

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

9 July – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 355 854 308 345 294 208

INTROIT: Psalm 145:1-14

I shall exalt You, my God, the King. I shall bless Your name for ever and ever.
Every day I shall bless You and praise Your name for ever and ever.

Great is the LORD and to be highly praised! His greatness is unsearchable.

One generation will praise what You have done to the next, and they will
proclaim Your mighty deeds.

Let me meditate on the glorious grandeur of Your majesty and on the
wonderful things that You have done!

People will talk about the power of Your awesome deeds, and I shall declare
Your greatness.

They will pour forth the fame of Your great goodness and shout for joy about
Your righteousness.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to become angry and
great in mercy.

The LORD is good to all. His compassion is over all that He has made.

All whom You have made will praise You, O LORD. Your devout people will
bless You.

They will talk about the glory of Your kingdom and speak about Your power,
to make known to the descendants of Adam the mighty things that He has
done and the glorious grandeur of His kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. Your dominion endures throughout
all generations.

The LORD is faithful in all His works and gracious in all His deeds.

The LORD supports all those who are falling. He raises up all who are bowed
down.

COLLECT: Gracious God, our heavenly Father. Your mercy attends us
all our days. Be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of
this world, and, at life's end, grant us Your promised rest and the full joys
of Your 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: Zechariah 9:9–12 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!”
 Romans 7:14–25a “I know that nothing good dwells in me.”
 Matthew 11:25–30 “Come to Me, all who labour and are heavy laden.”

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaalc@gmail.com.

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

Zechariah 9:9-12

⁹ Rejoice greatly, **daughter of Zion!** Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! **Look! Your King is coming to you.** He is righteous and victorious. **He is humble and is riding on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

¹⁰ “I shall cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of battle will be eliminated.”

He will proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ “As for you also, because of the **blood** of your **Covenant**, I shall release your prisoners from the waterless cistern.”

¹² “Return to your fortress, prisoners who have hope! Even today I declare that I shall restore twice as much to you.

Romans 7:14-25a

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I have sinful human nature and am sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing. For I do not do what I want to do but do what I hate. ¹⁶ If I do what I do not want to do, I also agree that the Law is good. ¹⁷ However, now it is no longer I who am doing it, but it is the sin that is living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful human nature. For the willingness is present with me but doing what is good is not. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good that I want to do. Instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰ If I am doing what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who am doing it, but the sin that is living in me. ²¹ Therefore, I find this to be the rule: Although I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. ²² For according to the inward human being I delight in God’s Law, ²³ but in the members of my body I see another law, which is waging war against the Law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that is in the members of my body. ²⁴ What a wretched person I am! Who will rescue me from this body, which is bringing death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Matthew 11:25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from wise and intelligent people and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶ Yes, Father, I praise You that this is how You have graciously wanted it to be. ²⁷ All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him.

²⁸ “Come to Me, all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden, **and I shall give you rest!** ²⁹ Take My yoke on you and learn from Me! For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

COME TO ME... AND I SHALL GIVE YOU REST
Sermon for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, 2023
Matthew 11:25-30

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel from before, Matthew 11:25-30: **At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from wise and intelligent people and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶ Yes, Father, I praise You that this is how You have graciously wanted it to be. ²⁷ All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him.**

²⁸ “Come to Me, all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden, and I shall give you rest! ²⁹ Take My yoke on you and learn from Me! For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

“Come to Me, all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden, and I shall give you rest!” In this verse from today’s Gospel, Jesus issues a gracious invitation and makes a wonderful promise. **“Come to Me”** is the invitation, and **“I shall give you rest”** is the promise. And to whom does He address this invitation and promise? To **“all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden.”**

What is it, then, to work hard and to carry a heavy burden? What does Jesus mean by that? Jesus speaks to those weary of trying to please God with their own efforts. He speaks to those who work under the Law, burdened with their weight of guilt and loaded down with the weariness and burdens that life in this vale of tears lays upon them. Jesus speaks to heavy-laden people *with loads they cannot carry.* To those who realise their weariness and burdened state, Jesus says today, **“Come to Me... and I shall give you rest!”**

Is Jesus speaking to you? **“All you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden,”** is that you? Are you weary and burdened? Then, yes, Jesus is speaking to you today, and He invites you to come to Him and receive from Him the rest *He freely offers.*

Jesus’ words back then addressed people who knew what it was to work hard and carry a heavy burden. The Pharisees would load heavy weights on people’s backs. They thought and taught that the Law was something you could keep if you worked hard enough. That was how you could be righteous before God - by your works. Salvation depended on the necessity of obedience to all the commands of the Law. That was a heavy burden to bear, and only the best and most dedicated could hope to live up to that standard, like the Pharisees.

