

**Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,**  
**ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY**  
19 November The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 463 485 372 339

**INTROIT:** Psalm 90:1-12

O LORD, You have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity You are God.

You turn mankind back to dust and say, "Return, children of Adam!"

For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes, like a watch in the night.

You end their lives while they sleep. They are like grass that is fresh in the morning.

In the morning it flourishes and is fresh. In the evening it withers and dries up.

For we have been consumed by Your anger and terrified by Your fury.

You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

For all our days have passed away in Your wrath. We finish our years like a sigh.

The days of our lives have seventy years in them or, if we are strong, they are eighty years. Their pride is only toil and trouble. For life quickly passes, and we fly away.

Who knows the power of Your anger? For Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due to You.

Teach us to count our days correctly, that we may gain wise hearts!

**COLLECT:** Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**READINGS:** Zephaniah 1:7-16 The great day of the LORD.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

Matthew 25:14-30 Three kinds of workers and their talents.

*Welcome to all worshipping with us!*

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

## **Zephaniah 1:7-16**

<sup>7</sup> Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near. For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice. He has declared holy those whom He has invited.

<sup>8</sup> “On the day of the sacrifice of the LORD I shall punish the princes, the king’s sons and all who dress in foreign clothing. <sup>9</sup> On that day I shall punish everyone who jumps over the threshold and all who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deception.

<sup>10</sup> “On that day,” declares the LORD, “a loud screaming will come from the Fish-Gate, a howling from the Second Quarter and a loud crash from the hills.

<sup>11</sup> Howl, you who live in Maktesh! For all the merchant people will be destroyed. All who weigh out silver will be exterminated. <sup>12</sup> At that time I shall search Jerusalem with lamps and punish the men who are becoming thick on their dregs of wine, those who are thinking, ‘The LORD will not do anything good or do anything evil.’ <sup>13</sup> Their wealth will be plundered, and their houses will become a sinister desolation. Although they build houses, they will not live in them. Although they plant vineyards, they will not drink their wine.”

<sup>14</sup> The **great day of the LORD is near**. It is near and coming very quickly. Listen! The day of the LORD will be bitter. There the warrior will scream for help. <sup>15</sup> That day will be **a day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup> a day of trumpet-blowing and battle cries against the fortified cities and against the high corner-towers.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> Fellow-Christians, you do not need us to write to you about times and dates, <sup>2</sup> because you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> When people are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come on them suddenly like labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape. <sup>4</sup> You, however, fellow-Christians, are not in darkness, that this day should overtake you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> For you are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, let us not sleep, like the rest but let us keep awake and be sober!

<sup>7</sup> For people who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> However, let us, who live in the day, be sober, **putting on the breastplate** of faith and love and the hope of **salvation as a helmet!** <sup>9</sup> For God has not appointed us to His wrath but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> He has died for us, so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, encourage each other and build one another up, as in fact you are doing!

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

<sup>14</sup> “For it is like a man going on a journey. He called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> He gave one man five talents, another two talents and another one talent, each according to his ability and he immediately went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The one who had received the five talents went and put them to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> In the same way the one who had received the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> However, the one who had received the one talent went away, dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more talents. He said, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. Look! I have gained five more talents.’ <sup>21</sup> “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter your master’s joy!’

<sup>22</sup> “The one who had received the two talents came and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. Look! I have gained two more talents.’

<sup>23</sup> “His master told him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter your master’s joy!’

<sup>24</sup> “When the one who had received the one talent also came, he said, ‘Master, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering from where you have not scattered. <sup>25</sup> I was afraid. So, I went away and hid your talent in the ground. Look! Here you have what is yours.’

<sup>26</sup> “His master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! So, did you know that I harvest where I have not sown and gather from where I have not scattered?’

<sup>27</sup> Therefore, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and, when I returned, I would have received my own back with interest. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents! <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has something will be given more and have plenty. However, he

who has nothing will have even what he has taken away from him. <sup>30</sup> So, throw the useless servant out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!”

**FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF OUR MASTER’S TALENTS**  
**Sermon for the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 2023**  
**Matthew 25:14-30**

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

Today’s text for our sermon is our Gospel from before, Matthew 25:14-30.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Our text for today, the story known as the Parable of the Talents, has real application to us. How?

