

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

1 October The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 358 197 357 113

**INTROIT:** Psalm 25:1-10

I am lifting up my soul to You, O LORD.

O my God, I trust in You. Let me not be put to shame! Let my enemies not gloat over me!

Certainly, no one who waits in hope for You will be put to shame. Those who act treacherously without any reason will be put to shame.

Make Your Ways known to me, O LORD! Teach me Your paths!

Lead me in Your truth and teach me! For You are the God who saves me. I wait in hope for You all day long.

Remember, O LORD, Your compassionate and merciful deeds! For they have existed from eternity.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my rebellious acts! According to Your mercy remember me, because of Your goodness, O LORD!

The LORD is good and upright. Therefore, He teaches sinners in the Way.

He leads humble people in what is right and teaches humble people His Way.

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth for those who keep His Covenant and His Testimonies.

**COLLECT:** Lord, lead and support us with Your grace. Help us always to do good. 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!*

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

**READINGS:** Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 When a wicked person turns he shall save his life.

Philippians 2:1-18 Look..... to the interests of others.

Matthew 21:23-27 Jesus' authority is questioned.

**Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32**

<sup>1</sup> The Word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> “What do you people mean when you use this proverb about the land of Israel, ‘The fathers eat unripe fruit, and the children’s teeth feel dull?’ <sup>3</sup> As surely as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “you will certainly not use this proverb in Israel any longer. <sup>4</sup> Look! All persons belong to Me. Both the soul

of the father and soul of the son alike belong to Me. The person who sins is the one who will die...

<sup>25</sup> “Yet you say, ‘The behaviour of the Lord is not fair.’ Please listen, family of Israel! Is My behaviour not fair? Are not the ways you behave the ones that are not fair? <sup>26</sup> When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and acts unjustly, he will die for those things. He will die because of the unjust things that he has been committing. <sup>27</sup> Moreover, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness that he has been committing and does what is just and right, he will save his life. <sup>28</sup> Because he has considered all the rebellious acts that he has been committing and has turned away from them, he will certainly live. He will not die.

<sup>29</sup> Yet the family of Israel says, ‘The behaviour of the Lord is not fair.’ Are the ways in which I behave not fair, family of Israel? Are your ways not the ones that are unfair?

<sup>30</sup> “Therefore, family of Israel, I shall judge each of you according to his conduct,” declares the Lord GOD. “Repent and turn away from all your rebellious acts, that sin may not cause your downfall. <sup>31</sup> Cast away from you all your rebellious acts, which you have been committing! Make yourselves new hearts and new spirits. Why should you die, O family of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live!”

### Philippians 2:1-18

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if you have any encouragement in Christ, if you have any comfort from His love, if you have any fellowship of the Spirit, if you have any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being harmonious and setting your minds on the same thing! <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty conceit but in humility regard others as being better than you are! <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others!

<sup>5</sup> Have the same attitude as Christ Jesus had! <sup>6</sup> Although He was in the form of God, yet He did not consider His equality with God as a prize to exploit. <sup>7</sup> Instead, He emptied Himself, took on the form of a slave and became like other human beings; and, when He was found in the appearance of a human being, <sup>8</sup> He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> That is why God also has very highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every other name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus **everyone** in heaven and on earth and under the earth **may kneel**, <sup>11</sup> and that **everyone may confess** that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the **glory of God** the Father.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only when I have been with you but also even more now that I am absent, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling! <sup>13</sup> For it is God who continues to work in you

both to be willing and to be doing according to His good purpose.<sup>14</sup> Do everything without complaining or arguing,<sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and pure, **children of God without blame in a crooked and depraved generation**, among whom you shine like stars in the universe,<sup>16</sup> as you cling to the Word of life, that I may boast on the day of Christ that I have not been running for nothing or **labouring for nothing!**<sup>17</sup> However, even if I am being poured out like a drink offering while I am offering your faith as a sacrificial service, I am glad and rejoice with you all.<sup>18</sup> In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me!

### Matthew 21:23-27

<sup>23</sup> When He had come to the Temple, the Chief Priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching. They asked, “By what authority are You doing these things?” and “Who has given You this authority?”