The Pharisees truly believed they could manage the Law and master it, but what they did was to take the teeth out of the Law and make it just an external, superficial keeping in its outward form. Take, for example, the Sabbath commandment. People should rest from their work on the Sabbath to hear God’s Word. But instead, the Pharisees made up their regulations - how many steps one could take on a Sabbath day’s journey, that sort of thing - and they missed the whole point. They turned it into a manageable kind of law they could master. But that sidesteps the force of the Law. God’s Law is meant to show us the sinfulness of our hearts. *It exposes us as sinners who do not want to do God’s will.* In this way, God shows us our need for

forgiveness and righteousness, but the Pharisees deluded themselves into thinking they were keeping God's Law and thus *were righteous on their own*.

The Pharisees had to look better than everyone else to make themselves seem righteous. So, they devised many man-made laws and regulations and developed a system of minute rules that, if you really put your mind to and worked hard, you could keep the Law in some outward fashion. Other people, of course, those who could have been more attentive to these rules would come off looking less religious, which in turn made the Pharisees look good by comparison. That was their game.

What was the effect this had on people? They felt weighted down and burdened. Jesus would later condemn both the scribes and Pharisees for their false teaching by saying of them, "*They tie up loads that are heavy and hard to carry and lay them on other people's shoulders*" (Matthew 23:4). By directing people to the Law and their added-on human regulations, the Pharisees had tied heavy loads on people's backs. It was more than they could bear.

This issue came up again later in the early church. Some were saying the Gentiles - the non-Jews - had to keep all Jewish law to come into the church: "*The Gentiles must be required to obey the law of Moses.*"¹ But the apostle Peter got it right when he said: "*Why are you testing God by putting a yoke on the necks of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? No! Through the grace of the Lord Jesus we believe to be saved, just as they also do*" (Acts 15:10-11).

The Law is a heavy yoke that you and I cannot bear. Keeping all the commandments of God is an enormous weight, and we are not strong enough to lift it. The apostle Paul realised this about himself, as we heard in today's Second reading from Romans 7. He wrote, "*For I do not do what I want to do but do what I hate... For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful human nature. For the willingness is present with me but doing what is good is not. For I do not do the good that I want to do. Instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do... What a wretched person I am! Who will rescue me from this body, which is bringing death?*"

¹ Acts 15:5

Paul himself had been a Pharisee. He knew something of the burden of the Law. And here, we can hear him straining under that heavy weight. He knew now that he was nowhere near good or strong enough to carry that load. He couldn't do it. And if Paul couldn't do it - and he was about as zealous and religious as they come - guess what? *You and I can't do it either.*

Paul describes the battle raging within every Christian: our failure to do all that we know we should do and our corresponding tendency to do things we ought not to do. We keep falling into the ditch on either side: sins of commission, actively doing the wrong, and sins of omission, our failure to do the right. This battle within us, the conflict between the new man who wants to obey God and the Old Adam who serves only self - this struggle and how it weighs upon our conscience - is the working hard and the heavy burden we bear.

Do you feel it? Do you realise that you have not loved God as you ought? Do you realise that you have not loved your neighbour as you ought? That you have not kept God's commandments in all your thoughts, words, and deeds? Do you realise, further, that the Law of God condemns you as a sinner and sentences you to death? That there is no escape, no way out, nothing you can do to get out from under the crushing weight of the Law when it comes crashing down on your head? Paul's question echoes today: "*Who will rescue me from this body, which is bringing death?*" (Romans 7:24).

Thank God Paul knows the answer to his question! He joyfully declares it: "*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" (Romans 7:25). Yes, dear friends, it is through Jesus Christ our Lord that we have been delivered, that the load is lifted, the burden removed. That's why Jesus can say to us today, "**Come to Me... and I shall give you rest!**"

Jesus Christ is the only one who can do this. He is the only one strong enough to carry the load that is the weight of the Law. That's what Jesus has done. He lived the righteous life we do not live. He kept God's Law completely in our place. His love for the Father was total, His love for the neighbour complete. Nothing was left out or fell short of the mark.

Then Jesus did something more. The crushing weight of the Law, the sentence it pronounces on sinners, the verdict it declares, "*Death to all those*

who do not do all that is written therein"² - the death sentence we deserve, Jesus suffered in our stead. The sinless Son of God died the death of sinners, hanging on a cross, suspended between heaven and earth, mocked by men and abandoned by God. That is a heavy load to bear - there is nothing heavier.

