

HYMNS: 498 783 80 175 85 416

INTROIT: Psalm 68:1-10

God will arise. His enemies will scatter, so that those who hate Him will flee from Him.

As smoke is blown away, You will blow them away. As wax melts before the fire, wicked people will perish before God.

Nevertheless, righteous people will be glad. They will rejoice before God. They will be glad and rejoice.

Sing to God! Sing praise to His name! Prepare a road for Him who rides through the deserts! His name is the LORD. Be very glad in His presence!

God, who is in His holy dwelling place, is the Father of the fatherless and the Defender of widows.

God places lonely people in homes. He leads prisoners out into prosperity, but rebellious people live in a scorched land.

O God, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness — the earth quaked, the heavens indeed poured down rain before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.

You caused a plentiful rain to fall, O God. You firmly established Your weary inheritance.

It was Your dwelling place in which they settled. Out of Your goodness, O God, You prepared for needy people.

COLLECT: O king of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation, but send us the Spirit of truth, whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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.

READINGS:

Acts 1:12-26 Matthias is chosen as an apostle.

1 Peter 4:12-19, 5:6-11 The Spirit of God is resting on you.

John 17:1-11 Glorify Your Son.

Acts 1:12-26

¹² Then they went back to Jerusalem from what was called “the Mount of Olives,” which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

¹³ When they entered, they went to the second-floor room where they were staying. There were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew; James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas, the son of James. ¹⁴ With one mind these all kept praying together, along with the women, Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the disciples (the number of persons all together was about a hundred and twenty) and he said, ¹⁶ “Men, brothers, the passage of Scripture that the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David about Judas had to be fulfilled. He served as a guide for the men who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For Judas had been counted as one of us and had received his portion in this ministry. ¹⁸ With the reward that he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field. He fell headlong and burst open in the middle and all his intestines poured out. ¹⁹ All those who live in Jerusalem have heard about it; and so that piece of land is called ‘Akeldama’ in their language, that is, ‘Field of Blood.’ ²⁰ For Scripture has said in the book of Psalms: ‘**Let his home be deserted and let there be no one who lives in it!**’ and ‘**Let someone else take his position of oversight!**’ ²¹ Therefore, there must be one of the men who have accompanied us all through the time when the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² one of these men who have been with us, beginning with the baptism of John until the day when Jesus was taken up from us, to be a witness with us of His resurrection.”

²³ They proposed two men: Joseph, called “Barsabbas,” who was also known as “Justus,” and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, You know the hearts of all. Show which of these two You have chosen ²⁵ to take over the position of this ministry and office of apostle, from which Judas has transgressed, to go to his own place!”

²⁶ They cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias, and he was chosen by vote to be added to the eleven apostles.

1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

¹² Dearly loved people, do not be astonished at the fiery ordeal among you, by which you are being tested, as though something strange were happening to you!

¹³ However, rejoice in as far as you share in Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be very glad when His glory is revealed! ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because **the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on you.** ¹⁵ Of course, none of you should suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal or one who meddles in the affairs of others! ¹⁶ However, if anyone suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed but should glorify God for that name!

¹⁷ For it is time for the judgment to **begin with the household of God.** However, if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who refuse to listen to the Good News of God? ¹⁸ **If it is hard for a righteous person to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and sinful person?** ¹⁹ Therefore, those who are suffering according to the will of God should commit their souls to the faithful Creator, as they continue to do good! ...

^{5:6} Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the right time! ⁷ **Cast all your anxiety on Him!** For He cares for you.

⁸ Be self-controlled and alert! Your enemy, the Devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Be strong in your faith and resist him, knowing that your fellow-Christians in the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings! ¹⁰ After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you in Christ Jesus to His eternal glory, will Himself make you complete, make you firm, make you strong and give you a good foundation.

¹¹ To Him be the power for ever! Amen.

John 17:1-11

¹ Jesus spoke these Words, looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You! ² For You have given Him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. ³ This is eternal life, to know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. ⁴ I have glorified You on the earth by finishing the work that You have given Me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify Me at Your side with the glory that I had with You before the world existed!

