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

18 June - Third Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 347 852 456 451

INTROIT: Psalm 100

Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth!

Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with joyful singing!

Know that the LORD is God! It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, and bless His name!

For the LORD is good. His mercy endures for ever, and His faithfulness through all generations.

COLLECT: Almighty, eternal God, in the Word of Your apostles and prophets You have proclaimed to us Your saving will. Grant us faith to believe Your promises, that we may receive eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Exodus 19:2-8 Moses ascends the mountain to God. Romans 5:6-15 While we were sinners, Christ died for us. Matthew 9:35-10:20 Jesus' compassion, and the call and the sending out of the Twelve.

Exodus 19:2-8

² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai and set up camp in the wilderness. Therefore, Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain. He said: "This is what you shall inform the family of Jacob and what you shall tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen for

yourselves what I have done to the Egyptians and how I have carried you on the wings of eagles and have brought you here to Myself! ⁵ Now, if you strictly obey Me and keep My Covenant, then out of all nations you will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.' These are the Words that you shall speak to the people of Israel!"

⁷ Moses came back, summoned the elders of the people and laid before them all these things, which the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, "We shall do everything that the LORD has said." Then Moses took the answer of the people back to the LORD.

Romans 5:6-15

⁶ For, while we were still helpless, at the set time Christ died for ungodly people. ⁷ For very rarely will someone die for a righteous person, although someone might perhaps even dare to die for a good person. ⁸ However, God shows His own love for us by this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more, therefore, now that we have been justified by His blood, we shall be saved through Him from God's wrath. ¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, now that we have been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

¹² Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death also spread to all people, since all have sinned. ¹³ For until the Law sin was in the world. However, sin is not charged against anyone's account when there is no Law. ¹⁴ Yet death ruled from Adam to Moses, also over those who had not sinned in the same way as Adam did when he broke the Command (Adam was a type of Him who was to come). ¹⁵ However, the free gift is not like the transgression. For, if the many died as the result of the one man's transgression, much more, God's grace and the gracious gift of the One Man, Jesus Christ, have overflowed to the many.

Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-20)

³⁵ Then Jesus travelled through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness.

³⁶ When He saw the crowds, He felt sorry for them, because they were troubled and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd**. ³⁷ Then He told His disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸ Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest!"

- ^{10:1} Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out unclean spirits and to heal every disease and every sickness.
- ² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of, Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax-collector, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.
- ⁵ Jesus sent these Twelve out with the following Instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any city of the Samaritans! ⁶ Go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel! ⁷ As you go, preach: 'The kingdom of heaven is near!' ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and drive out demons! You have received freely: give freely! ⁹ Do not get any gold, silver or copper money to put into your money-belts! ¹⁰ Do not take a bag for the road or two tunics or sandals or a staff! For a worker is worth his food. ¹¹ Whenever you go into any city or village, inquire who is worthy in it and stay there until you leave! ¹² When you go into the home, greet it! ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace come on it! However, if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you! ¹⁴ If anyone does not welcome you or listen to your words, go outside of that house or that city and shake off the dust from your feet! ¹⁵ Truly, I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city. ¹⁶ You see, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves!
- ¹⁷ "Nevertheless, be on your guard against men! For they will hand you over to councils and will flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ You will be brought before governors and kings because of Me, to testify to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ However, when they hand you over, do not worry how you are to speak or what you are to say! For it will be given to you in that hour what you are to say. ²⁰ For you are not the ones who are speaking, but the Spirit of your Father, who is speaking in you.

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION Sermon for the Third Sunday after Pentecost 2023 Exodus 19:2-8

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 First Reading from before, Exodus 19:2-8: After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai and set up camp in the wilderness. Therefore, Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain. He said: "This is what you shall inform the family of Jacob and what you shall tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen for yourselves what I have done to the Egyptians and how I have carried you on the wings of eagles and have brought you here to Myself! ⁵ Now, if you strictly obey Me and keep My Covenant, then out of all nations you will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.' These are the Words that you shall speak to the people of Israel!"

