

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKY
3 March Third Sunday in Lent

HYMNS: 345 270 457 75

INTROIT: Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament displays what His hands have made.

One day pours out information to the next, and one night announces knowledge to the next.

There is no talking, and there are no words, and their voices are not audible.

Their measuring line has gone out into all the earth, and their messages to the end of the world. He has set a tent in them for the sun, and it comes out of its bridal-chamber like a bridegroom. Like a champion, it rejoices to run its course.

It rises from one end of the heavens, its turning point is at their edges, and nothing is hidden from its heat.

The Law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul. The Reminder of the LORD is reliable, making the simple person wise.

The Directions of the LORD are correct, making the heart rejoice. The Commandment of the LORD is pure, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever. The Decisions of the LORD are true and altogether righteous.

They are more desirable than gold, even much pure gold. And they are sweeter than honey, than honey from honeycomb.

Your servant is also warned by them. There is great reward in keeping them.

Who understands his errors? Declare me exempt from hidden faults.

Restrain Your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have control over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great rebellion.

May the words from my mouth and the thinking of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

COLLECT: O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Welcome to all worshipping with us!

Pastor Ziebell can be contacted via phone/text at 0407 583922.

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

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com or to the church office at ddaelc@gmail.com.

Pastor is usually in his office Tuesday-Wednesday for anyone who would like to call in. Other days of the week are set aside for visits.

READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17 The Ten Commandments.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Christ crucified, God's power and wisdom.

John 2:13-22 Jesus clears the temple and gives a sign.

Exodus 20:1-17

¹ Then God spoke all these Words: ² "I am the LORD, your God, and have brought you out of slave-quarters in the land of Egypt. ³ You shall have no other gods before Me! ⁴ You shall not make a carved image for yourself or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth below or that is in the water under the earth! ⁵ You shall not worship them or serve them! For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me. ⁶ However, I show mercy for a thousand generations to those who love Me and keep My Commandments. ⁷ You shall not use the name of the LORD, your God, in a wrong way! For the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who uses His name wrongly. ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy! ⁹ For six days you shall labour and do all your work! ¹⁰ However, the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD, your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle or your foreign resident, who is inside your gates! ¹¹ For in six days **the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them** but rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD has blessed the Sabbath day and has declared it holy. ¹² **Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land** that the LORD, your God, is giving you! ¹³ **You shall not murder!** ¹⁴ **You shall not commit adultery!** ¹⁵ **You shall not steal!** ¹⁶ **You shall not give false evidence against your neighbour!** ¹⁷ **You shall not desire** your neighbour's house! **You shall not desire** your neighbour's wife or his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey or anything else that belongs to your neighbour!"

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For Scripture says: “**I shall destroy the wisdom of wise people and frustrate the intelligence of intelligent people.**”

²⁰ **Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe?** Where is the debater of this age? Has God not **made foolish the wisdom** of the world? ²¹ For, since the world by its wisdom has not come to know God, God has graciously resolved, in His wisdom, to use the foolishness of the preached message to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for miraculous signs, and Greeks look for wisdom. ²³ However, we preach a crucified Christ, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, we preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶ For see what you were, fellow-Christians, when God called you! Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were influential and not many were born of noble parents. ²⁷ However, God has chosen the foolish things in the world to put those who are wise to shame. God has chosen the weak things in the world to put those who are strong to shame. ²⁸ God has chosen the lowly things in the world, the things that are despised and the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no one may boast before God. ³⁰ However, you are from Him in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God and righteousness, holiness and redemption, ³¹ that it may be as Scripture has said, “**Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord!**”

John 2:13-25

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the Temple He found those who were selling cattle, sheep and doves, as well as the moneychangers sitting there. ¹⁵ He made a whip of small ropes and drove them all out of the Temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who sold the doves, “Take these away from here! Stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that Scripture has said: “**The zeal for Your house will consume Me.**”

¹⁸ The Jews spoke up and asked Him, “What miraculous sign do You show to us, seeing that You are doing these things?”

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this Temple! I shall raise it in three days.”

²⁰ Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will You raise it in three days?”

²¹ However, He was speaking about the Temple of His body. ²² Therefore, after He

had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this and believed the Scripture and the statement that Jesus had made.²³ While He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw His miraculous signs, which He was doing.²⁴ However, Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people,²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify about man. For He knew what was in man.