In this parable, a master gives his servants various amounts of talents to manage on his behalf. When he comes back, we see what they have done with those talents and what the master says to them about their stewardship. You and I, too, have been gifted by God with varying talents and abilities, as well as money, to be used faithfully for God’s purposes. You and I are stewards entrusted with what our Master has given us. Talents on loan from God, we may say. So, how are we using what we’ve been given? *Faithfully, or not so much?*

The point in the Parable of the Talents is that while we are waiting for Christ’s return, there are things for us to do. It is not just an idle waiting. No, our Master gives each of us talents to use for His purposes, and we are to make the most of them while we are waiting. You and I have talents on loan from God. Therefore, let us use them as faithful stewards.

The Parable of the Talents depicts what the kingdom of heaven will be like as we wait for Christ’s return: **“For it is like a man going on a journey. He called his servants and entrusted his property to them.”** This is a picture of the church in the time between Christ’s ascension and His Second Coming. In other words, it is a picture of *now*. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ has entrusted us with His property, His goods, and His possessions. Right away, this sets the story in the realm of stewardship. What Christ has entrusted us with are His belongings, not ours. They are on loan to us, His servants, to be used according to our Master’s wishes. The idea of stewardship is that all we have is not our own. It belongs to our Master. We are His stewards, managing the resources He entrusts to us, and what is required of a steward is that *he be faithful*.

**“He gave one man five talents, another two talents and another one talent, each according to his ability.”** Notice that in this parable, the amounts entrusted to the servants vary. Some have been given more than others. This tells us that here we are not

talking about the basic and fundamental gift of salvation since that is the same for each and every one of us alike. Rather, we are talking about the various gifts and abilities and opportunities that God gives us since those do indeed vary. They are not the same for every Christian. We do not all have the same gifts given to us. Yet, we are called to faithfulness in our use of the gifts that God has given us.

Here, we want to avoid two extremes. On the one hand, we shouldn't overestimate the gifts God has given us, as though any one of us is some indispensable pillar of the church that the church just cannot survive without. That's pride. On the other hand, don't underestimate the gifts and abilities God has given you, either. That's false and excessive humility. Each of us does have things we can contribute to the life of the church according to our calling. We may not think it's much, but God has gifted us in the way He has so that we can use our gifts in the service of His kingdom. Even little things can mean a lot. What matters is not how much you have in comparison to others but rather that you are faithful to whatever you have been given, no matter how much or how little.

How has God gifted you? God has things for you to do with those gifts. Are you a child? God wants you to develop your talents in an all-around way - your mind, your body, your knowledge of the Bible and the Christian faith - so you can live out a life of service to your fullest potential. Even now, you can help out at home, church and school, showing the love of Jesus in how you live toward others. Are you a father or a mother? You have been given the gift of children entrusted to your care. What higher stewardship can there be? You have the calling and the duty to teach your children the Word of God, to raise up your children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. That's your number one job. You older saints, those of you with a little more free time on your hands, God is not finished with you yet. You have years of wisdom and experience to draw on.

We all have talents and skills that can be used in God's service, in the many tasks to be done in the church. Do you want to know how you can help? Just ask. There are lots of ways for you to help. All of us, together, make up the body of Christ. And just as in the human body, where we need all parts doing their job - the toenail and the armpit, as well as the eyes and ears and mouth - so also in the church, we need all hands on deck, each doing his part, large or small, for the body to function to its fullest.

So Christ gives us gifts that vary - "talents" to return to the language of the story. You know, we use the word "talents" to mean the gifts and abilities and skills that people have, things they can do. But in this parable, the term "talents" refers to money. A "talent" was a unit of money. So let's not forget that the "talents" we can and should use for the work of the kingdom even include our money, which is also a gift from God. He gives us the ability to earn our money, after all. And our money can be put to good use for God's kingdom through the work of the church. Your money doesn't really belong to you anyway. It belongs to God—all of it, 100%. Now, some of it, of course, you need for food and shelter and clothing for you and your family. Beyond that, though, some of the money God entrusts to you can be put to use for the church's ministry. To support the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments here in this

congregation, to spread the Gospel far and wide, and to help the poor and needy, through works of mercy. Yes, our talents include our dollars, which are not really ours but God's. Those dollars have been entrusted to us to use wisely and faithfully to extend God's kingdom.

Back to the parable. A couple of the servants put their talents to work, earning more in the process. They don't end up with the same amount, but then they didn't have an equal amount to start with. *Yet they were equally faithful with whatever amount they had been given.* However, there was this one servant who spoils the story. He doesn't do anything with the talent he was given. Instead, he **“dug in the ground and hid his master's money.”** Now, the master returns. The faithful servants, the faithful stewards, report in, telling the master how they had put his money to work. The master's response, in each case? **“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter your master's joy!”** Here, we see a most gracious and generous master. It was his grace and generosity in the first place that gave them anything to work with. It was his money they were managing, not their own. So it is for us. The talents and abilities we have and the money we have - we realise that they come from God's gracious hand. *“He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.”*

And on top of that, our gracious God has redeemed us in Christ to *“live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him.”* More grace! Christ's holy, precious blood has purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. The cleansing water of baptism has brought us into Christ's church and given us the Spirit to live and work for His kingdom. Grace upon grace!