⁷ Moses came back, summoned the elders of the people and laid before them all these things, which the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, "We shall do everything that the LORD has said."

Then Moses took the answer of the people back to the LORD.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. Dear friends in Christ,

The LORD had said, "Out of all nations you will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation." What a blessing the LORD was granting to His people! Out of all the nations of this earth, The LORD chose the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation so that through this nation, He might accomplish His plan for the salvation of all people!

But let us delve deeper into the understanding of these words.

The LORD had spoken these words to Israel at Mount Sinai, shortly after He had brought them out of slavery in Egypt and back to Himself at the holy mountain. Listen again to these words: "You have seen for yourselves what I have done to the Egyptians and how I have carried you on the wings of eagles and have brought you here to Myself! ⁵ Now, if you strictly obey Me and keep My Covenant, then out of all nations you will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation."

Let's first see what this meant for Israel.

First, it puts it all in the context of the LORD mightily delivering His people from their bondage because the children of Israel had become slaves in Egypt and were crying out in distress under their heavy burden. Their voices were heard by the LORD, who had remembered His covenant and came down to visit His people, setting them free.

Centuries earlier, the LORD had established a covenant with Abraham that He would bless him and his descendants, make them a great nation, and give them a land to live in, where they would be at peace and live under the LORD's blessing and walk in His ways. Now the LORD was delivering on that promise. He acted in history to free His people and return them to the Promised Land. With a mighty hand, He brought them out. The LORD sent plagues upon Egypt until finally, Pharaoh let God's people go. Israel was spared. The blood on the doorpost marked their homes, and death would pass over. Israel came out that night, and with the LORD's protection and provision, Moses led them to Mount Sinai. That's the setting, then, for the words of our text. It's in the context of grace and deliverance and mighty rescue.

So it is for us. With a mighty hand, the LORD has brought us out of our bondage, our slavery to sin and death. The blood of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, marks our doorpost, and we are spared from eternal death. Jesus has defeated all our foes: sin, death, the devil, and hell. That old Pharaoh, Satan, has been thrown into the sea with all his hordes. A mighty rescue indeed! And it has been God's doing, all by grace. As for Israel, so also for us: The call to be a kingdom of priests, in service to the LORD, follows upon Him first setting us free and bringing us to Himself.

"You have seen for yourselves what I have done to the Egyptians and how I have carried you on the wings of eagles and have brought you here to Myself!." How the LORD has carried us to where we are today! His protection and provision have guarded and guided us through many dangers. The Holy Spirit has kept us in the one true faith, starting in our baptism, and here we are today: the church, ready to hear the LORD's calling.

"Now, if you strictly obey Me and keep My Covenant..." What do these words mean? Wasn't Israel already God's people? Indeed, the LORD had carried out the work of making them His people. It's not as though *they had to earn their way in*. No, they were already in. But to faithfully carry out their calling as God's people, they would need to hearken to His voice. They would need to walk in His ways. If

¹ Genesis 12 & 15

they strayed, failed to listen to the LORD's voice, and turned aside, they could not be doing what they were meant to do. They could not be who they were meant to be: *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*.

So it is for us. Are we going to be faithful in our calling, to be the church, to be God's holy people, set apart to belong to Him and do His will? Are we going to be intentional and mindful about being a kingdom of priests dedicated to the LORD's service? If so, then we must hear God's Word and take it in faithfully, and regularly. We need to be built up by the means of grace, here in the church, here at this holy mountain, the place of God's dwelling. This is how to be God's people and carry out our calling.

The LORD says to Israel and us, "You will be a special treasure to Me." How precious are these words? The LORD considers His people to be a treasure that He possesses. To be sure, it's not that we are so special or wonderful in and of ourselves. Indeed, Israel was not. They constantly disobeyed the LORD, failing to listen, grumbling and complaining, and not fearing, loving, and trusting in Him. It wasn't because of their innate goodness that the LORD had called them His treasured possession. And we are no better. How often have we stumbled and strayed, grumbled and griped, falling back into the old ways, the ways of the world? It's not because of our own goodness that God calls us His treasured possession. No, it's because of the great price that God has paid to make us His own! It has taken the holy precious blood of God's own Son to rescue and redeem us. What greater price could there be? Jesus Himself is the priceless treasure by which we become God's treasured possession. We have been bought at a price², the price of Christ's holy blood.