JESUS DISRUPTS OUR SINFUL LIVES SO WE CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE

Sermon for the 3rd Sunday in Lent 2024

John 2:13-25

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

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel from before, John 2:13-25: **The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.¹⁴ In the Temple He found those who were selling cattle, sheep and doves, as well as the moneychangers sitting there.¹⁵ He made a whip of small ropes and drove them all out of the Temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables.¹⁶ He told those who sold the doves, "Take these away from here! Stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise!"**

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²³ While He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw His miraculous signs, which He was doing.²⁴ However, Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people,²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify about man. For He knew what was in man.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Have you ever been disrupted? I'm sure you have! You need to take a flight, but wild weather intervenes. Flights are often cancelled due to violent storms around airports. Roads can be cut due to flooding or fire. Even people themselves can be disruptive. Children make a lot of noise when you are on the telephone or want to hear something on the television, for example. Protesters disrupt meetings. All of us have experienced a time when an illness or a bad diagnosis has disrupted our future plans.

In our Gospel for today, Jesus seems to be disruptive to many people by His actions in the Temple. Let's take a closer look.

Jesus had gone down to Capernaum, accompanied by His family and disciples, but soon left for the Jewish Passover in Jerusalem. All Jewish males 12 or older customarily made this pilgrimage at the Passover, going to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.¹ The celebration lasted seven days and included the killing of a year-old male lamb, without blemish, for the feast. The participants would recall how the blood of the lamb at the first Passover had spared the firstborn Israelites from the angel of death. Now, the very Lamb of God was attending that feast.

When Jesus arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, He found serious distractions from the sacred festival. It was like opening day at some local show event. Listen to what John says, **“In the Temple He found those who were selling cattle, sheep and doves, as well as the moneychangers sitting there. ¹⁵ He made a whip of small ropes and drove them all out of the Temple, together with their sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who sold the doves, “Take these away from here! Stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”**

Today, *we see a different side of Jesus*. We don't see a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger. He is not a young boy in the temple asking deep theological questions. He is not turning water into wine, healing the blind, caring for the lepers, or raising anyone from the dead. We don't see Him teaching His disciples through the use of parables. No, today we see a Jesus who is all business, making a whip of small ropes, turning over tables, and driving out the moneychangers. When this occurred, **“His disciples remembered that**

¹ See Exodus 12

Scripture has said: “The zeal for Your house will consume Me.” Those words were now being fulfilled before their eyes.

Now, perhaps this is a Jesus we do not like to see. We prefer the one that goes after that one lost sheep. Throughout the Season of the Epiphany, as we read from the Gospel of Mark, we saw a *compassionate* Jesus who cast out demons and healed people. We saw a *gentle, soft-spoken* Jesus calmly confronting sinners while outwitting His enemies. But that is not what we get in our reading for today. Instead, we see a Jesus who goes full bore while holding nothing back.

Perhaps you are thinking, “*Did Jesus lose His cool? Is this our loving Saviour who willingly took our sins to the cross? What happened to the command to love your neighbour as yourself? What about Jesus, who welcomes sinners and eats with them? Aren't we supposed to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us?*”

Yes, all of that is true. However, it is important to note that this is not a different Jesus; neither is He acting out of character. This is our *patient, merciful Jesus acting out of love and compassion for His people*.

Was Jesus upset? I am sure of it. Was He angry? No doubt. I am confident that these actions, especially when Jesus is referring to us, do not mesh too well with our precious views of Jesus as a teacher, healer, comforter, and friend.

This is our disruptive Jesus. A Jesus who loves His enemies enough to disrupt them from their sinful lives. He knows that their sins are not good for them and that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23), and the same goes for us, too. Jesus comes in, disrupts the sinful things in our lives, and loves us enough to hold us accountable for our sins. Jesus disrupts the chaos of our world and gives us peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

This is the disruptive Jesus who loves us enough to upset our sinful lives in exchange for His holy life. That’s ultimately what He wanted to do for the moneychangers in the temple. They thought Jesus was losing His cool when, in fact, Jesus was staying cool enough to seek to save them from eternal damnation.

Jesus has a love for souls. He desires that “*all men be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). The easiest thing for Jesus would be to say nothing and let all sinners go to hell. Instead, Jesus not only says something but also *does* something about our sins. He does this out of love because He wants each one of us with Him in heaven.

The Jewish leaders reacted guardedly to Jesus' actions in the Temple. They did not try to arrest Him, perhaps because they knew of the excesses and unpopularity of the market. But they missed the point. Instead of addressing the faults Jesus had exposed, they asked Jesus, **“What miraculous sign do You show to us, seeing that You are doing these things?”** What authority did He have to clear the temple? They implied that if He performed a miracle, they may recognise Him as the Messiah, but likely only as someone to lead them against Roman oppression.

They asked for a sign. He offered one. But, as we shall see, it wasn't the sign they wanted. **“Jesus answered them, “Destroy this Temple! I shall raise it in three days.”** ²⁰ **Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will You raise it in three days?”**

The Jews became argumentative and sceptical. Jesus, however, was not talking about the temple He had just emptied of sellers. **“He was speaking about the Temple of His body.”** He was saying He would die and rise again.