And when Christ returns on the Last Day, the fact that He will actually commend us, saying, **“Well done,”** and calling us **“good and faithful”**? That can only be God's grace! For I know that my stewardship hasn't always been that great. My stewardship of time and talents and treasures - I haven't always “done well.” I have been wasteful and selfish, not always so “good and faithful.” So these are rewards of grace, pure grace, that Christ will award us when He welcomes us into His eternal joy. You and I would have no reward at all were it not for the unfathomable forgiveness God graciously bestows upon us for Christ's sake. And He does! That is what is so wonderful. The grace of God in Christ entrusts us with any kind of stewardship in the first place and then, amazingly, rewards us by His grace in spite of our many failures. What a gracious Lord we have!

Back to the story. The one servant who buries his talent and doesn't do anything with it - it is his unbelief that damns him. There was no living faith there, for faith *always* produces its fruits. The wicked and slothful servant had the wrong belief about his master. He insulted and assailed the very character of God, revealing his unbelief. And so he is cast **“out into the outer darkness”** where there is **“weeping and gnashing of teeth!”**

But thank God, you and I shall be received into heavenly joy! **“Enter your master’s joy!”** is what we shall hear.

Dear friends, we know our Lord to be a good and gracious Master, a most generous Lord. He has gifted us with talents in abundance, each of us with the right amount for who He wants us to be and what He wants us to do. Whatever your talents - your natural gifts and abilities, your acquired skills, the opportunities God sets before you for love and service, and yes, your money - these are the talents you can put to use in God’s kingdom. We do this individually in our daily lives, and we do it collectively in our lives together as a church.

It is required of a steward that he be faithful. Through Word and Sacrament, our faith is being strengthened, and that, in turn, will strengthen our faithfulness. To be a faithful stewards, we need the ongoing forgiveness of God to pick us up when we fall. We need the continued strengthening that only comes through the ministry of the Gospel in the church. These means of grace are God’s gifts to us to help us be the faithful steward God wants us to be.

Grace upon grace upon grace! Until our Lord returns, He will strengthen us for His service and stewardship so that we shall faithfully use our talents on loan from Him. And when our Lord returns, He will commend us and welcome us with these most gracious words: **“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I shall put you in charge of many things. Enter your master’s joy!”** Amen.

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

#### PRAYER FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Lord our God, we praise You because You are the Rock of our salvation. You control the forces of nature in Your creation. Your name is holy; from one generation to another. You show mercy to those who trust and fear You. You bring down mighty kings from their thrones, and lift up the lowly. You fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich away with empty hands. We thank and praise You that You have rescued us from the power of darkness, and brought us safely into the kingdom of Your dear Son. By His death You have set us free from our sins; by His resurrection You have given us the sure hope of eternal life with You.

Increase the power of the Holy Spirit in us, that we may be able to escape from the corruption of this world, and avoid Your righteous wrath, that we may live as people whom You have graciously enlightened, in ways that are worthy of Jesus, our Saviour. Grant that, through Your Word, we may grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, know Your will better, and live as You desire. Use the difficulties in our lives to strengthen our faith and love. Make us wiser and more patient, and rich in brotherly kindness and compassion. Fill our hearts with constant awareness of Your generous love, that, as children of light, we may praise You through our lives.

Arouse Your Church, O Lord, that it may remember Your continual goodness. Cleanse, strengthen, and guide it, that it may indeed be Your holy people, as lights that shine in this world's darkness. Give it pastors who are faithful shepherds of Your flock. Put Your Word on their lips, that truth may triumph, and new life may increase among us.

Bless the preaching of the Gospel, that it may bear fruit and spread rapidly throughout the world. Move more and more to turn from their idolatry, rebellion, love of pleasure, and every other evil, and to look to Jesus Christ for life and light.

Look in compassion on the nations of the world. Exert Your gracious power in our land, that we may obey Your voice. Correct what is wrong in our society, and keep us safe from our enemies. Give our leaders wisdom and courage to rule justly, to uphold good and put down the evil, so that true worship and godliness may flourish. Bless our homes. Give all parents grace to lead their children to Jesus by the example of their own faith and life. Keep our homes free of all strife and conflict.

