

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

27 August The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 386 188 191 248

**INTROIT:** Psalm 138

I shall give thanks to You with all my heart; before the gods I shall sing praise to You.

I shall bow down toward Your holy Temple and give thanks to Your name, because of Your mercy and because of Your truth. For You have made Your name and Your Promise greater than everything else.

On the day when I called, You answered me. You used strength to make me confident in my soul.

All the kings of the earth will give You thanks, O LORD, because they have heard the Words of Your mouth.

May they sing about the Ways of the LORD! For the glory of the LORD is great.

For, although the LORD is high, He regards lowly people. Yet He knows the haughty person from afar.

Although I walk in the middle of trouble, You will keep me alive. You will stretch out Your hand against the anger of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.

The LORD will fulfil His purpose to protect me. Your mercy, O LORD, endures for ever. Do not forsake the works of Your hands!

**COLLECT:** Almighty and merciful God, it is by Your grace that Your faithful people serve You well. Grant that we may pass through this life without stumbling, and finally give us what You have promised in heaven. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns, with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Welcome to all worshipping with us!*

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

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

**READINGS:** Isaiah 51:1-6 The LORD comforts Zion.

Romans 12:1-8 The life of the person who is righteous through faith.

Matthew 16:13-20 "Who do you say that I am?"

### **Isaiah 51:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> "Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness and who search for the LORD. Look to the rock from which you have been hewn and to the quarry from which you have been dug! <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham, your ancestor, and to Sarah, who gave you birth! When I called him, he was only one person, and I blessed him and made him many."

<sup>3</sup> For the LORD will comfort Zion. He will comfort all its ruins. He will make its wilderness like Eden and its desert like the Garden of the LORD. Joy, gladness, thanksgiving and the sound of singing will be found in it.

<sup>4</sup> "Pay attention to Me, My people! Listen to Me, My nation! For Teaching will go out from Me, and I shall establish My justice in an instant as a light for the peoples. <sup>5</sup> My righteousness is near. My salvation will go out, and My arms will bring justice to the peoples. The coastlands will put their hope in Me and wait eagerly for My arm. <sup>6</sup> Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look at the earth beneath! For the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die like gnats. However, My salvation will last for ever, and My righteousness will not be frustrated.

### **Romans 11:33-12:8**

<sup>33</sup> How deep are the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is to search out His Decisions and to trace His ways! <sup>34</sup> For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His adviser?

<sup>35</sup> Or who has first given God something that He should pay him back?

<sup>36</sup> For all things are from Him and through Him and for Him. To Him be the glory for ever! Amen!

<sup>12:1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may approve of what God wants, namely, what is good, pleasing and perfect!

<sup>3</sup> For I tell everyone among you, through the grace that God has given to me: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think! Rather, think of yourself with sober judgment, as God has given a measure of faith to each one! <sup>4</sup> For, as we have many members in one body and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, who are many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup> We have charismatic gifts that are different according to the grace that has been given to us. If we have prophecy, let us use it in agreement with the faith! <sup>7</sup> If we have ministry, let us use it in our ministering! If anyone is a teacher, let him use it in teaching! <sup>8</sup> If anyone encourages others, let him use it in encouraging! If anyone shares, let him be generous! If anyone is a leader, let him do it diligently! If anyone shows mercy, let him do it cheerfully!

### **Matthew 16:13-20**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

<sup>14</sup> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

<sup>15</sup> He asked them, “You, however, who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven.

<sup>18</sup> I also tell you that you are Peter, and, on this rock, I shall build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you tie up on earth will be tied up in heaven, and whatever you untie on earth will be untied in heaven.”

<sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

**WHO IS THIS MAN?****Sermon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost 2023****Matthew 16:13-20**

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 for today, Matthew 16:13-20:

**When Jesus came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”**

**<sup>14</sup> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”**

**<sup>15</sup> He asked them, “You, however, who do you say I am?”**

**<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

**<sup>17</sup> Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> I also tell you that you are Peter, and, on this rock, I shall build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you tie up on earth will be tied up in heaven, and whatever you untie on earth will be untied in heaven.”**

**<sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

**“Who do people say the Son of Man is?”** is a question that arises in our Gospel today, and it is the most important question ever asked. Therefore, it is important how we answer it.