"You will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation." Now we're grasping what it means to be a kingdom of priests. The whole earth is the LORD's, but He has chosen one people out of all the nations to be His priestly people, dedicated to His service, to be His servant to all the other nations of the world. That was Israel's calling. Remember the covenant the Lord had made with Abraham back in Genesis 12: "I shall bless you.... and you will be a blessing... and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (v. 2-3). Through Israel, the LORD would bring blessing to all the nations. Ultimately, of course, this would be fulfilled in Christ, the seed of Abraham, Israel reduced to one, because through Christ, the blessing does come to all peoples. Israel had a calling to be the instrument of God's blessing in the world.

² 1 Corinthians 6:20

So it is now for the church. We are blessed to keep the blessing to ourselves and share it with others.

We are a priestly people, a kingdom of priests. At this point, we should ask: "What do priests do? What did the priests do within Old Testament Israel?" They were dedicated to the LORD's service. The Levitical priesthood was *set apart* to serve the rest of the people of Israel. So when the LORD says that the whole nation of Israel has the calling of being a kingdom of priests, He's saying that the people as a whole, all of them together, have that duty in relation to the world. That was their priestly vocation. It was true for Israel, and it's true for us as the church.

Within Israel, the service of priests consisted primarily of several things: They offered up sacrifices, interceded in prayer, and proclaimed the Word of the LORD. And that's what we also do as a kingdom of priests.

First, we offer up sacrifices. Now here we need to be clear. There is one sacrifice we can never make, and that is *the sacrifice for sin*. We cannot atone for our sin or the sins of others. No, that sacrifice is beyond our ability. But the good news is that that sacrifice <u>has already been made!</u> Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, has made the only sacrifice that avails, <u>Himself the victim and Himself the priest</u>. His is the atoning sacrifice that puts us right with God.

Now that we are right with God, we offer priestly sacrifices. This is the sacrifice of praise and worship of our lips and lives. The Apostle Paul writes, "Therefore, I appeal to you, fellow-Christians, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual worship" (v. 1). So, we do offer up sacrifices to God, not to atone for our sins, which Christ alone does, but sacrifices nonetheless, in lives dedicated to God's service.

Second, as priests, we intercede for others in prayer. We do this here in the Divine Service, specifically, in the Prayer of the Church. In that prayer, we pray for such things as the church at large, the government, and people in need - all sorts of people and needs we're praying for. And we pray this way in our daily prayers, too, <u>bringing the needs of others before God's throne of grace</u>. That is the priestly service of intercessory prayer.

Offering up sacrifices and interceding in prayer, and third, <u>proclaiming God's Word</u>. We have called and ordained servants of the Word, pastors, who preach and teach publicly in the church, and not all Christians are called to do that. But we all can do priestly service by sharing God's Word with others. As an example, parents are doing that when they teach their children at home.

But all of us, whatever our situation, can give a good witness to others of our Saviour. Personal evangelism, witnessing - whatever you want to call it, we all can <u>do it</u>. We have friends, relatives, associates, neighbours, and people we know in our network of relationships who may not know the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Who knows? And we may be just the person God will use to bring the good news to them. So let's prepare ourselves to be more effective witnesses for Christ.

"You will be a special treasure to Me, because the whole earth is Mine. ⁶ You will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation." The Apostle Peter picks up on this language of Exodus 19 in his Letter when he applies it to the church. He says, "You, however, are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own special people, that you may extol the wonderful deeds of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Martin Luther said of this passage: "We are all priests... so that all of us should proclaim God's Word and works at every time and in every place."

