

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

8 March 2023

Bulletin for the 3rd mid-week Lenten Service

HYMNS: 72 292 250 48 v.3

PSALM: Who, then, is the man who fears the LORD? He will teach him in the way that he should choose.

He himself will dwell in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land.

The intimate advice of the LORD is for those who fear Him, so that He causes them to know His Covenant.

My eyes are constantly on the LORD. For He will pull my feet out of the snare.

Turn to me and be gracious to me! For I am lonely and afflicted.

The troubles of my heart have multiplied. Bring me out of my afflictions!

Look on my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins!

Look at my enemies! For they are many and hate me with violent antipathy.

Protect my life and rescue me! Let me not **be put to shame!** For I have been taking refuge in You.

May innocence and honesty protect me! For I have been waiting for You.

Redeem Israel, O God, from all his troubles!

Psalm 25:12-22

COLLECT: Lord God, our Help and Deliverer, we thank You for lifting us out of the desolate pit and muddy clay, and for setting our feet upon the Rock, our Lord Jesus Christ, who carried out Your will and rose to live and rule with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SERMON: Mark 12:28-37 Significant Questions – Tuesday of Holy Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 48:12-21

“Listen to me, Jacob, and Israel, whom I have called! I am He. I am the First. I am also the Last. ¹³ My hand laid the foundation of the earth. My right hand spread out the heavens. While I was summoning them, they stood up together.

¹⁴ Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has predicted these things? The LORD loves him. He will carry out His purpose on Babylon. He will use His arm against the Chaldeans.

¹⁵ “I, yes, I, have spoken. Yes, I have called him. I have brought him, and his way will be successful. ¹⁶ Come close to Me! Listen to this: ‘From the beginning I have not spoken anything in secret. I have been there from the time when it began to happen. Now therefore, the Lord GOD has sent Me and His Spirit.’”

¹⁷ This is what the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel has said: “I am the LORD, your God, I am teaching you for your benefit, and I am leading you on the way on which you should go. ¹⁸ If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. ¹⁹ Your descendants would have been like the sand, and the children coming from you would have been like its grains. Their names would never have been cut off or destroyed from before Me.”

²⁰ Leave Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare this with a shout of joy! Proclaim this! Send it out to the end of the earth! Say, “The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!” ²¹ They had not been thirsty when He led them through the deserts. He had made water flow down from a rock for them. He had split a rock and water had gushed out.

P This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Drawn from the Four Gospels, Part 3

Just then, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Therefore Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, “For whom are you looking?”

They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus told them, “I am He.”

Judas, who was betraying Him, was also standing with them. When Jesus told them, “I am He,” they went backwards, and fell to the ground.

Therefore Jesus asked them again, “For whom are you looking?”

They said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if I am the One for whom you are looking, let these men go!”

This happened in order that the statement that He had made might be fulfilled: “I have not lost any of those whom You have given Me.”

The man who was betraying Him had given them a signal. He told them, “The One whom I kiss is the One. Arrest Him, and lead Him away securely!”

When he came, he immediately went up to Jesus and said, “Rabbi,” and kissed Him.

However, Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Then the men came forward, took hold of Jesus, and arrested Him.

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Then Jesus told him, "Put your sword back in its place! For all who take the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, so that He will at once provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?" Then He touched the servant's ear and healed him.

At that time Jesus asked the crowd, "Have you come out to arrest Me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? Every day I have been sitting and teaching in the temple, and you have not arrested Me. However, all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled."

Then all His disciples deserted Him and ran away. A certain young man was also following Him wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They tried to take hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.¹

Then the troop of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish assistants arrested Jesus, and tied Him up. They took Him to Annas first. For he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews, "It is better that one Man should die for the people."²

Then those who had arrested Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the chief priest, where the scribes and the elders had been called together.³

Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. That other disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. However, Peter was standing outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl watching the door, and brought Peter inside. When the men had lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and had sat down together, Peter sat down among them.⁴

The chief priests and the whole Jewish council kept on looking for false testimony against Jesus in order to put Him to death. However, they did not find any, although many false witnesses came forward. Later two men came forward, and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days.'"⁵ However, even on this point their evidence did not agree.

