

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
3 September The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 503 112 171 177 840 458

INTROIT: Psalm 26

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 eternal God, increase in us faith, hope, and love, and help us to receive what You have promised from Your loving and gracious hand; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

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.

READINGS:

Jeremiah 15:15–21 “I am with you to save you and deliver you.”

Romans 12:9–21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Matthew 16:21–28 Take up your cross and follow Me.

Jeremiah 15:15-21

¹⁵ LORD, You understand. Remember me and take care of me! Take revenge on my behalf against those who are persecuting me! Because You are slow to become angry, do not take me away! Realise that I am suffering insults because of You! ¹⁶ Your Words were found, and I devoured them. Your Words have become my joy and the delight of my heart. For Your name has been called over me, O LORD, God of hosts. ¹⁷ I have not been sitting in the company of revellers. I have not been expressing delight. I have been sitting alone, because Your hand has been on me. For You have filled me with indignation. ¹⁸ Why has my pain been endless and my wound been incurable, refusing to be healed? Will You really be like an intermittent stream to me, like water that is unreliable? ¹⁹ Therefore, this is what the LORD has said: “If you return, I shall take you back, and you will stand before Me. If you separate what is precious from what is worthless, you will be My spokesman. Those people should come back to you, but you yourself shall not go back to them! ²⁰ I shall make you a fortified wall of bronze to this people. They will fight against you but will not defeat you. For I am with you to save you and rescue you,” declares the LORD. ²¹ “I shall rescue you from the hands of wicked people and redeem you from the grasp of ruthless people.”

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Love must be sincere! Hate what is evil! Cling to what is good! ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another with brotherly love! Honour one another above yourselves! ¹¹ Do not be timid in your zeal! Be fervent in spirit and serve the Lord! ¹² Be joyful in your hope! Be patient in trouble and persevere in prayer! ¹³ Share with God’s holy people who are in need! Eagerly welcome strangers as guests! ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you! Bless and do not curse them! ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice! Weep with those who weep! ¹⁶ Agree with one another! Do not be proud but accommodate yourselves to humble people! **Do not think that you are wise!** ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil! **Take into consideration what all people regard as good!** ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people! ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, dearly loved people, but leave

room for God's wrath! For Scripture has said: "**Vengeance belongs to Me. I shall repay,**" says the Lord. ²⁰ Rather, "**If your enemy is hungry, feed him! If he is thirsty, give him a drink! If you do this, you will heap burning coals on his head.**" ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good!

Matthew 16:21-28

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer greatly at the hands of the elders, Chief Priests and scribes, be killed and be raised on the third day.

²² However, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, "May God in His mercy spare You this, Lord! This will certainly not happen to You."

²³ However, Jesus turned and told Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, because you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of human beings."

²⁴ Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me! ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what good will it do a person if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels and then **He will repay each person according to what he has done.** ²⁸ Truly, I tell you that there are some of those who are standing here who will certainly not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

THE WHO, HOW, AND WHAT OF JESUS

Sermon for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost 2023

Matthew 16:21-23

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 the first three verses of our Gospel read before, Matthew 16:21-23: **From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer greatly at the hands of the elders, Chief Priests and scribes, be killed and be raised on the third day.**

²² **However, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, "May God in His mercy spare You this, Lord! This will certainly not happen to You."**

23 However, Jesus turned and told Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, because you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of human beings.”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Last week, we heard Peter say something that brought a hearty commendation from Jesus. Jesus told Peter that *his confession of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God¹, was the rock on which Jesus would build His church*. Today, Peter says something that brings a *harsh rebuke* from Jesus. Jesus says to Peter, **“Get behind Me, Satan!”**

What has happened in such a short period that sees Jesus going from one extreme to the other with Peter? In just a few verses, Peter goes from commendation to rebuke, so much so that Jesus calls him Satan. Today, we shall seek to answer this question, and as we shall see, it all has to do with what Peter thinks about Jesus as the Messiah. We shall see Peter gets *who* Jesus is, but not the *how*.

Peter gets the “*who*.” This means that Peter knows *who* Jesus is. This is what we heard from last Sunday’s Gospel. Peter and the other disciples had been with Jesus for some time and had listened to His preaching and teaching as He expounded the true meaning of God’s Law, as in the Sermon on the Mount. They had seen Jesus’ miracles - healing the sick, casting out demons, calming storms, and so on - powerful demonstrations of His divine authority. And so, after the disciples had observed all that at close range, Jesus asked them, “*You, however, who do you say I am?*” Peter answered, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16).

