

DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA

21 February, 2024

Bulletin for the 2nd Mid-Week Lenten Service

HYMNS: 71 69 852 48 v.3

PSALM: Protect me, O God! For I have taken refuge in You.

I have been saying to the LORD: "You are my Lord. Without You I have nothing good."

As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the excellent people, and all my delight is in them.

Those who run after another god will have many sorrows. I shall not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

O LORD, You are my allotted portion and my cup. You are firmly holding what has been allotted to me.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely, I have a delightful inheritance.

I shall bless the LORD, who has given me advice. Even during the nights my inmost parts teach me.

I have set the LORD before Me constantly. Because He is at My right hand, I shall not stagger.

Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices. My body also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol or allow Your Faithful One to see decay.

You make known to Me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures for ever. Psalm 16

COLLECT: God of love and faithfulness, You showed Your favour to Your people by sending Your one and only Son to be our Saviour. Help us to trust in Him as our gracious Redeemer and so enjoy the peace He has come to bring, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SERMON: Psalm 41:3 Sustained in Sickness

The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:5-10

⁵ The Lord GOD has opened My ear, and I Myself have not been rebellious. I have not turned back. ⁶ I have given My back to those who struck Me and My cheeks to those who plucked out My beard. I have not hidden My face from insults and spittle. ⁷ The Lord GOD will help Me. That is why I have not been disgraced. That is why I have set My face like flint and know that I shall not be ashamed. ⁸ He who declares Me righteous is near. Who will contest a lawsuit against Me? Let us stand up together! Who is My accuser? Let him confront Me! ⁹ Look! The Lord GOD will come to help Me. Who is he who will condemn Me? Look! They will all wear out like a garment. The moths will eat them.”

¹⁰ Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of His Servant? Let the one who has been walking in darkness and has had no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God!

P This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Drawn from All Four Gospels

Portions selected from Matthew 26:15-27:66, Mark 14:12-15:47, Luke 22:7-23:56, and John 13:1-19:42, arranged chronologically to tell the story of the arrest, trials, suffering, crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord Jesus.

Events occur on Thursday and Friday, 13-14 Nissan (April 2-3), 33AD, in and around Jerusalem.

Jesus Valedictory Speech, and High Priestly Prayer

JOHN 14:1“Let not your hearts be troubled! Believe in God and believe in Me! ² In My Father’s house there are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go to prepare a place for you, I shall also come again and take you to be with Me, that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ If you have known Me, you will know My Father also and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father! Then that is enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus asked him, “Have I been with you for such a long time, and have you not known Me, Philip? The person who has seen Me has seen the Father. How do you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? These Words, which I am telling you, I am not speaking on My own authority, but the Father, who remains in Me, is doing His works. ¹¹ Believe Me, that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me. Or else, believe because of the works themselves!

¹² “Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who believes in Me will also do the works that I am doing and do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

¹³ I shall also do whatever you ask in My name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask Me for anything in My name, I shall do it.

¹⁵ “If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments. ¹⁶ I shall also ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷ He is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see or know Him. You know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I shall not leave you as orphans. I am coming back to you.

¹⁹ “Only a little while longer and the world will not see Me any longer, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in My Father, that you are in Me and that I am in you.

²¹ “The person who has My Commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The person who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and show Myself to him.”

²² Judas, not Judas Iscariot, asked Him, “Then, Lord, what has happened that You are going to show Yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We shall come to him and make Our home with him.

²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My Words. The Word that you hear is not Mine but the Father’s, who has sent Me. ²⁵ I have told you these things while I am still with you. ²⁶ However, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything that I have told you. ²⁷ Peace I am leaving with you. A peace that is My own I am giving to you. I am not giving it to you as the world gives it. Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid!

²⁸ You have heard Me telling you, ‘I am going away and am coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ Now I have told you before it happens, so that, when it happens, you may believe. ³⁰ I shall not say much to you any longer. For the ruler of the world is coming and has no hold on Me.