<sup>24</sup> Jesus answered them, “I also shall ask you one thing. If you tell it to Me, I too shall tell you by what authority I am doing these things.<sup>25</sup> From where did the baptism of John come? Was it from heaven or from men?”

They discussed it among themselves: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask us, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’<sup>26</sup> However, if we say, ‘From men,’ — we are afraid of the crowd. For they all regard John as a prophet.”

<sup>27</sup> They answered Jesus, “We do not know.”

Then He also told them, “Neither do I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

## WHOSE AUTHORITY?

### Sermon for the 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, 2023

#### Matthew 21:23-27

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 Gospel read before, Matthew 21:23-27:

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Some people don't seem to get it. Some people don't seem to understand that in all facets of life, a certain established system of limits and boundaries clearly defines each person's area of responsibility and what is not. Whether you are at home, in your place in the family, in your job or in school, or in your assigned role in other organisations, you know what decisions belong to you and to your discretion and which do not. And most of us would never dream of overstepping those boundaries in order to dictate to someone else what they should be doing when it comes to the decisions and areas of responsibility that belong to them alone. Maybe we shall offer a little helpful advice now and then; but even so, *we want to be very careful not to*

*overdo it.*

But, some people just don't get it. These are the ones who feel they must impose their opinions and their will upon others. They're not satisfied looking over their own affairs but feel compelled to invade the realm of others and issue what amounts to commands about things that don't concern them at all. No one likes it when they do. This is why there's a long list of phrases for telling that kind of person to mind their own business, like: "Who do you think you are ordering me around?" Or "What gives you the right to tell me how to raise my kids?" Or "You're not my boss. Where do you get off telling me how to do my job?" and "When I want your opinion, I'll ask for it". Yes, there are lots of ways to say it. All of these are ways of telling someone that they've crossed the line and that they're imposing themselves where they're not welcome.

I mention this because it's the same message conveyed to Jesus by the temple's chief priests and Judea's political elders in today's text. And to put their comments into historical perspective, you need to know that the story we heard transpires on Monday of Holy Week. The day before was Palm Sunday when Jesus had entered the city of Jerusalem with a sizeable crowd of followers. Waving palm branches and laying their garments on the street, they sang their hosannas and hailed Him as the long-awaited Messianic King. People from the city joined the joyous throng as it wound its way through the narrow streets up to the Temple. Jesus dismounted from His borrowed donkey, passed through the gate, and stepped onto the Temple's outer court. There, He was appalled to find it choked with the stalls of moneychangers and the sellers of sacrificial animals. The latter had pens full of their bleating merchandise handy to make the Temple of God look and smell more like a stockyard than a house of prayer. In righteous fury, Jesus drove them all out. Chastised merchants and terrified animals scattered and disappeared through the gates leading back into the city like cockroaches fleeing into drains in a street gutter. Jesus then spent the rest of the day on the newly cleared court, healing the sick and lame who came to Him from every part of the city.

Today, Jesus has returned to the Temple, but this time He is teaching. A large crowd sits quietly around Him, listening. This annoys the priests and leaders who were supposed to be in charge. After all, this was their turf, not to mention they also made money from those merchants. And the merchants, well, they had come back. Perhaps they had gone and complained to the priests about losing money since Jesus was there, who, by what they could see, was permitted to stay there teaching. The trouble is that on some deeper level, the Temple authorities *know that Jesus is right about this issue*. It isn't proper for such business to be conducted in the Temple; it's just that it's gone on for a while now, and they like the kickbacks, so they've gotten used to the idea. So now, even though they know He's right, they hate that Jesus has

embarrassed them by overriding their authority and taking it into His own hands to clean the mess up. He's made them look both corrupt and incompetent.

The other thing that annoys them is that Jesus is popular with the crowd. Here they were, the experts - learned men who have studied their whole lives to be teachers of the Law. They've worked hard to be the best of the best - that's how they've earned their place among the scholars in the Temple, and none of them, not even the most eloquent or dynamic, has ever gathered such a following as this Man, who has no credentials and near as anyone can tell has no formal education. He's got a lot of nerve taking it upon Himself to play Teacher of Law in the Temple itself. Yet, here He is, packing them in so it's standing room only. It's presumptuous. It's infuriating. It's degrading. And it fills them with envy. They must shut Him down, but how do you do that and not upset or alienate the crowd that they want to win back *to their side*?