⁶ "I have made Your name known to the people whom You have given Me out

of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. ⁷ Now they know that all things that You have given Me come from You, ⁸ because I have given them the Words that You have given Me, and they have received them and learned the truth that I have come from You and have believed that You have sent Me. ⁹ I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me. For they are Yours. ¹⁰ All that are Mine are Yours, and what are Yours are Mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name that You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are one!

GLORIOUS SUFFERING

Sermon for the Seventh Sunday of Easter 2023

1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

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 Second Reading from before, 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11: **Dearly loved people, do not be astonished at the fiery ordeal among you, by which you are being tested, as though something strange were happening to you!** ¹³ However, rejoice in as far as you share in Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be very glad when His glory is revealed! ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on you. ¹⁵ Of course, none of you should suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal or one who meddles in the affairs of others! ¹⁶ However, if anyone suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed but should glorify God for that name!

¹⁷ For it is time for the judgment to begin with the household of God. However, if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who refuse to listen to the Good News of God? ¹⁸ If it is hard for a righteous person to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and sinful person? ¹⁹ Therefore, those who are suffering according to the will of God should commit their souls to the faithful Creator, as they continue to do good! ...

^{5:}⁶ Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the right time! ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on Him! For He cares for you.

⁸ Be self-controlled and alert! Your enemy, the Devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Be strong in your faith and resist him, knowing that your fellow-Christians in the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings! ¹⁰ After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you in Christ Jesus to His eternal glory, will Himself make you complete, make you firm, make you strong and give you a good foundation. ¹¹ To Him be the power for ever! Amen.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Two words that do not seem to go together are “glory” and “suffering.” Both words are at the opposite end of the spectrum. In Peter’s Letter and in words from our Gospel this morning from John, we find the idea of “glory” paired with the concept of “suffering.” But how can one glory if he suffers? That doesn’t make any sense, and yet, as redeemed children of God, they do. Our lives are lives of being in glory and yet suffering at the same time. How so? Listen to what St. Peter writes, **“Dearly loved people, do not be astonished at the fiery ordeal among you, by which you are being tested, as though something strange were happening to you! ¹³ However, rejoice in as far as you share in Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be very glad when His glory is revealed! ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on you.”**

“Glory” and “suffering” are placed back-to-back - and *there’s more*. Peter goes on to say: **“If anyone suffers as a Christian, he should not be ashamed but should glorify God for that name!”** and, **“Your fellow-Christians in the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings! ¹⁰ After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you in Christ Jesus to His eternal glory, will Himself make you complete, make you firm, make you strong and give you a good foundation.”**

According to Peter, it is as though we are supposed to rejoice when sufferings come our way on account of being Christians, that we may rejoice when the glory of Christ is revealed. If we are insulted, we are blessed because the Spirit of glory and God rests upon us. If we suffer as Christians, we are supposed to give glory to God. Christians worldwide are experiencing these sorts of sufferings, but this suffering is only for a little while because *God has called us to eternal glory.*

How can this be? How can Peter speak of glory when writing to Christians suffering fiery trials and persecutions? Actually, whether Christian or not, who enjoys suffering? Who likes to be persecuted? How can this suffering be glorious?

That's what Peter is saying, but let's be clear here. He's not saying that we *enjoy* the suffering itself. He's not saying that we should go out looking for persecution. No, that's not it. But he is saying that if we are persecuted - if we do encounter suffering on account of our Christian faith, even in those circumstances - we have something to rejoice over, that we can consider ourselves blessed, that we can give glory to God, and that we shall experience glory in the end. That's different than saying we go out looking for trouble and enjoy suffering.

Make no mistake: Christians do and will experience suffering and persecution on account of belonging to Christ. The world will bring it upon us. The devil will bring it upon us. Only don't bring suffering upon yourselves, Peter is saying, by doing things like being "**a murderer, a thief, a criminal or one who meddles in the affairs of others.**" Peter has made this distinction throughout this Letter. Make sure you don't blame your suffering on being a Christian when you're really experiencing trouble because you've done something terrible. We'll have enough trouble as it is, being on the receiving end of suffering from our adversary the Devil and the hostile world around us. They will give us grief enough.