³¹ However, the world should realise that I love the Father and that I am doing as the Father has commanded Me! Get up! Let us be going from here!

Jesus Warns of Further Desertion, Cries of Loyalty from the Disciples

Leaving Jerusalem to the East, through the Kidron Valley and to the Garden of Gethsemane

MATTHEW 26:30 After they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

³¹ Then Jesus told them, “All of you will take offence at Me this night. For Scripture has said, ‘I shall strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³² However, after I have been raised, I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.” LUKE 22:31 Then the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, look! Satan has asked for you people, to sift you like wheat. ³² However, I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers!”

MATTHEW 26:33 Peter answered Him, “If they are all going to take offence at You, I shall never take offence.”

³⁴ Jesus told him, “Truly, I tell you that tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”

³⁵ Peter told Him, “Even if I must die with You, I shall certainly not deny You.”

All the other disciples said something similar.

Teaching on the Way to the Garden of Gethsemane

JOHN 15:1 “I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Gardener. ² He takes out every branch in Me that does not bear fruit and prunes every branch that bears fruit, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I shall remain in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you, unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the Vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit. For without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like the branch and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burnt. ⁷ If you remain in Me, and My Words remain in you, ask for whatever you wish! It will be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and become My disciples.

⁹ “As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. Remain in My love! ¹⁰ If you keep My Commandments, you will remain in My love, as I have also kept My Father’s Commandments and remain in His love. ¹¹ I have told you these things that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² This is My Commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you continue to do what I command you. ¹⁵ I no longer call you ‘servants,’ because a servant does not know what his master is doing. However, I have called you ‘friends’ because I have made known to you everything that I

have heard from My Father. ¹⁶ You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that you may go and bear fruit and that your fruit may remain, that the Father may give you whatever you ask for in My name. ¹⁷ This is what I command you: Love one another!

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, that is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the Word that I spoke to you: ‘A slave is not greater than his master’! If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have observed My Word, they will also observe yours. ²¹ Now they will do all these things to you because of My name, because they do not know Him who has sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ The person who hates Me also hates My Father. ²⁴ If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would have no sin. However, now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ However, this has happened that the Word may be fulfilled that has been written in their Law: ‘They have hated Me without any reason.’ ²⁶ When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me. ²⁷ You also must testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

M: Here ends the reading.

The congregation stands.

SUSTAINED IN SICKNESS

Sermon for the 2nd mid-week Lenten Service 2024

Psalm 41:3

Grace and peace to you all from our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The text for our sermon tonight is Psalm 41:3: **The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.**

Dear friends in Christ,

King David had said in the opening words of Psalm 41, “*Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person! The LORD will rescue him in the*

day of trouble. ² The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be called fortunate in the land. Do not surrender him to what enemies want!"

We heard these words at last week's Ash Wednesday service. Using these words, two things were emphasised. First, all of God's Psalms - including Psalm 41 - speak about our Lord and His work of salvation on our behalf. Jesus once said to His disciples, "*These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled*" (Luke 24:44). That is why God included the Psalms in His Scriptures: they "*bear witness,*" said Jesus, "*about Me*" (John 5:39). Second, because the Psalms are about Jesus, they are also about you. You are the baptised of Christ. When you were baptised, you entered into Christ's holy body. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this when he says, "*So in Christ we who are many form one body*" (Romans 12:5), and again, "*It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption*" (1 Corinthians 1:30). And, on the night of His betrayal, Jesus told the disciples, "*On that day (when the Holy Spirit comes), you will realise that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you*" (John 14:20). ***We have been joined together with Jesus through our baptism by God the Father.***

Tonight, as we move forward in Psalm 41, I would like you to bear that very thing in mind: that the Psalms speak about you because they speak first about Jesus. Your baptismal connection to Jesus can help with these words from Psalm 41:3: "**The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.**"

First and foremost, Jesus is the one whom God the Father supported on a sickbed.