Jesus goes to the cross and is raised in three days for our salvation. He comes in and disrupts all things that would keep you and me from the loving arms of His heavenly Father. He understands that this is His Father's house and loves His Father. He wants each one of us to respect His Father's house so that we, too, can be in the Father's house in heaven *forever*.

Overturning tables and disrupting life is how our loving and gracious Lord works. Jesus disrupts our everyday life and calls us out on our sins. He commands us to stop listening to the lies of the devil and start doing things His way.

In the waters of Holy Baptism, Jesus comes to interrupt the devil's evil plans and claims us as His own. Then, after He has washed us in the font, He feeds us with His very body and blood to sustain and nurture us in the one true faith.

So, before we get too excited about Jesus turning the tables, maybe we should check our own tables. Sure, your sins and my sins are different than those in our story for today, but we, too, have been unfaithful to God in a different way.

You and I confess one truth but live another. We say sorry in one breath while holding tight to our favourite pet sins. Perhaps we try to dictate our relationship with God instead of letting God's love and forgiveness have His way in our lives.

So here is our one takeaway: Jesus is here today to do a little Lenten housecleaning by overturning the tables of our sinful nature.

Jesus knows there are sinful tables in our lives that need overturning. Things in our sinful hearts and minds must be driven out. Some things in our world interfere with worshipping faithfully in our Father's house. There are sinful things in our lives that Jesus needs to take a whip to, so that He can forgive them by His cross!

When Jesus disrupts our lives, He does it out of divine love and mercy without any merit or worthiness in us. He does this "*that no one may boast before God*" (1 Cor. 1:29).

Jesus disrupts our sinful lives so we can have eternal life in our Father's house. Praise be to our disruptive Jesus, who stops at nothing to save us. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Lord God, heavenly Father, limitless in love, and perfect in power, receive our worship and praise. Our eyes always turn to You, for without You there is no help, and with You there is no danger. Be the guardian and defender of all who lift up their hearts to You, of all who seek Your help in times of need.

We confess that we fully deserve Your wrath for breaking Your holy commandments. Therefore we thank You for Your great love in Jesus, who in His compassion and grace sacrificed Himself for our sins. With grateful hearts we praise You for His finished work: His holy life, His blessed example, His gracious teaching, His loving companionship, and His atoning death, and the place in Your kingdom that He has won for us.

Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may follow the example of Jesus, and walk in love. Grant that, as Your children, we may continue to repent of our sins, give up the ways of darkness and error, and walk in paths that are good, righteous, and true. Fill our lives with holiness, with love of Your Word, and with every grace and virtue.

Prosper and protect the work of Your Church. Give success to all who proclaim the glorious Gospel of salvation. Give conviction and faithfulness to all Your people, that they may work with zeal to gather in the harvest of Christ's redeemed people. Bless the ministry of the AELC. Give us what we need to continue in our work of proclaiming Your Gospel to those around us.

Rule and direct our government. Give wisdom and integrity to all in our police and armed forces, that our nation may be kept in peace, and that righteousness and justice may hold sway everywhere.

We pray for all in any need of body or soul for those around us, for all loved ones in distant places, for all who have strayed from Your truth, for all who are in temptation, for all who are suffering sickness and pain, and for all who mourn. Bless and help them according to their need. Hear their prayers. Comfort them with Your presence.

Unite in one spirit through the truth all in Your Church on earth, and finally bring us to Your joys in heaven. We pray for these things in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Article: Casting Blame

We love to cast blame. Indeed, with every negative circumstance in life we all have this compelling need to assign accountability for a wrong to someone or something. But why do we humans have such a strong inclination to cast blame? Are we attempting to distinguish right from wrong? Are we attempting to help someone own their sin unto repentance? Or is there something more?

One of the reasons why we have such a strong inclination to cast blame is because when something goes wrong, it wreaks havoc on our outlook on life – it reveals to us that our world is unstable and unpredictable. In other words, when something in life goes wrong and then causes our world to spin out of control, we want to explain what caused the problem. As a result, we attempt to

pinpoint what triggered the problem and then we cast blame upon the culprit. By casting blame, we are attempting to rationalise in our minds why we are uncomfortable and why a particular thing went wrong. Casting blame also allows us to feel like we are in control of the world, it allows us to feel like the world is safe, and it allows us to not panic over an evil situation. Blame allows us to feel as if we can restore a sense of control; it is what we do when we are unable to accept the painful and unstable realities of life.