“*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” That is the “*who*,” namely, *who Jesus is*. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, anointed with the Spirit of God, God’s chosen Servant. The Christ, the promised end-time King, coming from the line of David, the One who will bring in the kingdom of heaven here on earth, an everlasting kingdom. Jesus is the divine Deliverer, sent from heaven, the very Son of God. That all is packed into Peter’s words: “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

¹ Matthew 16:16

And Jesus commends Peter heartily for this answer: “*Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven. I also tell you that you are Peter, and, on this rock, I shall build My church*” (Matthew 16:17-18). Peter has got it correct! Of course, Peter did not come up with this answer by himself. God the Father had revealed this truth about Jesus to him. But Peter’s answer - *Peter’s confession of who Jesus is - is correct.* Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the apostolic proclamation of this truth is the rock, the sure foundation on which Jesus will build His church.

So Peter gets the “*who,*” and this confession of who Jesus is, His identity as the Christ, the Son of God, really forms the climax of the first half of Matthew’s Gospel. From this point on, the story of Jesus starts to move in a distinct direction. Matthew notes this shift with the little phrase, “**From that time on.**” Having established who Jesus is, now the storyline of the Gospel will move into *how Jesus will accomplish His mission as the Messiah.* And this is the “*how*” that Peter does not yet get.

This is where we pick up today’s Gospel reading: “**From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer greatly at the hands of the elders, Chief Priests and scribes, be killed and be raised on the third day.**”

Now, it all changes. This is not what you may expect for the mighty Messiah of Israel: He would be rejected by Israel’s very religious leaders, elders, Chief Priests and scribes, suffer many things from them and be killed. *How can this be?* Peter thought the Messiah would be welcomed with open arms! Peter thought Jesus would reign in glory and bring in a golden age of blessing, triumph, and deliverance from the hands of their enemies. After all, isn’t that what the greatest of all kings is supposed to do? Not get killed! That’s what Peter is thinking. He gets the “*who,*” but he doesn’t get the “*how,*” so he tells Jesus this. “**Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, “May God in His mercy spare You this, Lord! This will certainly not happen to You.”**”

“No!” Peter is saying. How can Jesus be the Messiah and have this rejection, suffering, and death happen to Him? I don’t get it!

No, Peter did not get it. What Peter says here is the direct opposite of what Jesus had come to do. To avoid this rendezvous with rejection and death in Jerusalem, and thus fail to redeem mankind - that is the devil’s objective, and so, Jesus now has to rebuke Peter with some strong words: “Get behind Me, Satan!

You are a stumbling block to Me, because you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of human beings.”

“**Get behind Me, Satan!**” What a harsh rebuke to tell Peter, the disciple He had just commended so heartily! “**Get behind Me, Satan!**” Those are the words similar to the ones Jesus had used on Satan himself, at the temptation in the wilderness.² Satan did not want Jesus to carry through with His mission. So, he tempted Jesus to take the easy way out, to achieve glory apart from suffering and going to the cross. Jesus told him, “*Be gone, Satan!*” Similarly, Jesus had to rebuke Peter, for Peter, even without realising it, was speaking Satan’s will, not God’s will.

“**Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, because you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of human beings.**” Jesus will not be dissuaded from carrying out His mission, even if that mission takes Him the way of the cross. Jesus had come to do the will of His Father, who had sent Him. And that will is to redeem mankind from their sins. And the only way to do that is for Jesus to bear the weight of our sin, guilt, and shame. That’s the “*how*” that Peter did not get.

Now, let’s be honest here. We would not have gotten it, either. It doesn’t make sense to the natural man. We expect glory. We want glory and God the Father’s approval. We don’t think things are bad enough between the Father and us - certainly not on our part - that it should require His own Son to die in our place. But that’s the reality of the situation. Things are that bad. We have no goodness in ourselves that will stand the test of God’s judgment. No, we have sinned, sinned against our Creator. We have not listened to His voice. Instead, we have gone off on our own, each wanting to be our own god, making our own decisions about what is right and wrong. That’s rebellion. That’s sin, the original sin, which lurks inside each one of us, and God’s judgment on sin is death - eternal death, *separation from God for eternity.*

What’s the answer? What’s the remedy - if there is to be a remedy? The answer will have to come from God. We could not do it. We could not pile up enough good works to atone for our sins, thus averting our eternal death and damnation. But God can. God does. And that’s where Jesus comes in, both with the “*who*” and the “*how*,” for it will take the Christ sent from heaven and the Son of the living God to do what you and I cannot do. ***Only Jesus Christ, God’s Son, can***

² Matthew 4:10

accomplish our redemption and deliverance. That's the "*who.*" And the "*how*" is that He will do this precisely by His suffering and death. For by dying in our place, on the cross, Jesus pays the price for our transgression. His holy blood does indeed atone for the sins of mankind. God's justice is satisfied. God's great mercy is displayed in its highest form. "*For God so loved the world*" - He so loved you and me - "*that He gave His only Son, that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