In ancient Greek mythology, there was a fellow named Atlas. His job was to carry the world on his shoulders (that's where we get the name for a collection of maps and charts in book form). Well, dear friends, Jesus is our real-life Atlas. He carries the weight of the world on His shoulders. The heavy, unbearable weight of the whole world's sins. "*Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29). That is the load Christ carried to the cross. He lifts it off our shoulders and puts it on His own.

The weight of our sins has been lifted; the load has been removed. That heavy load is gone as surely as the huge, heavy stone rolled away on Easter morning. The heavy millstone of judgment, the enormous tombstone of death - these have been rolled away and thrown into the depths of the sea. Sin is forgiven, and death is destroyed. Jesus lifts these burdens from us, and now He says warmly, invitingly, "**Come to Me... and I shall give you rest!**" Quit struggling on your own. Lay down your burdens at the foot of the cross. "*See my nail-pierced hands. I have done the job for you. Now you are free.*"

"Come to Me, all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy burden, and I shall give you rest!" Come to Jesus and find the rest you need. Rest for the weary, those worn out by their sins and the effects of sin we all experience in this fallen world. Rest for the weary - Christians who are troubled by the internal battle within, as the new man has to contend with the old sinful flesh. Rest from all our burdens - sadness and pain, sorrow and loss.

Jesus speaks to us today: "**Come to Me... and I shall give you rest!**" Yes, come and lay your burdens down. Find true spiritual rest in Christ for this life and the age to come. We have this rest now - peace with God and the forgiveness of sins, and we have the sure hope of eternal rest in the promised land of heaven. Amen.

² Joshua 1

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Lord of all power and grace, since Your eyes watch over the righteous and Your ears listen to their cries, hear our prayers as we come before You in gratitude and praise for all Your mercies.

We remember our great sinfulness before You, O Lord, and confess it with repentant hearts. Do not treat us as we deserve, but forgive us because of Your limitless love, that we may experience anew the joy of Your salvation and always live to Your praise.

We thank You for the daily miracles of Your care and love. Help us to realise always that You open Your hand and satisfy the needs of all Your creation and fill our lives with everything good, and make us thankful people.

We praise You especially for the gift of Your Son Jesus Christ, whom You have sent to be the Saviour of the world. Grant that we may believe in Him with all our hearts, honour Him as our Lord, and live under Him in the kingdom He has established. Help us to obey His words eagerly, to love Him truly, and to serve Him joyfully.

Continue to enlighten our lives by Your Holy Spirit, so that they may produce the abundant fruits of righteousness. Enable us to grow in knowledge of Your truth, in self-control in our lives. Give us a firm faith, pious minds, pure hearts, affection and sympathy for all our fellow-Christians, and love for all people.

Raise up pastors who will be true fishers of men. Help all Your people to put aside human opinions and selfish concerns, and to follow Your Son wherever He leads them. Give unity of spirit to Your people. Uphold those Christians who are suffering for the sake of their faith; and give them strength and courage.

We pray for the nations of the earth. Put down tyranny and terrorism. Raise up leaders who acknowledge You and Your will. Bless our country Australia. Lead its people pursue all that is good, and to put aside all that is evil. Frustrate the designs of those who want to promote agendas contrary to Your will.

Hear the cry of the suffering. Help them in body and spirit, and save them for Your mercy's sake. And, as we are only pilgrims in this world, guide and keep us, and bring us all at last to our heavenly home.

Receive these prayers, which we offer in the name of the author of life, Jesus Christ, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article God's Faithfulness

The "Once Saved, Always Saved" doctrine is alive and kicking. It is a false teaching about perseverance. Those who hold it say that a person who has faith in Christ cannot lose faith. Using "saved" to mean "converted," they teach that a converted person can never fall away.

It is no use confronting these teachers with people who have stopped going to church or stopped confessing faith in Christ. Since we cannot look into another person's heart, they will insist that such people either never believed or still believe.

But "Once Saved, Always Saved" is against the Bible. The Bible says that people can fall away and have fallen away. David fell away and did not repent until Nathan preached to him (2 Samuel 11:1-12:13). In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul lists other Old Testament examples and makes this application: "*Therefore, the one who thinks that he is standing firm should beware that he does not fall*" (v. 12). Jesus talks about those who "*believe for a while and in time of temptation they fall away*" (Luke 8:13). (See Isaiah 1:2; Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Romans 11:20-21; Galatians 5:4; 1 Timothy 1:19-20).

The Bible clearly says that a believer can fall from faith in Christ. So what do we tell a troubled Christian who asks: "How can I be sure that I will not fall away?" We tell him the Gospel, the message of God's grace in Christ, the forgiveness of sins because God the Son has died in His place.

The passages about falling away are not meant for troubled Christians. They are for people who are proud and secure in a fleshly way, trusting themselves not to fall away. They are for people like Peter, who bragged and boasted that he would not deny the Lord (Mark 14:29-30).