To be sure, the Gospel writers never recorded anything about Jesus suffering illness, feeling the effects of any disease, catching a cold, or even striking His "*foot against a stone*" (Matthew 4:6). As far as the Gospels are concerned, Jesus was a picture of health, right up to the moment of His arrest, always healing and never needing to be healed. All illness and disease are the result of sin; the human body of Jesus was unblemished and uncorrupted by disease *because Jesus had no sin of His own* (Hebrews 4:15). He was personally sinless. Still, Isaiah writes, "*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted*" (53:4),

and Peter writes, “*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed*” (1 Peter 2:24).

Jesus is the Lamb of God, who took upon Himself “*the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). Sinless Jesus took our sin, and that of the whole world, on Himself. God the Father laid onto His perfect Son every corrupt thing about us. Again, Isaiah reminds us, “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus held Himself personally responsible for our guilt; He made Himself to be the guilty one so that we could be “*blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish*” (Philippians 2:15). That is why the Scriptures say God “*made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Because Jesus took upon Himself all our sin, He also took upon Himself all the bodily effects of our sin, including our diseases and ailments. Isaiah declared, and Peter echoed, that promise from the Father concerning Jesus that shall yet be fulfilled in our bodies that with His wounds we are healed. That is why David could pray in another place - and why we also can pray, even in pain - “*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit*” (Psalm 103:2-4).

David said, “**The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.**” Those words describe God the heavenly Father’s personal attentiveness toward Jesus, who is God the fully embodied Son.

David’s word, “support,” could also be translated as “upholds,” which is a synonym. God had said through His prophet Isaiah, “*Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen, in whom My soul delights*” (Isaiah 42:1).

Some ancient artists depicted God the Father present at the crucifixion of Jesus. In those depictions, the heavenly Father would sometimes be positioned above and behind Jesus’ cross, arms outstretched toward Jesus, holding His Son’s sacrificial body in place against the beam. Thus, God the Father upheld and sustained the incarnate Son “*on His sickbed,*” as it were.

“When he is ill,” said David, **“You will transform all his bedridden condition.”**

Peter stated it this way that God the Father *“raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God”* (1 Peter 1:21). In the resurrection of our Lord, God the Father restored full health to His Son, setting Him free from the weight of our sin and the burden of our disease. The resurrection of our Lord’s flesh promises resurrection also to our flesh because He made Himself one with us. That is why Job confidently prayed, *“After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold”* (Job 19:26-27). Because Psalm 41 is about Jesus, the same Psalm is also about you and me, the baptised of Christ.

David’s “support,” or “uphold,” is a beautiful word! Jesus of Nazareth is the hand and Word of the Lord of hosts. *“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly, the right hand of the LORD exalts!”* (Psalm 118:15-16). *“Your right hand upholds me”* (Psalm 63:8). Isaiah reminds us that Jesus knows *“how to sustain with a word him who is weary”* (Isaiah 50:4).

Are you, at this moment, a picture of health? If you are, you did not reach that temporary state through your own effort or strength. David reminds us that *“The God of Israel - He is the One who gives power and strength to His people”* (Psalm 68:35).

Is anyone among you sick? You did not get that way because of some accidental oversight in the heavenly realms or because the Lord your God has forgotten you. If you are sick, it has been allowed by the attentive grace and overflowing mercy of your God, who *“gives power to the faint”* and *“increases strength”* (Isaiah 40:29). Even when we suffer in our bodies and struggle in our minds, Jesus is *“sweetness to the soul and health to the body”* (Proverbs 16:24).

Has your dear Christian loved one died in the faith and departed this life? His illness was not his death, and her disease did not claim her life. *“The child is not dead,”* said the Lord, *“but sleeping”* (Mark 5:39).

Why? Because David’s words in Psalm 41 are faithful and true: **“The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.”** May God grant this to us all. Amen.