And that, then, is the "*what.*" This is what Jesus Christ's death on our behalf has won for us: Life. Life forever. Life even now. Forgiveness for all our sins. They are all wiped away, a clean slate. A new life of faith and love, grounded in the Gospel, growing in the Gospel. Access to God our Father, who loves us dearly and hears all our prayers. He is with us, even in the midst of our troubles. He will deliver us out of them all. He will give us the strength to endure the turmoil and suffering we encounter in this life. The misery we experience - some of which we bring on ourselves, some of which others inflict upon us, some happens because we live in a fallen world - God's mercy is greater than our misery. There is a hope that we have to hold on to. God's mercy will triumph in the end, and that end will be life without end, resurrection from the dead, and eternal life in a restored creation *when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.*

That's the "*what,*" and it happens because of the "*who*" and the "*how.*" Who Jesus is and how He accomplishes our salvation gives us the "*what*": what we have in Christ and what we shall have forever *because of Him.*

Peter didn't get all of this at the time of our text. He got the "*who*" but he didn't get the "*how.*" He knew Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. But he didn't know how Jesus would carry out His mission, that it would involve rejection, suffering, and death. Peter did "**not have in mind the things of God but the things of human beings.**" But later, after Christ's resurrection, Peter would indeed "get it." Christ the risen Lord would open Peter's mind to understand the Scriptures, and Peter then would go on to be a bold proclaimer of Jesus Christ, of the "*who*" and the "*how*" and the "*what.*"

Dear friends, do you get it? I think you do. God has given you the gift of faith to believe in Jesus Christ and trust in Him as the Saviour. To know who Jesus is, how He has achieved your salvation, and what He has won for you as a result is a free gift given to us all! Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have raised from death the Lord Jesus, our great Shepherd, because His death fulfilled Your eternal covenant to save us from sin. We praise You for Your marvellous love and goodness, and pray that You would give us everything we need to know and do Your will, and to live to Your honour and praise. Come into our lives with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Renew in us a true and living faith in Jesus Christ Your Son, so that we may be completely united with Him, trusting not in our own goodness, but in the righteousness based on His death for us.

Keep us from fearing, loving, and trusting anyone or anything more than You. Fill us with love for You, which expresses itself in humble, loving service to our neighbours. Help us to act justly, to love mercy, and to live humbly before You, our God. Move us to show respect to everybody, to be generous to the needy, to share the burdens of the weak, and to act in sincere love to all people. Help us to pattern our lives on Jesus Christ. Make our words sincere and edifying, our lives pure and godly, and our relationships with others peaceful and harmonious.

Make Your Church so aware of Your countless blessings, especially the gift of the Gospel, that it may continually respond with thanks and praise. Inspire Your people to proclaim Christ's saving love to all mankind. Give pastors a true understanding of Your Word. Give wise judgment to those in positions of leadership. Give us all a loving compassion to people in need.

Bless our country and its people, that mercy, truth, uprightness, and peace may be evident everywhere. Give us leaders whose concern is not to serve personal pride or party loyalties, but to be Your instruments of service to all.

Fill our homes with the joy of Your presence. Inspire parents with the Spirit of Christ, so that they may encourage their children by word and example to live godly lives and to find joy in serving You and their fellowmen.

Bless all good and useful employment. Give to all both satisfaction in what they do and a fair reward for their efforts. Teach people in all situations to remember that they are accountable to You for every word and action. Open the windows of heaven and let rain come forth upon the dry land.

Look with pity on those who are facing trouble and trials, especially those Christians who are suffering for the sake of their faith. Strengthen all the needy by Your mighty power, that they may remember that You are their only Saviour and Help.

Hear our prayers for Jesus' sake, O Lord, that we may praise You for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Power versus Speed

Which is better - power or speed? To some extent, that depends on whether one wants to win the Bathurst 1000 or plough a paddock. But in the long run, surely power counts more than speed. The world could get along quite nicely without sports cars or race cars. But life would be much harder without tractors and bulldozers. And in the long run, slow and steady wins the race, too.

Power and speed come face to face on the football field. The speedy runner can easily step around and outrun a front-row forward. But a football game is not won or lost only by the speedy players. No team would ever get close to the try line without the big forwards rampaging and bulldozing the opposition for a good field position.

Sometimes you see a smaller player try to stop a bigger one, only to come off second best. It takes a lot of courage to stand in front and try to stop a rampaging 120kg man who is running at you with a head full of steam!

Jesus spoke of a strong man being overcome by a stronger one (Luke 11:21-22). Jesus was saying that His power to cast out demons is sure proof that He is stronger than Satan. That is great comfort for Christians at all times of temptation and tribulation. Our Saviour is almighty God!