And that is happening. It happened to the people to whom Peter wrote, those Christians in Asia Minor in the first century. Persecutions broke out in various places in the Roman Empire during the first couple of centuries of the church. Peter himself would be put to death - by crucifixion, in Rome, under Emperor Nero - within a couple of years of writing this Letter.

And the suffering and the persecution haven't stopped since. Even today, many are put to death for their faith in Jesus. Peter reminds us: "**Your fellow-Christians in the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings!**" Yes, they are, still today. Christians are being crucified and beheaded, literally, in various places in the world today. Muslim jihadists are violently persecuting and killing Christians in our day, in parts of the Middle East, in Africa, and in other Islamic lands. In Nigeria, the militant Islamic group Boko Haram has been murdering Christians and blowing up churches for several years now. Not as violent, but in China, the government there is removing the crosses from on top

of church buildings. In Europe, America, and Australia, things are a little more subdued. We're not facing imprisonment or death, not yet, but the culture and even our government have turned against Christianity.

How about you? Have you experienced any kind of suffering for being a Christian? Maybe not. Maybe it's been mild. But don't think it couldn't happen. Or maybe you haven't given much of a Christian witness with your life, so there hasn't been anything to persecute you over. If you have been keeping your mouth shut as a Christian for fear of being rejected by others - well, that's not good. Of course, we should not go out of our way to be obnoxious with a Christian witness, but don't hold back! Don't be afraid to speak up for Christ or for His church.

That's what Peter is getting at. He's giving us courage and hope and confidence in his Letter, even in the midst of sufferings and trials. We have reasons to take courage in Christ. We have cause for hope in Christ. We have glory awaiting us at the coming of Christ, and we have God beside us, even now, caring for us, watching over us, and strengthening us for whatever ordeal may come our way. This is how and why we can rejoice; we can consider ourselves blessed, and we can glorify God, *even in the midst of sufferings*.

And this is where the glory and suffering paired up in our Gospel reading for today comes in. In John 17, Jesus Himself uses the ideas of glory and suffering, paired up over and over again in His high priestly prayer to His Father: "*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You!*"² *For You have given Him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.*"³ *This is eternal life, to know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*"⁴ *I have glorified You on the earth by finishing the work that You have given Me to do.*"⁵ *Now, Father, glorify Me at Your side with the glory that I had with You before the world existed!"* (John 17:1-5).

"Glorify" and "glorify" all over the place. Jesus doesn't use the word "suffering" here, but that's what He's talking about - His own suffering, just about to happen. The hour has come, the time for His suffering and death. Jesus is about to enter it, momentarily, on the night when He prays this prayer. Jesus will be betrayed, arrested in the Garden, taken to trials in the night, handed over to the Roman governor, and beaten and crucified. That is suffering in the extreme. And yet Jesus says this is how His work is being accomplished. This is how Jesus is glorifying the Father's name - by going to the cross. This is the work the Father gave Jesus to do, that is, to win the salvation of the world by and through His

suffering. This is how God is glorified because it shows the great mercy and love that God has for us fallen sinners. God has given His own Son to redeem us, to free us from our bondage to sin and death. God's own Son made the perfect sacrifice for sin that covers all our wrongdoing. Our sins are forgiven on account of Christ. Death has lost its stranglehold. Christ's own resurrection shows what's in store for us. We share in His righteousness and His victory. We receive His life, being baptised in His name, and this life is eternal; *it lasts forever*.

Dear friends, this is what makes Christian suffering so glorious. By sharing in Christ's sufferings, it tells us that we also will have a share in His glory. Not that we earn our way into glory by our noble act of suffering. No. But because we are Christians, the sufferings will just come with the territory. It was that way for Peter the apostle and the readers of his Letter. It was that way for all the martyrs of the past. It is that way today for all our suffering brothers and sisters around the world. And it may even be that way for us, that is, this suffering for the faith. Yes, it may happen to us, too, to one degree or another. If it does, when it does, at those times rejoice and be glad, and give glory to God. For this suffering, suffering for the sake of Christ - this is reminding us that we are truly blessed. Glorious suffering indeed! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Almighty God, our light and our salvation, we praise You for Your love and pity to all people. But we praise You especially for giving us Your only Son Jesus Christ, who has ascended in triumph to Your right hand and sits at Your right hand with all other authority subordinated to Him. We thank You for crowning Him with glory and honour because of His obedient life, His innocent suffering, His redeeming death, and His resurrection. You have made Him king over all and Lord of all things for the benefit of the Church. Grant that we too may continue to confess Him as Lord of our hearts and our only Saviour.

