

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

1 March, 2023

Bulletin for the 2nd Mid-Week Lenten Service

HYMNS: 73 298 603 48 v.3

PSALM: LORD, You have been favourable to Your land. You have brought Jacob back from captivity.

You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people. You have covered all their sin.

You have taken back all Your fury. You have turned away from Your fierce anger.

Restore us, O God, You who save us! Withhold Your indignation toward us!

Will You be angry with us for ever? Will You prolong Your anger through all generations?

Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation!

Let me hear what God, the LORD, will speak! For He will promise peace to His people, to His devout people. However, let them not become foolish again!

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

Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

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, to prepare a way for His footsteps.

Psalm 85

COLLECT: God of love and faithfulness, You showed Your favour to Your people by sending Your one and only Son to be our Saviour. Help us to trust in Him as our gracious Redeemer and so enjoy the peace He has come to bring, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SERMON: Mark 11:15-19 Significant Action taken by Jesus on the Monday of Holy Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

Now, however, this is what the LORD has said, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: “Do not be afraid! For I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are Mine. ² When you go through the waters, I shall be with you. When you go through rivers, they will not flood over you. When you walk through fire, you will not be scorched, and the flames will not burn you. ³ For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I have given Egypt as a ransom for you, Sudan and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴ Since you have been precious in My sight, you have been honoured and I Myself have loved you. Therefore I shall give other human beings in exchange for you, and nations in exchange for your life. ⁵ Do not be afraid! For I am with you. I shall bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west. ⁶ I shall tell the north, ‘Give them up!’ and the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from far away and My daughters from the ends of the earth! ⁷ Bring everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed and made!”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
Gospels, Part 2

Drawn from the Four

While they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I tell you, one of you, **one who is eating with Me**, will betray Me!”

They began to be sad, and to ask Him one after another, “I am not the one, am I?”

Jesus answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures have said about Him, but how terrible for that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.”¹

The disciples began to look at one another, at a loss to know whom Jesus meant.

One of His disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Him. Therefore Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus which one He meant. Leaning back so that he was against Jesus’ chest, he asked Him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I shall give the piece of bread when I have dipped it.”

Then He dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. After Judas had taken the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “Do quickly what you are doing!”

¹ Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21

None of those who were reclining at the table knew why Jesus had said this to him. For, since Judas had the moneybag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy the things that we need for the feast!” or that he should give something to the poor. After Judas had taken the piece of bread, he immediately went outside. It was night.

When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him. If God has been glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself; and He will glorify Him immediately.”²

While they were eating, on the night when He was betrayed, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. He said, “Take, eat, this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, “Drink from it all of you, for this is My blood of the new testament, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”³

“Little children, I shall be with you a little longer yet. You will look for Me, but, as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. I am giving you a new Commandment, that you love one another. You also love one another, as I have loved you! By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Simon Peter asked Him, “Lord, where are You going?”

Jesus answered him, “You cannot follow Me now where I am going, but you will follow later.”

Peter asked Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I shall lay down my life for You.”

Then the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, look! Satan has asked for you people, to sift you like wheat. However, I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers!”

However, Peter told Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.”

Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day before you deny three times that you know Me.”

Peter told Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I shall certainly not deny You.” All the other disciples said something similar.⁴

Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you out without a purse, or a bag, or sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?” They answered, “Nothing!”

He told them, “However, now the person who has a purse should take it, and also a

² John 13:22-32

³ Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20

⁴ Matthew 26:33-35; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:33-38

bag! The person who does not have a sword should sell his garment and buy one! For I tell you that this passage of Scripture must be fulfilled in Me, **‘He was numbered with transgressors.’** Yes, what has been written about Me is being fulfilled.”

The disciples said, “Lord, look! Here are two swords.” He told them, “That is enough.”⁵

Then Jesus told them, “All of you will take offence at Me this night. For Scripture has said, **‘I shall strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’** However, after I have been raised, I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.”⁶

After they sang a hymn, Jesus went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, to the Mount of Olives, where there was a garden called Gethsemane. He and His disciples went into it. Now Judas, who was betraying Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples.⁷

When He reached the place, He said to His disciples, “Sit down here, while I go over there and pray! Pray that you may not enter into temptation!”

He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and began to be deeply distressed and troubled. Then He told them, **“My soul is very sorrowful,** to the point of death. Stay here and be watchful with Me!” He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me! Nevertheless, not what I want, but what You want!”

When He came back to the disciples, He found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “So could you men not be watchful with Me for one hour? Be watchful and pray, that you may not enter into temptation! The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass by unless I drink it, let Your will be done.” Again He returned and found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what they should answer Him. He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time. He said the same words as before.

An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. As He was in agony, He prayed more fervently. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground. Then He returned to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise. Let us go. Look, My betrayer is near!”⁸ M: Here ends the reading.

The congregation stands.

⁵ Luke 22:35-38

⁶ Matthew 26:31-32

⁷ John 18:1; Matthew 26:30

⁸ Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46

Significant Action Taken by Jesus on the Monday of Holy Week
Sermon for the 2nd mid-week Lenten Service 2023
Mark 11:15-19

Mark 11:15-19: When they had come to Jerusalem Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who were selling and buying in the Temple. He over-turned the tables of the moneychangers and the chairs of those who were selling doves. ¹⁶ He would not allow anyone to carry any object through the Temple. ¹⁷ Then He began to teach them: “Has not Scripture said, ‘My House will be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? However, you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

¹⁸ When the Chief Priests and scribes heard this, they began to look for a way to destroy Him. For they were afraid of Him, because the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching. ¹⁹ Whenever evening came, they used to go out of the city.