Our text begins: **<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”**

**<sup>14</sup> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”**

The disciples reported that the people generally recognised Jesus as a prophet of God. Some of the people (like Herod) thought Jesus must be John the Baptist brought back to life. At least they recognised that John and Jesus both proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God and called the people to

repentance. Some thought He must be Elijah the prophet brought back to life. They were familiar with the words of the prophet Malachi who had said, “*See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes*” (Malachi 4:5). But Jesus had declared earlier that John the Baptist was the second Elijah.<sup>1</sup> Others, not so sure of themselves, thought Jesus may be another of the Old Testament prophets, perhaps Jeremiah, who had preached against the false worship going on at the temple at his time, and he suffered a lot of opposition for it. Sounds just like Jesus.

All these were interesting opinions, but they were all off the mark. All these speculations and opinions belittled who Jesus really is. One greater than a prophet is here. Indeed, *Jesus is the One the prophets were pointing ahead to*.

And that’s the point. The people made nice-sounding opinions about Jesus, but they all fall short of identifying just who Jesus is. They all miss the mark, no matter how complimentary they may sound, and this sort of belittling of Jesus is still going on in our day. Many state today that Jesus was a great teacher and nothing more than a good man, perhaps a wise philosopher, but certainly not the Son of God.

Of course, we know Jesus to be much more. Peter and the disciples know who the real Jesus is. Jesus asks them, “**You, however, who do you say I am?**” and Simon Peter speaks up with the right answer: “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” Yes, that’s who Jesus is! He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, promised from centuries past. God had given the promise long ago to King David that one of his descendants would reign on his throne forever and have an everlasting kingdom of righteousness and blessing, and here He is – “**the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” This Jesus, this Christ, is the very Son of God, God incarnate, come in the flesh. Peter spoke truly. “**Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven.**” No one can know who the real Jesus is unless God reveals this truth to him. Jesus Himself had said, “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him*” (John 6:44). You and I did not just wake up one morning and decide that Jesus is the divinely-sent Saviour come down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. No, we didn’t come up with that on our own - God’s Word has worked that faith in our hearts. Jesus has opened our minds to understand the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul once

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 11:14

wrote, “*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor. 2:14). But in Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit has called us by the Gospel and enlightened us with His gifts, so that now we do believe in Jesus Christ our Lord. God’s purpose is “*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name*” (John 20:31). Thanks be to God!

Who is this Man? Simon Peter says, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” The confession of this faith - getting it right and confessing it boldly - is foundational to the church that Jesus established. Jesus replies: “**I also tell you that you are Peter, and, on this rock, I shall build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.**” Peter’s name is “**Simon, son of Jonah,**” but Jesus now gives Simon his enduring nickname “**Peter.**” The Greek word for rock is “petra,” and the Greek for Peter is “Petros.” With a fine play on words, Jesus is saying that Peter’s rock-like confession of Christ as “**the Son of the living God**” will be the “rock” on which Jesus will build His church. And so it is. The church is the household of God, “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone,*” as Paul writes to the Ephesians (2:20).

“**On this rock, I shall build My church.**” This is Jesus’ church, and He will build it His way. Often, people in the church want to build it *some other way*. They think the way to build the church is to have how-to messages by hipster pastors wandering back and forth on a stage, with peppy praise bands performing shallow choruses flashed on big screens. They like to promote Jesus as some kind of life coach. There is no cross, no talk about sin or the sacraments. Instead, there is lots of entertainment and lots and lots of programs! That’s how you build the church. And you know what? They may succeed in terms of numbers but not much in terms of truly building the church. If the true, real Jesus is not preached, Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins; then you’re missing the boat. This is Jesus’ church, and He will build it His way, regardless of popularity or numbers.

“**On this rock, I shall build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.**” Hell is letting loose on the church in our day. While it is not as bad here in Australia as in other countries, Christians are doing it tough. The church is under attack. Even from within the church, false teachers are undermining the faith. But Jesus is watching out for His church. He is guarding His flock and purifying our faith, even in the fire of affliction. They cannot take

our salvation away from us. Jesus, our Champion, has conquered death, the devil, and hell's hordes by His victorious death and resurrection. “*I have the keys of Death and Hades,*” the risen Christ declares, having conquered in the fight.<sup>2</sup> The church militant will be the church triumphant because Christ has triumphed over our enemies for us. Jesus is determined to build His church and care for it until the end of time, **“and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”**