So, both for Old Testament Israel and for the New Testament church, that's who we are: *A kingdom of priests*. We are God's treasured possession, bought with the price of Christ's holy blood. We are a holy nation, set apart to belong to God alone, who has rescued and redeemed us to be His people. And we are a kingdom of priests, dedicated to God's service with a high and holy calling: to offer up a living sacrifice of praise; to intercede in prayer for all sorts and conditions of men; and to declare the excellent character and works of our most excellent God. To Him alone be all glory. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we praise You for creating all things by Your power, and for sustaining the earth and all who live on it. Let us never forget Your witness to Yourself in Your creation.

Father, we praise You for revealing Yourself to us in Your Word, and for showing us Your holy will. We thank You for the inspired writers of Your wise and true Word, for through them You have shown us Your forgiving love and given us rich promises that give us hope. We praise You for Your grace in Christ Jesus, by which You have provided us our escape from Your judgment on our disobedience. Pour out Your Spirit on us so that we may grow in knowing You.

We praise You for leading us from death to life through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Your Son. By Your love for us, move us to love You and those about us with a love that isn't mere words, but that is real and active. Give us sympathetic hearts for those in need, that we may share with them the things You

have given us. Grant that through our love they may learn to know Your love and praise You.

We thank You that You have prepared salvation for all people, and that through the Gospel You invite all to Your kingdom. Give us opportunities to pass on Your invitation to salvation to people whom we meet in our lives, that they also may respond to Your mercy with thankful hearts. Send forth Your messengers into every corner of our world, so that the lost may rejoice in Your mercy.

Almighty Lord, guide all to whom You have given authority in our country. Bless our society with pure motives, noble goals, and moral strength. Give all Australians the desire to live before You in loving trust and obedience.

Bless our homes, and make them places of true learning and love, that all who live in them may find peace and joy in harmony with You and with one another.

We pray for Your special protection and help for the sick, the sorrowful, the aged, and the lonely. We pray especially for those in our congregation who are unwell. Comfort all who have suffered material loss, and the loss of dear ones. Meet their needs with Your mercy, and show them the wonderful things You have prepared for all Your children. Father, hear our prayers, and if there is anything else we should have asked for, grant it for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has saved us, and pleads for us. Amen.

Article: How do you spell Faith?

Many people get into theological difficulty because they misspell the simple word "faith."

Many people think and speak as if they spelled the word "faith" with a capital "I" in the middle, overshadowing the rest. They see faith as an achievement of the human ego deciding to believe and trust. They make faith in some sense a good work that accomplishes or contributes something toward salvation.

Faith is not a human work, a human product. Faith is God's work (John 6:29). It has to be God's work because we cannot even begin to do anything toward it on our own (1 Corinthians 2:14). Faith must be based on God's power, not man's wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:5).

If we produced our own faith, faith would be silly. We would be trusting and believing ourselves instead of God. That would be idolatry. If we convinced ourselves to believe that our sins were forgiven, faith would not be standing on solid ground. It would only be wishful thinking.

If someone has been mad at you and you want to know that he has forgiven you, you must hear it from him. It is no good merely to imagine that he has forgiven you. He must tell you, show you, convince you. If we are to be convinced that God has

forgiven our sins, we must be convinced by God. God convinces, assures, and reassures us through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. That directs our attention not to ourselves but to Christ.

The Law directs our attention to ourselves. It tells us what sinners we have been. It shows how we have deserved eternal damnation by offending God in thought, word, and deed. But the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, directs our attention away from ourselves and to Christ alone.

John 3:16 should be read in context. Read John 3:14-15 and compare that with Numbers 21. The Israelites who were bitten by the fiery serpents died if they looked within themselves for the resources to fight off the venom. They lived when they looked outside themselves, to the brass serpent on the pole. If we sinners look within ourselves for anything to contribute to our salvation, we die. Our constant gaze should be directed to Christ and His cross, where He, the sinless Son of God, suffered and died in our place to pay for our sins.

Christian faith is faith in Christ! It is not faith in ourselves. It is not faith in faith. It is faith in Christ alone. Faith receives the gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation for Christ's sake alone. Faith does not earn or accomplish anything for our salvation. It does not even go out and get it. The gift is delivered by God the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament. Then good works result from salvation.