They come up with a question of authority. Everyone in the crowd will understand and be able to relate to it. It's also something that Jesus, if He is indeed the law-and-order man He claims to be, will have to acknowledge. *We* are in charge of the Temple and what goes on, not Him. *We* have been appointed to this task, and no one has the right to usurp our authority and take it upon himself to move in here and start acting like he owns the place.

**“The Chief Priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching.”** They wished to confront Jesus. From their point of view, it would be a win-win situation. If, when asked about the source of His authority, Jesus says, *“I do this on My own accord,”* they can politely ask Him to leave; if He refuses, they could force or arrest Him. On the other hand, if He says He's been sent by God, they could bring Him up on charges of blasphemy. “How is it that the LORD spoke to You about doing all these things and didn't bother to mention it to us, the very people He's appointed to be in charge through proper channels?”

So, they put the question to Jesus: **“By what authority are You doing these things?” and “Who has given You this authority?”** It's a tense moment. This is a power struggle, pure and simple, and everyone there realises what's at stake.

But have you ever noticed how often Jesus answers a question with a question? And have you noticed how His questions usually defuse the polemic grenades His enemies toss His way? In reply, Jesus says, “That's a good question you've put to Me.” **“I also shall ask you one thing. If you tell it to Me, I too shall tell you by what authority I am doing these things.<sup>25</sup> From where did the baptism of John come? Was it from heaven or from men?”**

Again, it's a question of authority. Did John take it upon himself to begin his ministry of calling people to repentance and baptising them, or was he

commissioned by God for the task? Now, the Chief Priest and the elders find themselves in a pickle. If they say John's baptism was from heaven, Jesus has got them in a corner because everyone knows they rejected John. So they'd be admitting that they were mistaken about him - which they dare not do in front of the people because then they'd lose face. On the other hand, if they say John was a self-appointed upstart, the crowd will be angry because the common consensus is that he had been a genuine prophet of God. They dare not say anything bad about him. So their win-win solution suddenly becomes a lose-lose dilemma. They decide to play it safe. **They answered Jesus, "We do not know."**

There's probably more truth in that reply than they care to admit; but by asking this question, Jesus reveals the fiction of their supposed authority. They have been imagining that they are the experts in charge; but they can't do it when asked to render an expert, authoritative judgment on a spiritual matter - the very thing they have been placed in authority to do. Fear of being exposed as hypocrites on one hand, or on the other, fear of losing popularity with the masses, paralyzes them. It proves that they aren't really in charge like they think they are but are, in fact, *being controlled by other forces*. Specifically, they are being controlled by their fear, pride, greed, and jealousy - these things are their masters - or, in a word, sin. It's granted them the illusion of being in control. It's deceived them with the image of having authority. Now Jesus shows what's really directing affairs in the Temple.

And that, of course, is why He's come: to set things right. He's here to reestablish the authority of the Lord in His Temple. And as we've seen, He does it with a three-pronged attack. He drives out what doesn't belong, heals what's diseased and broken, and teaches God's Word. And what impels Him is His all-consuming zeal for God's house and His infinite love for God's people; not greed, jealousy, or pride, and certainly not fear, for if He'd been afraid of anything, knowing as He did what would happen to Him in just four days, this is the last place on earth He'd be.

Jesus didn't answer His enemies' question about His authority and who gave it to Him. The crowd with Jesus had given the answer the day before when they said, "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*" Jesus didn't need to answer for His own part because His actions spoke louder than words. And, of course, we see how foolish the question was from our perspective as Christians. If the Lord Jesus is not in charge of the Temple, who is? It was for His worship the place was built. It was the place His Word was to be heard. And the sacrifices that took place there daily were all pointing to Him and the death He would die to atone for the sins of the world.