Enable us through Your Holy Spirit to understand and know the things that belong to Your eternal kingdom. Comfort and strengthen us by Your heavenly truth. Stir our lives by Your Spirit, so that we may be ready to forgive others, love others as brothers and sisters, and be willing to help others generously and cheerfully. Keep us watchful and prayerful, so that we may not fall into temptation. If need be, give us the willingness to suffer for Jesus' sake. When testing comes, help us through Your Spirit to stand firm and steady, always busy in our work for You.

Renew all who serve in Your Church by Your gracious, powerful Spirit, that Christ may be consistently confessed, His cross uplifted, and His Gospel proclaimed as the only power that saves. Give grace and power to all pastors and missionaries, and warm love to all Your people, so that all may use their varied gifts to Your praise, through Jesus Christ.

Bless all parents, that they may give a good example to their children and encourage them in faith, godly living, daily study of Your Word, and a life of service to You and to all people.

Pour out Your Spirit on our nation, that our people may live in peaceful and pious homes, and may serve You in all godliness and honour. Give Your blessing to all who work with mind or hand, that they may do their tasks honestly and conscientiously, and receive both satisfaction and a proper reward for their service. Give true wisdom to all in government, that they may perform their duties in ways that please You.

Hear the prayers of all in trouble and suffering. In the quiet hours of the night when there is no one to share their burdens of pain, loneliness, and worry, give them Your strength and hope, and assure them of Your love, power, and constant presence.

We give to You, heavenly Father, and your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and to the Spirit of glory and of peace, all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: The Fear of the Lord

Should we fear God? Some Christians will say yes and mean the right thing. Some Christians will say no and mean the right thing. Some non-Christians will say yes and mean the wrong thing. Some non-Christians will say no and mean the wrong thing. It depends on the meaning of the word "fear." A slave fears a cruel master. A son fears a kind father. The slave cringes in terror - akin to hatred - and is afraid. The son bows in respect - akin to love - and is not afraid.

Some non-Christians say that we should not fear God. Worldly modern people think that God, if He exists at all, does not care about sin. There is no need for fear - or for forgiveness - because God was not angry in the first place. They are wrong. God is just. God is angry at their sin. They should be afraid. They should repent.

Some non-Christians say that we should fear God. They believe that God exists and that our relationship to Him is simply a matter of obedience or disobedience. They obey outwardly to some extent but only out of fear. They see God as a severe Taskmaster and stern Judge. They need to learn the true meaning of God's Law. They need to be told the depth of their sinfulness, the total inadequacy of their merely outward attempts to obey God's Law. They should be afraid. They should repent.

By the Law, God brings people to repent, to acknowledge their sins against God, and to know their need for forgiveness. Through the Gospel, God brings them to believe, to trust that their sins have been forgiven because Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, has died in their place for their sins. When they believe the Gospel, they are Christians. They will answer the question differently: should we fear God?

Some Christians say that we should not fear God. They mean that we should not be scared or afraid of God, just as children do not shrink in terror from a loving father. That is correct. God's perfect love for us removes that kind of fear, for God loved us so much that He gave His Son to suffer and die in our place for our sins. The Gospel, the good news of forgiveness for Jesus' sake, removes our fear, for Christ has removed the need to fear - in the sense of terror, being scared or afraid. The Gospel gives us boldness and confidence as we approach God in prayer or see our death and the end of the world approach.

Some Christians say that we should fear God. They mean that believers in Christ should still respect God, stand in awe of Him, and remember His justice, power, and holiness. God's love in Christ moves us to love Him and be grateful to Him - and to respect Him more than ever, in the right way. A child who knows his father's strength will be all the more grateful for his father's love, for being loved, forgiven, and welcomed into his father's favour. Our awe of God's power can only make us more grateful that He is gracious to us for Jesus' sake.

