are proud of their sins. They need to recognise their sin as damnable sin. The Law needs to crush their pride and drive them to despair of their own goodness. *They need to realise they have no righteousness of their own but must turn to God for mercy and the righteousness that only Christ can provide.* You see, the fact that Jesus welcomes sinners does not mean that God condones or winks at sin or wants us to continue in our sins. Far from it! Instead, God wants all men to come to repentance, both terrible disreputable sinners and comparatively mild respectable sinners - God wants all of us to come to repentance and to find our life and our righteousness and our salvation in Christ Jesus alone. And when that happens, not only does Jesus receive us, not only

does He rejoice over us, but Jesus also restores us and gives us new direction and purpose in our life. Jesus puts us into service in His kingdom. It doesn't matter how far we have gone astray. When Jesus restores us, we have a purpose and a calling in our life, to live out our vocation in this world in service to God and our neighbour.

That's what happened with Paul himself in his own life. Before he was called to be an apostle, as Saul, he had thought he was doing God a service by persecuting the Christians. Paul, Saul, had been one of those very zealous, self-righteous Pharisees like we see in the Gospel reading. But Jesus even brought Paul to repentance so that he recognised how far off the beam he had gotten. Paul reflects on this, and never forgot it. As he writes to Timothy, Paul thanks Christ for appointing him to His service, even though he had been "*a blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man*" (1 Timothy 1:13). But the mercy and grace of our Lord overflowed for Paul, "*that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the chief*" (1 Timothy 1:16). Christ had saved Paul, the chief of sinners, and restored him and given him the privilege of being His apostle, to preach the Gospel he had formerly persecuted.

So it is for us. When Jesus forgives us, He also gives us new life and new opportunities for service in His kingdom. While we may not be called to be an apostle, yet we do have a vocation to live out in God's service. Husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, worker, employer, citizen, church member, or pastor - whatever our calling or callings in life, Jesus has restored us and given us the dignity to live for Him, "*to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.*"

Where should we see ourselves in the picture that Jesus paints for us today? We see ourselves with Jesus, as sinners found by Him and brought back home. For the truth of the matter is, that Jesus welcomes, rejoices over, and restores sinners just like you and me. Amen.

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

## **PRAYER FOR THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have raised from death the Lord Jesus, our great Shepherd, because His death fulfilled Your eternal covenant to save us from sin. We praise You for Your marvellous love and goodness, and pray that You would give us everything we need to know and do Your will, and to live to Your honour and praise. Come into our lives with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Renew in us a true and living faith in Jesus Christ Your Son, so that we may be completely united with Him, trusting not in our own goodness, but in the righteousness based on His death for us.

Keep us from fearing, loving, and trusting anyone or anything more than You. Fill us with love for You, which expresses itself in humble, loving service to our neighbours. Help us to act justly, to love mercy, and to live humbly before You, our God. Move us to show respect to everybody, to be generous to the needy, to share the burdens of the weak, and to act in sincere love to all people. Help us to pattern our lives on Jesus Christ. Make our words sincere and edifying, our lives pure and godly, and our relationships with others peaceful and harmonious.

Make Your Church so aware of Your countless blessings, especially the gift of the Gospel, that it may continually respond with thanks and praise. Inspire Your people to proclaim Christ's saving love to all mankind. Give pastors a true understanding of Your Word. Give wise judgment to those in positions of leadership. Give us all a loving compassion to people in need.

Bless our country and its people, that mercy, truth, uprightness, and peace may be evident everywhere. Give us leaders whose concern is not to serve personal pride or party loyalties, but to be Your instruments of service to all.

Fill our homes with the joy of Your presence. Inspire parents with the Spirit of Christ, so that they may encourage their children by word and example to live godly lives and to find joy in serving You and their fellowmen.

Bless all good and useful employment. Give to all both satisfaction in what they do and a fair reward for their efforts. Teach people in all situations to remember that they are accountable to You for every word and action.

Look with pity on those who are facing trouble and trials, especially those Christians who are suffering for the sake of their faith. Strengthen all the needy by Your mighty power, that they may remember that You are their only saviour and help.

Hear our prayers for Jesus' sake, O Lord, that we may praise You for ever and ever. Amen.