Earnest pastors and teachers of the Word are often tried by certain doubts. Why do people resist and reject the Word of God? Why do more people care more about anything worldly than about everything spiritual? Why do people rebel against a faithful pastor proclaiming God's Word? That is rebellion against God (Luke 10:16)! Why does God put up with that? Satan's power is limited. God's power is unlimited. Is Satan working harder than God?

That is the question. God is infinitely stronger than Satan. So when Satan seems to be coming out on top, it seems to us that he is trying harder than God. He is not working harder than God. But Satan is working more furiously than God. He has to. He knows that he is outmatched in the power department. His only hope, his last hope, his desperate (that is, hopeless) hope is in furious speed. Satan's hope will be disappointed. Our hope in Christ will be fulfilled and realised for Jesus' sake.

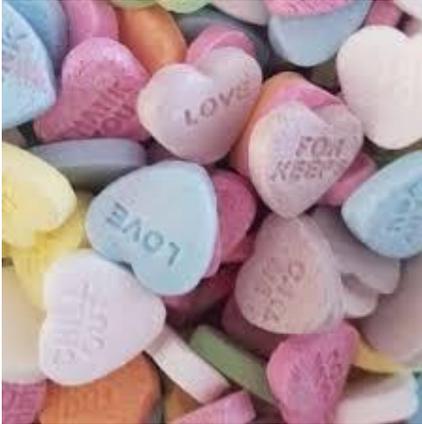
In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus encouraged perseverance in prayer despite seeming delays in God's help. He said: "*Will God delay long over them? I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?*" (vv. 7-8). The Bible seldom speaks of speed in God's actions. It does so here in a curious paradox. God will endure with us while we suffer, but He will also rescue and avenge us quickly (see Psalms 31:2; 69:17; 79:8; 102:2; 143:7).

The usual lists of God's attributes include power but not speed. Speed is temporal, and God is outside of time. But He knows the right time for everything He plans to do. He plans to help us in every trouble. He will help us in the right way at the right time. God wants us to trust Him in spite of Satan, in the face of the foe's furious ferocity.

"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Paul asks (Romans 8:31-32; see vv. 28-39). Because Christ has died for our sins, God is gracious to us and directs all things for our benefit and blessing. God invites and moves us to trust Him for this world and the next in His Word. Based on the promises of God in His Word for Jesus' sake, that faith will be fulfilled; that hope will happen; that trust will come true.

Children's Message:



Look at the picture here. What is it a picture of? It's a picture of what is called "conversation lollies." I'm sure you all love lollies! But have seen any like these? They are lollies with writing on them. These lollies are usually given to someone you love because they have such words as "U R mine" or "hug me" or some other little word written on them. I guess these are the kind of lollies you can give on Valentine's Day! And can you see in the picture that a couple of the lollies have "love" written on them?

These lollies may be fun to read before you eat them, but they're not very serious - especially not very serious about love. Actually, the way we talk about love often isn't very serious, and sometimes it's pretty silly.

One of our Bible Readings in the church today comes from Romans. There, the Apostle Paul writes, "Love must be sincere!" (Romans 12:9). That means to let love be real, true, serious, not silly. And Paul isn't talking about boyfriends, girlfriends, or even husbands and wives - even though that kind of love can be wonderful, true, and not silly. Paul talks about everyone who believes in Jesus being kind and caring to everybody else, and he gives many examples. We love people by treating others as our best friends or brothers. We honour them and let them know they're very important to us. We pray for them, help them if they need food or clothes, and maybe have them over to our house. We love people by saying pleasant things when they say mean things to us, being happy when something good happens to them, and letting them know we hurt when something sad happens to them. We love people by getting along with them, not arguing, but being patient when we disagree.

We probably won't find any of that written on conversation lollies, but we love like that anyway. And the reason we do is because Jesus does all that for us. He loves us in the most wonderful way - by dying on the cross to forgive all the times we're not very loving. And He did that so He could have us with Him forever. In fact, He guarantees us that He will raise us from the dead to live forever as part of His loving family where no more sin or death will affect anyone and everyone will be perfectly loving.

Dear Jesus, help me to love others as You have loved us. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

10 September 15 Pentecost	17 September 16 Pentecost	24 September 17 Pentecost
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)	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 10 September		
READINGS: Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:1-10; Matthew 18:1-20		
HYMNS: 499 431 345 (789 291) 607		
Sunday, 17 September		
READINGS: Genesis 50:15-21; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35		
HYMNS: 263 119 376 24 verse 6 MARBURG: 831 119 376 839 849 24 verse 6		

Today, 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.

September Bible Studies:

Toowoomba: Sunday, 10th, 8.00am.

Greenwood: Wednesday, 13th, 7.30pm.

Marburg: Sunday, 17th, after service.

Lowood: Thursday, 21st, 10.00am at Lowood.

Aubigny/Oakey: Friday, 22nd 7.30pm at Oakey.