And then Jesus says to Peter: **“I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you tie up on earth will be tied up in heaven, and whatever you untie on earth will be untied in heaven.”** Here Jesus entrusts Peter, the apostles, and the church the binding and losing keys. This is the authority to forgive and retain sins. For the impenitent, the unrepentant, their sins are retained on them. They are bound in their unbelief. But for those who repent of their sins, who recognise their lost condition apart from Christ, there is the precious loosing key, the word of forgiveness, the Holy Absolution, preached and applied. Here is balm for the troubled conscience. For those who are troubled by their sins, there is good news! All their sins are forgiven, for Christ's sake! Jesus has bled and died on the cross for our sins, and now we are cleansed, clean and forgiven and right with God. God is not angry with us! God loves us! Christ crucified is the proof! Christ's resurrection confirms it! We shall not die but live!

And now, the last verse of our text: **“Then He warned the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.”** But thank God, this is not the last word! At this point in their journey, Jesus has to tell the disciples not to tell anybody who He is because they still didn't quite get it. They knew Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, but they didn't know yet what His being the Christ would entail, which would mean a cross, suffering, and death. But they will. When Jesus rises from the dead and ascends into heaven and sends them the Holy Spirit, then these same disciples will start telling everybody that Jesus is the Christ! The good news will go forth to every nation!

That's why you're here this morning. You have heard the good news, and you believe and rejoice. You rejoice to answer the question, “Who is this man?” You know, and you love to shout it out, and sing it, and tell everyone you know: “This Jesus - He is the Christ, the Son of the living God! I have life in His name! This Jesus is my Saviour! He's your Saviour too! This Jesus died and rose again

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<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1:18

and lives forever, for me and for you! And because He lives, I shall live too. Forever.”

Who is this Man? He is **“the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Amen.

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

## PRAYER FOR THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O Lord, we thank You for all Your goodness to us, but especially for the gift of Your Word and for the knowledge that we have of You through its message. We thank You for teaching us Your commandments, but, far more, we thank You for showing Yourself and Your limitless grace to us in Jesus Christ Your Son. Enable us to listen to Him in faith and to obey Him in love.

Send forth Your Word into our world today. Open doors of opportunity for us, and equip us to be active witnesses to Your Gospel, so that more and more may come to know Jesus Christ. Bless the work and the students of the seminaries of the AELC and the ULMA. Sow Your Word in the hearts and minds of people everywhere. Change their blindness to sight. Change their enslavement to sin, Satan, and death into the freedom that Christ alone gives.

Heavenly Father, let Your Word, as a living power, judge the thoughts and desires of our hearts. Increase our knowledge of what is good, and strengthen us to examine ourselves, amend our lives, and give up our pet sins. Grant that, through feeding on Jesus, the Son of Man, we may remain in Him, and He in us, and that, remaining in Him, we may be guided by His Word, and bring forth abundant fruit.

Let Your Word shine in our homes, that parents and children may live together in love, serve one another in kindness, and experience true joy, both in this life and the one to come.

Give the Spirit of Christ to all who are facing sickness, sorrow, hardship or need. Grant that they may find You quick to strengthen and bless them, and lead them to praise You for doing everything well.

Continue to keep us by the power of Your Holy Spirit; comfort us by Your Gospel, and sustain us by Your love.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, who gave Himself for us, that we might live through Him, and praise You for ever and ever. Amen.

**Article: How are you?**

“How are you?” We understand that this question refers to one’s physical health. It is commonly used in greetings and may be the most frequently asked question worldwide. It is considered perfectly polite to ask about someone’s physical health. Not asking may seem impolite and even uncaring. But it is a personal question. Yet we seldom or never ask about someone’s spiritual health. That seems too personal, too intimate. It may be considered insulting or offensive even to imply that someone might be in less than perfect spiritual condition.

It is a sign of concern to ask about someone’s physical health. Why is asking about someone’s spiritual condition considered prying or judging? We go straight to physical health in any conversation. We get to spiritual topics in the most roundabout way, if at all. Even a pastor, whose work is to care for people spiritually, senses that he must first ask people about their physical well-being and get around to spiritual matters gradually and indirectly.

We ask about the body but not about the soul. We ask about disease but not about sin. We ask about physical pain but not about spiritual distress. We ask about the battle with bacteria but not about the struggle with Satan.