We ask for Your mercy for all who are sick and in need. Support them with Your strength, and deliver them by Your goodness, that they may rejoice in Your fatherly wisdom and care.

Grant that, equipped with the armour that You supply, we may be ready for the coming day of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it may not overtake us like a thief in the night. Grant that we may finally share in Your eternal kingdom of light, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Article: When You Are in Darkness, Christ Is Your Light**

Seeing is believing, they say. Thomas would agree. That first Easter evening, when Jesus appeared in living flesh and blood to His amazed disciples, Thomas wasn't there. When they told him what they had seen, he was incredulous: "*Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I shall never believe*" (John 20:25).

We understand Thomas, don't we? His reaction reflects our own experience: dead people don't walk and talk. It makes sense that Thomas would want to see Jesus with his own eyes. I think I would, too.

Eight days later, Thomas got his proof.

The disciples were again together in that same locked room, and this time Thomas was among them. The risen Lord suddenly appeared again. "*Put your finger here,*" Jesus said, indicating the nail marks in His hands. He invited Thomas, "*Put out your hand, and place it in My side,*" showing His flesh wound. "*Do not disbelieve, but believe*" (John 20:27).

And Thomas called Him "God." "*My Lord and my God,*" he confessed. Jesus responded, "*Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*" (John 20:29).

That's where you and I come in. More than twenty centuries separate us from that



night when Jesus appeared alive to His astonished disciples. We've never laid eyes on Jesus or touched His living body with our own hands. Yet Jesus tells us there's a blessing for people like us, who believe without seeing Him.

Remember this blessing when you walk through the dark days that are sure to come into your life. That darkness comes in all sizes and shapes.

When you wrestle with chronic worry or pass through deep valleys of anguish, grief, or despair, it's hard to cling to God's promises. If your body is also wracked with pain, it's hard to think straight, let alone pray. If your mind is locked in trauma mode and you're hit with panic attacks, it's hard to focus on anything else. If your heart is pounding and your head is reeling, it's hard to think of God, much less pray.

Faith is weak at these times. Sometimes, it's just hanging by a thread. Yet faith is faith, and if you believe in Jesus in those darkest valleys of your distress, you are blessed. Jesus said so Himself!

*"Now we see in a mirror dimly"* Paul wrote, *"but then face to face"* (1 Corinthians 13:12). What we shall one day see with our own risen eyes in eternal glory, we can already dimly see by faith.

Unfortunately, what we perceive by faith is often clouded in anxiety and murky with fear. Anxiety and fear frequently merge into doubt - and occasionally something worse. Suffering saints through the centuries have told of dark nights of the soul when God seems absent and unresponsive. In those fearful times, hope begins to fade and faith grows dim. Yet even then, Jesus' blessing holds firm: *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

But what should we do when the future is uncertain and faith seems futile? When God seems far away? What can we do when fear takes over and sorrow overwhelms us? Where can we find light in our own dark nights? The psalmist guides our way. King David voices the anguished cry of every suffering saint who has ever wondered if God is absent: *"Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me"* (Psalm 139:7-10).

God is present everywhere, even when our human eyes do not detect Him. Though we cannot see Him, He sees us. Were we to climb to the heights of heaven, descend to the depths of hell, or fly away to the farthest seas, His gracious presence would still be there. Even when we feel abandoned, He is present with us every moment of every day. In stormy seas of uncertainty and deep, dark valleys of despair, when we sense nothing but fear and dread, His hand still leads and His love still supports us. Through every long and lonely night of misery, God Himself stands guard, holding us safe and secure. Darkness is no threat to Him. If I say, *"Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night, even the darkness is not dark to You; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with You"* (Psalm 139:11-12).

No doubt you've had your share of long, dark nights; most Christians have. Grief, pain, or loss of one sort or another will bring those times of darkness into your life.

When you can't sleep, your body's telling you your mind is on overload and your heart is breaking. Some nights it's hard to pray, and when you do it seems like no one's there to listen. In that darkness, you will feel that God is gone and your own misery is your only company. Although this wonderful world God made for us contains a lot of beauty and happiness, it also holds a lot of ugliness. And sorrow. And fear. And pain. And death.

But remember, we serve a Lord who snatched life from the jaws of death. He brought light into darkness. One Friday afternoon at Calvary, darkness enveloped Jesus while He suffered extreme agony of body, mind, and spirit upon His cross. After three anguished hours of torture, He breathed His last, and His friends took His battered, bloodied body down and buried Him in a borrowed tomb.