There is no shortage of blame in our culture these days though; everyone is quick to blame. A tragedy happens, and within minutes, blame is being applied – even before all the facts are gathered. Our media certainly does not help with this either. Media commentators are quick to cast blame in order to return our world to a sense of normalcy. It seems that our culture – more than ever – cannot deal with the feelings of being helpless and out of control when bad things happen. We want to feel o.k. and we want to feel in control; therefore, we blame.

But does casting blame really help that much? It does help to assign responsibility to someone or something when tragedies occur, for it is important to always discern right and wrong, good and evil. Blame (assigning responsibility) is also helpful in bringing about Godly sorrow and repentance for a wrong. But beyond the ethics of discerning good and evil and the blessing of repentance, does blame do anything to calm our nerves and reduce our helplessness? No, it does not. The reason why? Blame does nothing to change our unstable and unpredictable world that is, more often than not, full of erratic evil. That is to say, simply casting blame will not erase our world's unstable past, and it will not bring forth a stable future, for blame only points out evil but does 'nothing' to overcome evil.

For the Christian, though, there is hope. As bad as it gets, we know that this world will not last forever. Furthermore, we know that Jesus is coming back and holds everyone and everything accountable. With the Lord, blame will not only be assigned, but the Lord will have vengeance. Everything evil will be burned. Every knee will bow to Christ (Philippians 2:10).

What this means is that we Christians can apply blame in order to discern right and wrong and for the sake of repentance, but we need not use blame in order to somehow restore a sense of control over the world. Indeed, we do not need to panic and fret, for the Lord is our Rock and our Fortress in a world that is mad. The Lord holds the beginning and the end. The Lord holds you and me when tragedies occur.

Children's Message:

Do you like playing with Lego? Imagine you built an awesome model car similar to the one in our picture, but then your friend broke it. You worked hard building it. Let's say you worked on it for ten days! But then



your friend took it apart so he could use some of the pieces to make something of his own! And let's say the car you made was going to be a gift for that same friend. You were going to give it to him anyway, but he broke it before you could give it to him. Wouldn't that make you mad?

That's how Jesus felt one day when He went into the Temple. The Temple in Jerusalem was a lot like a church. It was the place where people came to worship God. It was God's house. And it was a gift God had given to His people. But some of the people in the Temple weren't worshipping. Instead, they were selling animals and birds and all sorts of things. They were using the Temple to make money instead of worshipping God. So Jesus was angry. He knocked down their tables and told the people that God's house, the Temple, was to be a house of prayer for people from all over the world, but they'd made His Father's house into a market! The Temple was a wonderful gift for all people, but they used it to do their own thing, just like what your friend did to the gift you built for him.

People in the Temple were upset with Jesus. They asked Jesus to prove He had the right to knock down their tables and ruin their business. Then Jesus said something that sounded strange. He said, "*Destroy this Temple! I shall raise it in three days.*" The people were confused. It took forty-six years to build that temple. How could Jesus rebuild it in three days? But Jesus wasn't talking about the temple building. He was talking about His own body. Jesus knew that soon people would destroy Him by nailing Him to a cross where He would die. But He would not be destroyed forever! In just three days, Jesus would rise again.

Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for people's sin. He rose again too, so we have new life in Him now and forever in heaven. Jesus is a greater gift than anything we can give - even a super-cool Lego car! God sent His own Son, Jesus, to give us the gift of forgiveness. Now, when we come to Jesus' house, as we're here today, we can worship and thank Him for forgiving us when we do wrong. *Thank You Jesus for dying and rising for me. Now I have eternal life given to me as a free gift! Amen.*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, 6 March 4th mid-week Lenten Service	10 March 4 Lent	17 March 5 Lent
7.30pm Aubigny Hymns: 53, 55 part 1, 60, 48 v3	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR Wednesday, 13 March 5th mid-week Lenten Service 7.30pm Oakey Hymns: 57 part 1, 171, 57 part 2, 48 v3	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR Wednesday, 20 March 6th mid-week Lenten Service 7.30pm Toowoomba Hymns: 49, 64, 791, 48 v.3
Sunday, 10 March		
READINGS: Numbers 21:4-9; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21		
HYMNS: 79 171 852 (148 847) 754		
Sunday, 17 March		
READINGS: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:32-45		
HYMNS: 71 157 7 (53 80) 169		

Saturday, 9 March, 10.00am. CoC/Sem Committee meeting at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Please note that this is the CoC AGM, so elections will be held. Please ensure each congregation is represented.

Saturday, 9 March, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are invited to come along. Please bring something for afternoon tea.

Saturday, 16 March, 7.30pm. Youth at Trinity Oakey. All youth and young adults are invited to attend. Please bring something for a shared supper.