It is a prominent part of pride that politeness almost requires us to assume that everyone must be doing fine spiritually. Sinful pride wants to say, “I am such a good person that you should automatically recognise that I am doing fine in my spirit. And what business is it of yours anyway? How dare you even imply by a question that I might be having spiritual difficulties?”

Satan also has a hand in this business. He is the number one enemy of God and man. He has been known to make frontal assaults, but his primary method is the sneak attack. He wants to lull us into a false sense of security by denying his spiritual reality and our spiritual problems. Genuine security is never attained by denying the enemy’s reality, power, or ferocity. We should want to know what he is all about and what he is up to.

It is just as caring, loving, and more important to ask about someone’s spiritual condition than to ask about his physical health. It does not imply that we consider him a worse sinner than others or ourselves. There need be no arrogance expressed or perceived in such a question. Christians should try to show love and concern by asking about spiritual life, whether it is present or flourishing.

Christians should know that they themselves have problems with sin, temptation, and affliction. Everyone in this world has those problems. Christians are not spiritually perfect. They are still sinners in this life and face spiritual difficulties of many kinds.

Christians should also know that non-Christians have nothing but spiritual problems. Without Christ, they have no solution to those problems. The assumption that people who do not confess faith in Christ are in good shape spiritually is a serious mistake. It is the false idea that a person can do fine on his own or have a good relationship with God apart from the Word of God and the faith in Christ that it produces. There is no spiritual life apart from Christ.

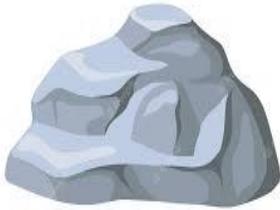
A congregation accepting any person as a communicant without asking about his spiritual condition is considered warm and friendly. That is actually an uncaring attitude! A congregation asking first about an individual's spiritual state, whether he confesses his sin and faith in God's grace for Jesus' sake, is considered judgmental. That is actually the caring, loving attitude!

The spiritual diagnosis for all of us is God's Law, which tells us that we are sinners and warns of God's anger against sin. The solution to the problem, the cure for those who admit the disease, the way from death to life, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the good news that the Son of God became a Man to satisfy God's anger against our sin by keeping the laws we have broken and by suffering the punishment for our sins, dying on the cross for our guilt.

There is no sense talking about the solution if we do not discuss the problem. No one cares about a cure unless he is concerned about a disease. It should be considered extremely loving to ask about someone's spiritual condition as long as the questioner admits his sinfulness and is motivated to share the message of forgiveness for Jesus' sake. That good news is how God gives spiritual life, health, and growth.

You will soon ask or be asked the question: "How are you?" When you hear or say it, think about a spiritual dimension to the question in your life and the other person's life. Think about sin as the problem. Think about forgiveness for Jesus' sake as the solution.

## Children's Message:



Here is a picture of a large rock. It's heavy!

Sometimes we talk about a rock like this as being a "solid rock." Why do you think we say that? It's because *it is* large and would be hard to break or move. That's why people might call it a "solid rock."

In our Gospel lesson today, Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus calls our faith in Him a solid rock. He says that His church (the people who believe in Him) is built on the solid rock of faith in Jesus and His payment for our sins on the cross. Each of us is like a large, solid rock because we believe in Jesus. God's Holy Spirit keeps our faith in Jesus strong and hard to break.

So let's thank Jesus for making us strong like a rock! Let's remember that Jesus keeps our faith in Him strong!

*Dear Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross and taking away our sins. Thank You for keeping our faith strong like a rock. In Your name we pray. Amen.*



WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<b>3 September 14 Pentecost</b>	<b>10 September 15 Pentecost</b>	<b>17 September 16 Pentecost</b>
8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC <u>9.00am</u> GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC (Baptism)
<b>Sunday, 3 September</b>		
READINGS: Jeremiah 15:15-21;      Romans 12:9-21;      Matthew 16:21-28		
HYMNS: 503 112 171 (177 840) 458		
<b>Sunday, 10 September</b>		
READINGS: Ezekiel 33:7-9;      Romans 13:1-10;      Matthew 18:1-20		
HYMNS: 499 431 345 (789 291) 607		

Sunday, 3 September, 1.30pm. Seminary Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

Wednesday, September 6, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: Leanne. Choose a Bible verse from Numbers 1-4. Item of Interest: A flower & what is your favourite flower?

Saturday, 9 September, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are invited to attend.