¹ Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-54; John 18:1-11

² John 18:12-14

³ Matthew 26:57

⁴ John 18:15-16; Luke 22:55

⁵ Matthew 26:59-61

Then the chief priest stood up in the middle and asked Jesus, “Are You not answering at all? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

However, Jesus remained silent and did not answer at all. Again the chief priest asked Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Then the chief priest tore his clothes, and said, “Why do we need witnesses any more? You have heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?” They all condemned Him, saying that He deserved to die. Then some men began to spit at Him, cover His face, strike Him with their fists, and say to Him, “Prophecy!” The attendants also gave Him blows.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the chief priest came, and, when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You were also with the Man from Nazareth, this Jesus!”

However, he denied it, saying: “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” He went outside to the forecourt, and a rooster crowed. When the servant girl saw him, she again began to tell those who were standing around, “This is one of them!”

However, he denied it again. After a little while, those who were standing near began to say to Peter again, “In fact you are one of them. For you are a Galilean.”

However, he began to curse and swear: “I do not know this Man, about whom you are talking.”

Just then, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. Then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered the Word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.”

Then he went outside and wept bitterly.⁶

When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people came to a decision against Jesus, to put Him to death. They bound Him, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate, the governor. When Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver coins back to the chief priests and elders. He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

However, they said, “What is that to us? You should see to it!”

So he threw down the pieces of silver into the temple and departed. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are the price of blood.”

⁶ Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:60-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27

They made the decision to use them to buy the Potter's Field, as a burial place for foreigners. Therefore that field has been called "the Field of Blood" to this day. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, "I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him who had been valued, whom those of the children of Israel had valued, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord had commanded me."⁷

M: Here ends the reading.

The congregation stands.

We are Confronted with Two Very Significant Questions - Tuesday of Holy Week

Sermon for the 3rd mid-week Lenten Service 2023 Mark 12:28-37

Grace and peace to you all from our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The text for our sermon tonight is Mark 12:28-37: **One of the scribes came to Him. When he heard them arguing and saw that Jesus had been answering them well, he asked Him, "Which Commandment is the first of them all?"**

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The first one is: 'Hear, Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one,³⁰ and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength!' ³¹ The second one is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself!' There is no other Commandment greater than these."

³² The scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher! You have told the truth in saying that He is one and that there is no other besides Him. ³³ Loving Him with all one's heart, with all one's understanding and with all one's strength and loving one's neighbour as oneself is also more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered sensibly, He told him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

After that, no one dared to ask Him another question.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, He asked, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet!'" ³⁷ David himself calls Him 'Lord'. Then how is He his son?"

The large crowd used to enjoy listening to Him.

⁷ Matthew 27:1-10

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

Dear friends in Christ,

You and I ask questions every day. Some of them are not important or critical, such as, “What’s for dinner?” or, “Did you watch the end of the footy game yesterday?”

While some questions we ask every day are somewhat routine and not critically important, there are other much more significant questions that we ask at times, such as, “Will you marry me?” or, “Did you get the job?” or, “Is the biopsy cancerous?” These are not simple questions but are significant, life-changing questions.

Tonight, we continue our Lenten series by considering what took place on Tuesday of Holy Week. Jesus had entered Jerusalem amid enthusiastic crowds on Palm Sunday. Then, on Monday, had taken significant action in clearing the temple grounds of the merchants and moneychangers. On Tuesday, we are confronted with two very significant questions, one that a scribe asks Jesus and another that Jesus asks the crowds in the temple area.

Jesus had just been having a discussion with the Sadducees, the Jewish religious clergy. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection from the dead.⁸ A lone scribe who was listening in was impressed with Jesus’ words. The scribes and Pharisees would have enjoyed Jesus winning a debate over the Sadducees.