It takes work to keep this straight. We are saints and sinners at the same time. The Law still terrifies us any time and every time we hear it - and rightly so, for we are sinners. Then and always, we need the Gospel. The Gospel, the good news of forgiveness, life, and salvation for Jesus' sake, calms our fears and takes away our terror - and rightly so, for we are saints. We are those whom God considers holy and sinless, perfectly innocent because Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, died for our sins in our place.

Should we fear God? The Bible seems to say yes and no. The seeming contradiction is removed if we remember the different meanings of the word "fear." We should not fear God with the fear of torture, torment, and terror (1 John 4:17-18). We should fear God with the fear of respect and awe (Psalm 130:4). We need to remember this distinction when we read Bible passages that speak of the fear of the Lord. Christians should fear God in a positive way, not in a negative way.

Should we fear God? The non-Christian should be afraid of God, with terror taught by the Law. Then his fears should be calmed by the Gospel. If he refuses to repent or, having repented, if he refuses to believe, he remains a non-Christian. He has not received forgiveness. He should still only fear God.

Should we fear God? The Christian should not be afraid of God. Though the Law has taught him terror, the Gospel has relieved that fear and replaced it with faith, trust, boldness, and confidence in God's grace in Christ. God is no longer mad at us because of our sins. God is pleased with us because of our Saviour.

Children's Message:

Does anyone know what a judge wears in a court of law? He or she wears a black robe. A judge doesn't just go into the closet in the morning and choose something to wear that he likes. Or he doesn't just put on a suit and tie that he thinks looks sharp. Wearing whatever you want to wear is a way of saying I get to choose whatever I want to do, and lots of things we do get to choose, but that's not the way it works for a judge. A judge puts on a robe that looks just like what every other judge wears. The robe reminds the judge and everyone in the courtroom that the judge doesn't choose to do whatever he or she wants and doesn't make decisions based on what the judge wants to do. A person wearing that robe is not to make judgments based on his or her own opinion. He or she is there to make a judgment based on the law. The judge represents not himself or herself but the law.

Our first Bible reading today, from Acts, was about calling a new pastor, Matthias. Like a judge wears a robe, every pastor wears a stole. That's the thing he wears around his neck. At this time of year, it is white in colour. A stole is given to the pastor on the day he's ordained, the day he becomes a pastor. And every time a pastor gets ready to lead worship, he doesn't just go into his closet and choose whatever he wants to wear. He puts on some kind of robe, and then he always puts



on a stole. Just like for the judge, this stole is a reminder that as pastor, I don't say or do whatever I want. I only say and do what God says in His Holy Word. When I was ordained, when I first put on a stole, I promised God in front of God's people that I would only say what Jesus wants me to say, nothing more, nothing less. In fact, stoles especially remind us of that because it goes over the neck the way a yoke goes over the neck of an animal that's hitched up to pull a plough or a wagon. The horse pulling the wagon doesn't go wherever it wants to, does it? It only goes where the driver makes it go by pulling on the reins. Same way, a pastor only says what God tells him to say in His Word, the Bible.

Is that good - that pastor only says what God tells him to say? Yes, it is! Because God's Word tells pastors to tell you about Jesus - all that He commands you and how much He loves you, even to die on the cross to give you eternal life.

Thank You Jesus for giving us pastors to tell the good news of our salvation! Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

28 May Pentecost	4 June Trinity Sunday	11 June 2 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 28 May		
READINGS: Numbers 11:24-30; Acts 2:1-21; John 7:37-39		
HYMNS: 123 121 306 (763 398) 134		
Sunday, 4 June		
READINGS: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Acts 2:14a-22-36; Matthew 28:16-20		
HYMNS: 140 139 136 (789 842) 221		

BIBLE STUDIES:

Thursday, 25 May, Lowood, 10.00am.

Friday, 26 May, Oak/Aub at Aubigny, 7.30pm.

Sunday, 28 May, Toowoomba, 8.00am.