As believers in Him, we are the beneficiaries of His sacrifice. He has purchased and won us from sin and death with the precious blood He has shed on our behalf. And by the indwelling of His Spirit, He has made each one of us His Temple. And

this is where today's text applies to each of us: it's the question of authority. Who's in charge of your Temple?

At the outset, I mentioned that some people don't seem to get it. They try to force their will upon others. The leaders of the Temple saw Jesus that way. He was stepping on their toes, and they didn't like it. I wonder if sometimes we don't see Jesus the same way.

After all, we imagine that we are the resident experts on personal fulfilment and what leads to happiness in our lives, and we don't want Him barging in and imposing His will on us. We all have those areas that we've made compromises with the way the world operates. We've deceived ourselves into thinking that they're not so bad, and we've let them go on long enough now that we've come to a certain agreement with them - and by so doing, we've turned our Temples into stinking stockyards full of filth instead of the houses of prayer and worship they were meant to be. Then, on top of it, we fear being exposed as the hypocrites we are, and we fear becoming unpopular if we stand up for what we believe is right. If any of this sounds familiar, it shouldn't be hard to see who's really in charge of your Temple. It's not you; it's your old sinful nature. It's the side of you that pretends to be in charge while it challenges the genuine authority of Jesus. It's the side of you that asks Jesus, "*What gives You the right to tell me what to do?*" Or, and I hope you see the irony here, "*Who died and made You king?*"

It's certainly the wrong question to ask Jesus because you already know the answer.

And really, it's the wrong way to think about it. If we acknowledge that we are indeed Temples of the Lord, then it's not Jesus Christ who is the unwelcome interloper barging into our lives and attempting to take control; rather, it is we ourselves who attempt to impose our sinful and selfish wills on what belongs to Him. We are the ones who don't get it. We've been purchased with a price. We don't belong to ourselves but to Him, which is why Jesus is here today to set things straight with the same three-pronged attack: to cast out what doesn't belong in here, to create in us a new heart to replace the old one sickened and twisted by sin, and to teach us God's Word with authority so that His will and his Spirit are what reign in our bodies, both as individuals and also collectively in this Church which is the body of Christ. Just as we must see that these bodies don't belong to us, we must also see that this Church and its teachings and practices are not ours to do with as we please. They belong to Jesus. His is the only Word with authority here. In the end, every human thought and opinion must be captive to the Word and the authority of Jesus Christ, and we do well to remember this in everything we do together here as His Church.

It all comes down to a question of authority: Who's in charge of your life? Who has the authority in the Church? May God our Father keep us steadfast in His Word so that in all things we may honour Jesus Christ, and by our words and actions crown Him Lord of all. Amen.

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

#### PRAYER FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

O God our Father, Lord of all, the creator and sustainer of all things in heaven and on earth, we bow before You in worship, and bring before You our praise and our prayers. In the name of Your only Son Jesus Christ, we ask You to forgive us our many sins, and to rescue us from what we deserve because of them. Come into our lives with Your power, and save us from the temptations and dangers that threaten us.

We recognise our own weakness and know we need Your help. Without Your strength we can do nothing. Therefore, give us the power and blessing of Your Holy Spirit, so that we may stand in the grace You gave us in Baptism, and that we may live a life that measures up to the standard You set when You called us to faith. Inspire us with the Gospel about Your delivering up the Son of Man into the hands of sinful men. Because we humbly receive all spiritual blessings from You, take away our stubborn self-wills, and lead us to do Your perfect will. Take away our pride and conceit, and make us humble. Take away our critical and grumbling spirit, and make us content. Take away our resentment and anger, and make us gentle and patient. Help us in love to put up with each other's faults and weaknesses, as people who have been made rich by Your love.

Pour out Your blessing on Your Church, O God. By the Spirit's power, make us one in heart and mind, in the peace of Christ. Enable us to grasp the Church's oneness in Christ in the truth of the Gospel. Take away from us our pride and sinful desire for pre-eminence. Inspire us by Jesus' humble service to us to serve You gratefully through serving our neighbours. Give us opportunities to demonstrate the confession of the Gospel before the world, that people may be drawn to Your Son and rejoice in Your salvation.