Anyhow, this lone scribe, who probably had painstakingly written down hundreds and hundreds of commandments, things that one should and should not do, was now genuinely interested in this great Teacher. He didn’t appear to be trying to trick Jesus but wanted to hear from Him, so he asked, **“Which Commandment is the first of them all?”**

Jesus’ response is a two-part answer summarising all of God’s Law. He says, **“The first one is: ‘Hear, Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one,³⁰ and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength!’”** Jesus is quoting the Old Testament here, specifically Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

Notice that the answer to this question begins *not with what we should or should not do* but with God, His being and His essence. **“The Lord, our God, the Lord is one.”** He is one Divine Being, and He is the only one. As opposed to all the false gods of the Canaanites in the Old Testament, the only true God is one, and God rightly demands that we love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength.

⁸ Mark 12:18

This, by the way, was a very familiar passage for Old Testament believers since it was part of the prayer all pious Israelites were expected to pray three times a day. There was no doubt in their estimation that this was the most important commandment. What was new about Jesus' answer was what He said about our neighbour, placing this on the same level as the first when He added, "**The second one is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself!'**" Here again, Jesus is quoting the Old Testament, this time Leviticus 19:18. In these two responses, Jesus has correctly summarised God's Law.

If you and I could love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, we would never violate the first three commandments. We would never fail to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. We would never misuse His name and always remember the Sabbath day, keeping it holy.

But you and I know how feeble and faint our love of God can sometimes be. You and I know how often we put ourselves first and God a distant second.

If we could truly love our neighbour as ourselves - always and perfectly - we would never violate the fourth through the tenth commandments. We would always honour our father and mother. We would never kill, let alone be angry with someone. We would never commit adultery, even in our thoughts. We would never take what belongs to our neighbour. We would never do or say anything that could hurt our neighbour's reputation and good name, and we would never have a passionate desire to have what belongs to our neighbour.

Here again, we come up short. All of life toward God and other people is summarised in these two statements: **loving God with all we have and loving our neighbour as ourselves.** It's not just the outward acts but the internal sins against our neighbour associated with these commandments that do us in.

The good news is that the one talking with the scribe is the one God. He is the one God who came to do what we could never do. He came to fulfil the Law of God perfectly and completely. He loved God with all of His heart, soul, mind, and strength. He alone loved His neighbour as Himself.

In fact, He would lay down His life for His neighbours - and they include you and me. Now, you and I appear before God in the merits of Christ and His cross, in His righteousness, as if we had perfectly fulfilled all of God's Law. By God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, you and I are now clothed in the perfect obedience of Christ. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1).

But now Jesus has a significant question of His own. This question would point to the miracle of God becoming man in Jesus Christ. Christ asks, "**How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?**"

The scribes were the experts and the interpreters of the Old Testament for the people and were correct in teaching that the Christ, the Messiah, would come from the line of King David in the Old Testament.

Jesus then quotes Psalm 110, verse 1, a psalm that David had written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit concerning God the Father and the Messiah. He said, **“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet!”** Jesus points out that David himself called the coming Messiah “Lord.” David referred to both the Father and the coming Messiah as “Lord.” So how could this Messiah be both the son and the Lord of David?

There is only one answer to that significant question, and the answer was standing right in front of the large crowd in the temple that Tuesday. He is the God-man, Jesus Christ. He is 100% God and 100% man. He is the One who was there at the creation of the world with God and was in every way God Himself. He is the One who commanded wind and waves to cease, and they obeyed. He is the One who healed all sorts of physical infirmities and problems, removing them as if they never existed. He is the One who demonstrated His mastery over life and death by raising three people that we know of from death to life once again. And, as we shall gather to rejoice and celebrate in a few weeks, He is the One whom death and the grave could not hold! He is the One who rose triumphant from the grave!

He was, is, and remains David’s Lord and our Lord. *“That is why God also has very highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth may kneel, and that everyone may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil. 2:9-11). God the Father has said to David’s Lord, Jesus Christ, **“Sit at My right hand,”** and from that place of all power and authority, Christ reigns over all creation. From that place, He cares and provides for us. From that place, He has answered all of our significant questions. Amen.

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

<p style="text-align: center;">12 March, Sunday 3 Lent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">15 March Mid-week LENTEN SERVICE</p>
<p>8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7.30pm OAK Vespers</p>