But do not I believe? Yes, I believe. I do the believing in the same way in which Lazarus did the walking when he came out of the tomb (John 11). He walked out of the tomb but had not raised himself from death. The Christian believes in Christ but has not raised himself from spiritual death to the life of faith. Jesus gave Lazarus life through His Word. Jesus has given us life through His Word (Ephesians 2:1-10).

How should we spell "faith"? We should spell it with a very small, humble, contrite "i" kneeling at the foot of the next letter- the cross! The cross should be written large. The cross of Christ is what matters. The cross of Christ is what has made the difference.

Christianity emphasises Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). Liberalism emphasises God the Father. Charismaticism emphasises God the Holy Spirit. Both also emphasise man. But the Father wants to be known as the One who has loved us so much that He gave His only Son for our salvation (John 3:16; Romans 8:32). The Spirit wants to be known as the One who testifies to the Son and glorifies Him (John 15:26; 16:14).

Christianity emphasises Christ. For Jesus is not merely God and not merely man. He is both God and man in one Person. We are saved purely and only because of God incarnate. The only Man we trust, glorify, and worship is the Man who is God, who has died for our sins and rose again - Jesus Christ alone!

Children's Message:

Do you like being read stories? Do you sometimes ask your mum or dad to read your favourite stories over and over - like maybe they read it to you last night, but you ask for it again tonight? And maybe the same one tomorrow too? And maybe the next day? I know I have some stories I like to hear repeatedly. Good ones are worth hearing again!

For church each Sunday, we have this thing called the lectionary. This is a book that we read each Sunday. The lectionary is a schedule for reading the very best stories - Bible stories. We have a First Reading, then a Second Reading, and a Gospel Reading. Today, our First Reading tells us how Moses went up a mountain to speak with God. Our



Second Reading tells us that Jesus died for us so that we could be with Him forever! And our Gospel tells us how Jesus "travelled through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 9:35). And the lectionary will have us read those same stories again, three years from now. That sounds like a long time, but by the time you are your parents' age, you will have heard those stories lots and lots. And that's good, because they're the best stories, and the good ones are worth hearing again and again.

Now, many of you already read stories to yourselves. In fact, some of you read chapter books, don't you? Some of you, long chapter books! Chapter books are usually too long to read all at once, right? So you read one or two chapters today, and another chapter or two another day.

The lectionary works like that too. Let's use our Second Reading as an example. Our Second Reading comes from the Book of Romans. The Book of Romans is a chapter book. It's too long to read all the way through in church today, so the lectionary has us read from chapter 5 today, and then next Sunday from chapter 6. And guess what the next week? That's right, chapter 7, until we get all the way through. We're going to be doing that together here in church. And you know what? All these stories in the lectionary, especially in Romans, really are the best stories, because every one of them is about how Jesus saved us by dying on the cross, so we have eternal life just by believing it!

Thank You, Jesus, for giving us Your Word, so that we may read and hear that You are our Saviour! 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.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

25 June 4 Pentecost		2 July 5 Pentecost		9 July 6 Pentecost	
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC (Baptism)	9.00an 9.30an 10.15a	n OAK HC n TMBA LR n AUB LR m GRN HC n LOWOOD LR	9.00an 9.30an 10.45a	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.30am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	
Sunday, 25 June					
READINGS: Jeremiah 20:7-13;		Romans 6:12-23;	M	atthew 10:5a, 21-33	
HYMNS: 36 199 200 171		MARBURG: 276	199 200	0 848 291 171	
Sunday, 2 July					
READINGS: Jeremiah 28:5-9;		Romans 7:1-13;	; Matthew 10:34-42		
HYMNS: 518 361 372 (15	7 289)	380			

Saturday, 8 July, 10.00am. CoC/Sem meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

BIBLE STUDIES:

Friday, 23 June, 7.30pm. OAK/AUB at Oakey.

Sunday, 25 June, MARBURG after service.