In a physical body - just like ours - Jesus bore our sin and carried our sorrows.

The price of our sins was paid in human flesh and bone, blood, sweat, and tears. Jesus experienced pain like ours. Fear and dread came upon Him just like it does on us, and He felt our human anguish with every fibre of His being.

But by His cross and in the death that He died, Christ Jesus brought life and immortality. Three days later He emerged from His grave victorious over death and hell, transforming this world's darkness into everlasting light.

Although you may spend long hours in anguished prayer wondering if God is even there to hear you, you can be sure that your private darkness is not dark to Him. Night is as bright as day to Him, and darkness is as light (Psalm 139:12). He sees clearly in the dark. And you can be sure He will hold you, safe. "*He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him*" (Daniel 2:22).

When you were baptised you were born again, into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

Now your life is securely anchored in the living flesh and blood of your crucified Lord.

True, you haven't seen Jesus for yourself like Thomas, neither have you traced the print of the nails in His hands or touched the wound in His living flesh. But you do believe in Him nonetheless, and so you are blessed. Jesus said so.

Though your nights are unbearably long and your darkness impenetrably deep, Christ Jesus will sustain you and see you through them. You may not see Him now, but you will see Him soon enough - on the day of the resurrection of all flesh. Then all sorrow and sighing will flee away, and death will be no more. God will wipe away your every tear with His own hand. Then you will enter into the eternal joy of your Master, a joy no one will ever be able to take away.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:8-9).

In the deepest valleys of your life, through every long and dark night, in every trouble, you can call upon Christ Jesus. Pour out your complaints to Him. Pray, praise, and give Him thanks. His promise stands forever sure: "*I am yours and you are Mine, and there is nothing that can ever separate Me from you or you from Me.*"

## Children's Message:

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a parable. A parable is a story about regular people, but that story has a special meaning about Jesus and God's kingdom.

This parable tells about three workers who received money from their master. The master wanted the servants to use the money to do good. Two of the servants used the money to do good, and they gave even more money back to the master. To these servants, Jesus says, "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*" (vv 21, 23).

However, one of the servants didn't do a good job using what he received from the master. He buried the gift in the ground because he was afraid the master might be mad at him if he tried anything else. To this worker, Jesus says to go away.

What does Jesus want us to learn from this? In the story, God is the Master. He is the One who gives the gifts. Not only does He give us all that we need: clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, and all that we have. He gives us our families, our friends, our schools, and our churches. He also gives us the blessing of eternal life in heaven - all of this through the love of Jesus, our Saviour, who died for our sins.



Since God has given us the good news of Jesus' love, what do we do with it? We could share it with other people. Or we could be selfish with our gift and hide it away.

God has given you the gift of friends. Even more, Jesus reaches out as our dearest and closest friend. Do you look out for other people who need Jesus as their friend? God has given you the gift of forgiveness. He

forgives and takes away all your sins. When someone makes you upset and hurts you, do you share that gift of God's forgiveness with them, or do you hold onto that thing they did wrong and stay angry?

This parable teaches, first, that God has given us great gifts, most importantly, the good news of Jesus' love - which gives us eternal life, salvation, hope, joy in the Holy Spirit, and all those other gifts. Second, we learn that because of God's generous gifts to us, we can be generous with others. We don't hide the good news away. Instead, we tell others that Jesus loves them, just as God has loved us in Jesus.

*Dear God, thank you for blessing us with Jesus! Please help us to take the good news of His love and give that to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<b>3 December 1 Advent</b>	<b>10 December 2 Advent</b>	<b>17 December 3 Advent</b>
10.00am TMBA HC AELC Service	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC  7.00pm MARBURG Children's Christmas Program	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC
<b>Sunday, 3 December</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 64:1-9;	1 Corinthians 1:3-9;	Mark 11:1-10
HYMNS: 10 19 7 11		

**PLEASE NOTE:** Changes have been made to the schedule through December. Look to your bulletin for service times.

Next Sunday will be as follows:

10.00am HC Thanksgiving service for Pastor's 25 years in the ministry.

12.00pm – 1.00pm shared lunch in the hall.

1.00pm – 1.30pm We shall go into the church for a short Advent program.

December 7, 10.00am. Bible Study at Lowood. (Please let Pastor know if this day doesn't suit.).

November Bible Studies:

Greenwood – Thursday, 23 November, 7.30pm.

Oakey/Aubigny – Friday, 24 November, 7.30pm at Oakey.

Toowoomba, Lowood/Marburg – no Bible Study in November.