Give Your guidance and blessing to all lawful authority, especially to our Queen and her representatives, and the parliaments of our Commonwealth and State. Give them wisdom and sound judgment, that godliness may rule and evil be kept in check.

Be the guardian of our homes and families. Make them places where Your Word is treasured, where faith in You produces love, and where love expresses itself in service to You and others.

Touch with Your healing power the sick, the sorrowing, and the suffering. Hear their cry, and remember them in Your mercy. Show them that You are the ever-present source of help, and the saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.

These things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

**Article: When You Are Afflicted, Christ Is Your Comfort**

You may remember the bracelets that many Christians used to wear, which read WWJD: ‘What would Jesus do?’ It’s a good question. Actually, it’s not a bad way to guide our decision-making. The world would be better if Christians showed Jesus’ love and care in more of our interactions. And it would make a big difference if we reflected on that question before spouting off to our neighbours or unloading on our spouse, to cite just two common situations. WWJD, indeed.

Yet the question “What would Jesus do?” also oversimplifies the biblical record about Jesus’ actions. Jesus responded differently in different situations. He cracked the whip at the money changers in the temple (John 2:15), yet He rebuked Peter for his violence in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:52). Jesus praised the woman who extravagantly poured ointment over His head in Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13), yet He also commended the poor widow for her paltry offering (Luke 21:1-4). Jesus saw into the human heart in a way that we cannot, so it’s hard for us to figure out what He would do in every situation. But one WWJD always applies.

What would Jesus do? He would suffer. When you suffer as a Christian, you can know for certain that you’re doing what Jesus would. It’s what Jesus actually did! He didn’t seek suffering, like some cosmic masochist; rather, He suffered because He wanted us. He came to seek and save the lost, laying down His life as the ransom to free all humankind from bondage to sin, death, and hell.

His seeking and saving cost Him dearly. Roman crucifixion was anything but tidy. This deliberately barbarous practice was implemented to keep Rome’s captive people in submission. No Roman citizen could lawfully be put to death so cruelly. As in the case of Jesus, crucifixion usually involved being stripped and then mercilessly whipped before being nailed up to die a lingering, torturous death in naked, public shame. After days of starvation and exposure, most victims eventually died of asphyxiation. They could no longer raise themselves against the nails tearing at their flesh to gulp sufficient air to breathe.

It was an awful death for Jesus to die, yet all the blood and the gore of the cross was only the tip of the iceberg.

With His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, Jesus faced God’s wrath against us all. He was the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. At the cross, the atoning sacrifice was made; in His own body, Jesus carried the weight of all of humanity’s sins. The penalty for our sin was borne by Him. The ransom price was paid in full; the scales of God’s divine justice were balanced when Jesus died. So His last word from the cross was a triumphant cry: “*It is finished*” (John 19:30).

Does it sound strange that Jesus ended all that agonising misery of body and soul on such a high note? His whole life and mission was to fulfil the Father's will. Jesus knew right from the start that He was on a mission to redeem a lost and condemned world, so He steadfastly set out to accomplish what He had been sent to do. He knew full well the price He would pay.

The night before He died, Jesus pleaded with His Father to find another way to complete the mission, if possible. Yet in the end, Jesus humbly prayed: "*Not My will, but Yours, be done*" (Luke 22:42). And so the Father's will led first to the cross, through pain and death, to victorious resurrection joy.

No wonder, then, that the writer of the letter to the Hebrews frames Christian suffering with joy. "*Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God*" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Having finished His race in triumph, Jesus achieved the goal of his entire life and ministry - to pay the penalty for our sin and to ransom humanity from the clutches of sin, death, and hell.

We, too, can find joy in suffering - it is wrapped in the suffering of Jesus.

Your suffering will find meaning in Christ's suffering, whether you hurt physically or emotionally. Of course, your affliction doesn't pay for anyone's sins, much less your own. That's already over and done: "*For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Your private pain finds meaning in the collective experience of all of Christ's beloved. In writing about the suffering he encountered in his ministry, Paul saw affliction as the norm for all Christians. He saw his personal problems as mysteriously linked with the whole church - and the afflictions of Jesus: "*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church*" (Colossians 1:24).