The Bible has unlimited assurance for those who trust Christ, not themselves. We go on from 1 Corinthians 10:12 to verse 13: "*God is faithful.*" The point is to trust God's faithfulness, not our faith. Christian faith is faith in Christ, not faith in faith. If we trusted our faith, we would be trusting ourselves. That would be idolatry. It would also be foolishness, for we are terribly, fatally weak. On our own we can fall but we cannot fly. To rise, we must be raised. We must be held and lifted by

God. He does that through His Word.

We are weak, but Christ is almighty. No one can take His sheep away from Him (John 10:27-30). The passages about falling away teach us not to trust ourselves. The passages about being held by God move us to trust Him more and more. See Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 1:9-14; 1 Peter 1:5; 5:10.

By our own power, we cannot begin to believe nor continue to believe. We cannot come to Christ or stay with Christ by our own thought or effort. Through the Gospel, God has brought us to Christ and keeps us with Christ. Jesus accepts us for His own sake because our sins have been forgiven by His sacrifice for our sins in our place. Jesus will not reject us or let go of us (John 6:37, 44; 10:27-30; Matthew 11:28).

Then why do some fall away? We do not know. We do not know why some are saved and others are lost. The Bible does not explain. We must be content to do without an answer to that question in this world.

If a person is converted, preserved, and saved, God has done it. God alone gets the credit. If a person never believes or falls away, it is his own fault. Man alone gets the blame. But God wants everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). We do not understand. We do not have to understand. God understands.

But how about you and me? Is our salvation certain? The only answer is the Gospel, the good news of salvation for Jesus' sake. By the Gospel, God assures us of salvation. Salvation is certain because it is all God's doing.

The Biblical teaching assures and reassures us. The teaching that we can fall is a needed warning not to trust ourselves. The teaching that God holds us is the needed comfort that leads, moves, and draws us to trust Him more and more. God's faithfulness is our security. He will not change His Word. He will not forget His promises. He will not reject nor abandon His children. He will deliver us from this present evil world full of tears and take us to be with Him in heaven because of Jesus.

Children's Message:

I pray this never happens, but if there were ever a fire here in church, your first job would be to get outside and then pray, and someone would call the fire brigade. What would the fire brigade do? They'd send firefighters to come here. While everyone else is getting away from the fire, the firefighters would come closer to the fire. Why? Because it's their work to put out the fire and to keep everyone safe. They've been trained and equipped to face very dangerous things like fire to keep us safe.



Today's First Reading says something you don't often hear in church: "*Shout in triumph*" (Zechariah 9:9). The prophet Zechariah was letting people know some very good news: Jesus would be coming to Jerusalem riding on a donkey, coming to help them. He was like the firefighters hurrying to where the danger is in order to save people from danger. Sin puts us in great danger. It can cause us to lose our life and lose out forever on being with God. We should always run away from sin and pray that God would protect us from it. But Jesus, instead of running away from sin and sinners, came to where the sin was, came to us, the sinners. He came to rescue His people.



And He still does. On Palm Sunday, He didn't ride on a fast and powerful horse to escape from trouble but into Jerusalem on a donkey to go to the cross to rescue us. He came to save us. He came to fix things. He came to suffer and die for us so that we can be forgiven and kept safe in Him forever. Jesus came to help.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem, the children and the people shouted, "*Hosanna.*" That means "Save us!" It's really the same word as Jesus' very own name. "Jesus us!" "Save us!" "Hosanna!"

Hosanna! Save us, Jesus. Help us. We need Your forgiveness. We need Your help. We need You to keep us safe. Jesus comes to help you and save you, and He's ready to hear you any time you call on Him. *Lord Jesus, hosanna! Save us! Amen.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

16 July 7 Pentecost	23 July 8 Pentecost	30 July 9 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	10.00am TMBA HC AELC Service
Sunday, 16 July		
READINGS: Isaiah 55:10-13;	Romans 8:12-17;	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
HYMNS: 507 197 267 (840 847) 515		
Sunday, 23 July		
READINGS: Isaiah 44:6-8;	Romans 8:18-27;	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
HYMNS: 303 485 497 (73 327) 509		

Tuesday, 11 July, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: John.

Marburg/Lowood members note: Service on 23 July is at Marburg – not Lowood. There was a mistake in the yearly schedule.

JULY BIBLE STUDIES:

Thursday, 13 July, 10.00am, Lowood.

Thursday, 20 July, 7.30pm, Greenwood.

Friday, 28 July, 7.30pm, Oak/Aub at Aubigny.

Sunday, 30 July, 8.30am, Toowoomba.