## Article:        Creation (continued)

Moses turns his attention to the account of the creation of woman. God created the man first. He also awakened in the man a realisation that he had no companion. God brought the birds and animals to the man and had him give them names. The first man was not some Neanderthal who shuffled around the earth, uttering grunts and banging the ground with his club. The first man was very intelligent. He didn't need hours of deliberation before coming up with an appropriate name for each creature. He saw, understood, and gave the animals their names.

As Adam went through this process, he became aware that he did not have a companion suitable for him. Thus, God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. From the man, God took a rib. From this rib, God made woman as a suitable helper for the man. It is important to note that the entire human race is descended from one head. Even woman came from man. Thus, when Adam sinned, we all sinned. When Christ obeyed God's will for us, His righteousness was credited to the world's account (Romans 5:18; 1 Cor. 11:8-9). God also established at creation the roles that He wanted man and woman to have. It must be noted that God made marriage heterosexual. God didn't create an 'Alfred' for Adam. He created a woman for Adam. Marriage is also to one spouse. God did not create a harem for Adam. He created one person who was uniquely suitable for him.

By creating the woman for the man, God instituted marriage. Adam recognised that the woman had been taken out of him. God Himself added the information that He had instituted marriage, a union in which one man and one woman are to be united to each other.

The Lord also indicated that part of the companionship of marriage was for the man and the woman to become one flesh. Not only do the two form one unit, but they also engage in sexual relations as part of the companionship God intended for marriage (1 Cor. 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). In chapter 1, Moses also indicates that God had another purpose for the sexual union in marriage. God blessed the man and the woman with the ability to reproduce. He said, "*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it*" (v. 28). God expects husbands and wives to place their marriages in the service of his work of preservation. In this way God preserves human life on the earth. Furthermore, the Bible also tells us that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:3-5).

Finally, God gave the man and the woman vegetation to eat for food. God also

gave every green plant for food to the animals He had created. The first direct statement in the Bible that speaks of God's permission to eat meat is to Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:3). Perhaps animals were already eaten after the fall into sin. The first divine permission, however, is recorded in connection with God's words to Noah after the flood.

At the end of the sixth day of creation, God declares that all that He had made was very good (Gen. 1:31). God is not the author of evil. The creation He made was totally good, in every respect. It was the disobedience of Satan and of Adam and Eve that corrupted God's good creation.

On day seven God rested (Gen. 2:1-3). God made everything in the six days of creation. Moses wrote, "*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array*" (Gen. 2:1).

The account in Genesis 1 and 2 gives us a factual account of God's creation of the world. When people say it doesn't make any difference how God made the world, they are wrong. It does make a difference. We cannot depart from what God has revealed to us in His Word. Where God has not clearly spoken, we cannot speak in more detail than He does. Where He has spoken, we cannot deviate.

*To be continued...*

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at [www.aelc.org.au](http://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.

A tentative plan has been set for a concert to be held at Bethlehem Toowoomba (for more info on the concert, see announcement below). The following is the program:

**Sunday, 20 November.**

9.30am AELC HC service at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Shared lunch and fellowship after service

12.30pm Concert    Cup of tea after the concert

Renovation work has commenced 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, in thanks to all who have supported the project. 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](mailto:bjzisc@gmail.com).

## COMING SERVICES

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

<b>18 September 15 Pentecost</b>	<b>25 September 16 Pentecost</b>	<b>2 October 17 Pentecost</b>
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC Harvest Thanksgiving	9.30am O/G/A combined at AUB HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC & Bible Study 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG LR
<b>Sunday, 18 September</b>		
READINGS: Amos 8:4-7;	1 Timothy 2:1-15;	Luke 16:1-15
HYMNS: 171 339 381 327 MARBURG: 564 814 563 51 293 568		
<b>Sunday, 25 September</b>		
READINGS: Amos 6:1-7;	1 Timothy 6:6-19;	Luke 16:19-31
HYMNS: 445 385 96 (71 285) 379		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, 12pm. A shared lunch will be held at Bethlehem Toowoomba, celebrating Sheilagh (Pip) Beutel's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Please, no presents. All are invited to attend.

Tuesday, 13 September, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Grant.

### BIBLE STUDIES FOR SEPTEMBER:

Sunday, 18. After service at Marburg.

Thursday, 22. 10.00am at Lowood.

Sunday, 25. O/A/G combined after service at Aubigny.