That's the secret to maintaining an even keel in storm-tossed situations and to finding persistent hope in the midst of your suffering: seeing your affliction as your personal link to Jesus. Because He is "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" (Isaiah 53:3), you can be sure you are not alone in your suffering. Jesus is there with you. Because He bore your misery ahead of you and experienced it in a human body just like yours, your pain is sanctified in His. Emotional or physical distress can be endured not because you have sufficient grit and determination to push through it on your own but because He is alongside you. You have no virtual Saviour, but one with flesh, bone, and nerve endings like yours. He knows what He's saying when He invites you to come to Him with your worries and burdens: "*Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I shall give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light*" (Matthew 11:28-30).

You can fill in the blanks with your own afflictions. Life is never easy; frequently, it's very hard. Occasionally, it seems unbearable. Would you sometimes like to question Jesus about His so-called "easy" yoke and "light" burden?

You are not alone in your suffering. Jesus goes with you. In drawing close to Him, you will find comfort in your affliction because Jesus has walked your path ahead of you. *"For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too"* (2 Corinthians 1:5).

But remember, comfort isn't necessarily comfortable. Finding comfort doesn't always mean we are released from suffering. Instead, it means we are not alone in our personal misery or pain; we have company when we hurt. That's what a "comforter" is in the New Testament: someone called alongside us to sustain us in calamity. As Christians, the best we can give each other in times of affliction is what we ourselves have received - comfort from the comforter in chief: Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Children's Message:

Today I want to speak to you about what fills you with joy. What fills you with joy? What makes you happy? What do you like to do that makes you smile?



I am sure that there are a lot of things that fill you and me both with joy and make us smile. Maybe it's when your mum and dad are both home together with you. Maybe it's when a friend comes to your house to play or you get to go to the park. Maybe a certain food treat makes you happy and fills you with joy - maybe cake, ice cream, or pizza. Lots of things fill us with joy, don't they!

Like last Sunday, our Second Reading today is from the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Philippians. Paul was in prison when he wrote this book. But even being in prison, Paul was filled with joy. And this week, he asks the Christians in Philippi who were reading this book of the Bible to give him even more joy. Any idea how they could do that? Paul says they would complete his joy by all together believing in Jesus, agreeing how much Jesus loves them, and loving one another. He said, *"Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being harmonious and setting your minds on the same thing!"* (Phil. 2:2).

How do you know Jesus loves you? Jesus died on the cross for us, showing how much He loves us. And because He died for us all, we can be together and with Him in heaven. Since we're all going to be best of friends in heaven, we love one another as dear friends now, too, don't we!

I'll tell you, it fills me with joy to know that all of you and your families and my family and I can all be together with Jesus forever in heaven! That fills me with joy.

Let's pray and thank Jesus for filling us with joy! *Thank You, Jesus, for filling me with the joy that You are my Saviour, and that one day I shall come to be with You in heaven. Amen.*

### WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<b>8 October 19 Pentecost</b>	<b>15 October 20 Pentecost</b>	<b>22 October 21 Pentecost</b>
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am 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	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
<b>Sunday, 8 October</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 5:1-7;	Philippians 3:4b-14;	Matthew 21:33-46
HYMNS: 181 791 62 (159 291) 75		
<b>Sunday, 15 October</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-9;	Philippians 4:4-13;	Matthew 22:1-14
HYMNS: 391 221 326 (789 842) 514		

Wednesday, October 4, 10.00am. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: *Carolyn*. Choose a Bible verse from Numbers Chapters 5-8. Item of Interest: *A brooch*.

Tuesday, October 10, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Oakey. Opening devotion: Gavin.

Saturday, October 14, 1pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba.

### October Bible Studies

Thursday, 19 October, 10.00am, Lowood/Marburg at Lowood.

Thursday, 26 October, 7.30pm Greenwood.

Friday, 27 October, 7.30pm Oakey/Aubigny at Oakey.

Sunday, 22 October, 8.00am Toowoomba.

### Forward Announcement:

Reformation Day Service, October 29. 10.00am HC AELC Service at Marburg, followed by the Sunday School children's picnic.