Dear friends in Christ,

We are all familiar with the details of the significant events that took place on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. But what took place on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week? Those three days contain some of Jesus’ most significant actions, teachings, and confrontations with the religious leaders of His day. Beginning tonight and continuing over the coming weeks, we shall explore what occurred on the three significant days between Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday.

Our text for tonight takes place on Monday of Holy Week. On the previous day, Palm Sunday, Jesus had been welcomed to Jerusalem enthusiastically, with the crowd shouting, “*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who is coming in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heavens!*” (Matthew 21:9). Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was a triumphal procession, although at the moment most of the crowd did not know that His real triumph would come later that week when He would conquer sin and death. However, Palm Sunday ended on a bit of an ominous note as Mark records, “*Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. He looked around at everything. Since it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the Twelve*” (Mark 11:11).

The next day, Monday of Holy Week, Jesus would do much more than merely look around the temple grounds. He was disgusted with what He saw and took significant action.

Three years earlier at another time, Jesus had cleansed the temple. John writes how Jesus “*made a whip of small ropes and drove them all out of the Temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables.*”¹⁶ *He told those who sold the doves, “Take these away from here! Stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”* (John 2:15-16). Apparently, His action at that time had not been taken to heart; the evils, with full approval of the authorities, had taken over again. As Mark now records, “**Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who were selling and buying in the Temple. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the chairs of those who were selling doves.**” And quoting Isaiah 56:7, Jesus stated, “**My House will be called a house of prayer for all the nations.**”

Granted, this may seem shocking to us as it’s not how we are accustomed to seeing Jesus. It is not the meek and mild Jesus we sang about at Christmas. So just what was happening?

Each Passover festival, celebrated annually by the Jews in remembrance of God delivering His people from their slavery in Egypt, multitudes of Jews would come to Jerusalem to celebrate. Since some Jews would come from far away, it was much easier for them to buy the animals they needed to sacrifice as close to the Temple as possible rather than trying to bring the animals with them over long distances. So to make matters convenient, the priests just happened to have pre-approved animals for these travellers to purchase. Of course, these animals came at a premium price. There were even reports of kickbacks to some priests and priests rejecting animals purchased at places other than the official temple vendors, thus forcing people to buy from certain salesmen.

Travellers to Jerusalem would also come with foreign currency, so they would have to exchange it for acceptable currency to pay the temple tax. As you may expect, there were reports of the moneychangers charging exorbitant exchange fees. The focus was no longer on God, prayer, and sacrifice but on the “business” of the Temple at Passover time. *That* had become the point of emphasis.

But there was something still more dreadful happening. Note how Jesus' quote of Isaiah states that the Temple was to be a "**house of prayer for all the nations.**" It was to be a house of prayer not just for Jews but for Gentiles as well. That's why the Temple had been constructed with a court for male Jews, a court for female Jews, and a court for Gentiles. The Gentiles were being robbed of the one place in the temple where the Old Testament Law allowed them to worship. So when some of the temple precincts were converted into marketplaces, where would the Gentiles, the "nations," be able to pray and worship? The Temple, meant to be a house of prayer for all nations, was instead a money-making machine for the religious leaders and all who were involved in their greed. This is why Jesus launched into significant action, clearing the temple grounds.

A day of significant action on the part of Jesus sends a message to you and me. We, too, can be tempted to turn the practice of the Christian faith into a means to line our pockets, to make our budget for the year. And it is so easy for us to give budgets and offerings, income and expenses such a high priority that we lose sight of the real reason we're doing what we're doing as a congregation. If the Lord blesses us with growth, do we view new people with joy, who, like us, need to be fed with God's gifts of Word and Sacrament? Or would we, at least in part, welcome them with the thought that these people can help us make our budget?

Now I'm not saying that we shouldn't have a budget and that we shouldn't plan and make financial projections, but we must be on guard to keep our priorities straight. Budgets are there to serve the ministry, not the other way around!

The moneychangers and the vendors who sold animals for sacrifice had placed a real obstacle in the way for people, especially Gentiles, to worship God. In fact, they all but precluded the Gentiles from being able to pray and worship in the temple courts. Are there any obstacles to the worship of God in your life this day? Are there self-inflicted obstacles? Are there obstacles that have been placed there by someone else, perhaps someone close to you? Or are you possibly placing obstacles in the lives of others who seek to worship?

Jesus would like nothing more than to take significant action in overturning and driving those obstacles out of your life so that you would instead receive His good gifts of Word and Sacrament from Him.

It was significant action indeed on the part of Jesus on the Monday of this most Holy Week, yet, it would pale by comparison to the significant action He would take for us and for all people at the end of this week. He would not drive vendors and animals from the temple court. Instead, He would drive sin, death, and the devil from their place of rule and dominance in the lives of people. And in so doing, He drove out what separated us from God, namely, our sin.

And all Christ has accomplished for us became ours on a wonderful day of significant action in our lives, the day of our baptism. A day of significant action on God’s part, indeed. On this day, the Holy Spirit, working through water and the Word, called us to faith, washed away all our sin, claimed us as children of God, and made us heirs of everlasting life. But it doesn’t stop there. Even today He continues to shower upon us all His blessings. He invites us to regularly gather in His “**house of prayer,**” a place where baptisms still happen, a place where the Word is still proclaimed, and His body and blood is received through the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. May this continue until Jesus returns in glory, to usher in His new kingdom, where we shall reign with Him forever more. Amen.

<p style="text-align: center;">5 March, Sunday 2 Lent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8 March Mid-week LENTEN SERVICE</p>
<p>8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC</p>	<p>7.30pm GRN Vespers</p>