

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
7th July Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 498 217 375 150 847 457

INTROIT: Psalm 123

I have been lifting up my eyes, to You, O You who are dwelling in heaven. Indeed, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes are looking to the LORD our God, until He has mercy on us.

Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us, because for too long we have had enough of contempt.

Our souls for too long have had enough of derision from those who are at ease, enough of contempt from haughty people.

COLLECT: O God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy. Grant us the fullness of Your grace that we may be called to repentance and made partakers of Your heavenly treasures; 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:

Ezekiel 2:1-5 Ezekiel speaks to a rebellious nation.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 The purpose of Paul's thorn in the flesh.

Mark 6:1-13 Jesus is rejected at Nazareth, and send out the twelve to preach repentance.

Ezekiel 2:1-5

¹ He told me, "Son of man, **stand up on your feet**, that I may speak to you!"

² The Spirit entered me when He spoke to me and set me on my feet, and I heard Him speaking to me. ³ He told me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebellious nations that have rebelled against Me. They and their fathers have been in revolt against Me to this very day. ⁴ They are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall tell them: 'This is what the Lord GOD has said.' ⁵ As for them, whether they listen or refuse to listen - for they are a rebellious family — they will, nevertheless, realise that a prophet has been among them."

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

¹ I must boast. There is nothing to be gained by it, but I shall go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago — whether in his body, I do not know or outside of the body, I do not know, God knows. Such a man was caught up to the third heaven. ³ I know that a man like that — whether in his body or without his body, I do not know, God knows — ⁴ was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible Words, which are not permissible for a human being to speak. ⁵ About a man like that I shall boast but shall not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶ For, if I want to boast, I shall not be a fool. For I shall be telling the truth. However, I am sparing you, to prevent anyone from thinking more of me than he sees I am or than when he hears something from me. ⁷ Therefore, to keep me from becoming proud because of these surpassingly great revelations, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to plague me, that I might not become proud. ⁸ About this, I begged the Lord three times, that it would leave me. ⁹ Nevertheless, He told me: “My grace is enough for you. For My power is made complete when you are weak.” Therefore, I shall boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions and in difficulties. For, when I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1-13

¹ Then Jesus went away from there and came to His hometown and His disciples followed Him. ² When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard Him were amazed. They asked, “Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters also here with us?”

They took offence at Him.

⁴ However, Jesus began to tell them, “A prophet is not without honour, except in his hometown, among his relatives and in his family.”

⁵ He could not perform any miracle there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ He was amazed at their unbelief. Then He went all around in the villages and taught.

⁷ Jesus called the Twelve to Him, began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. ⁸ He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, ⁹ but to

wear sandals. He told them, “Do not put on two tunics!”¹⁰ He also told them, “Wherever you go into a house, stay there until you leave that place!”¹¹ Moreover, if any place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake off the dust that is under your feet, as a testimony against them!”

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They also drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with olive-oil and healed them.

TRULY AMAZING
Sermon for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost 2024
Mark 6:1-13

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 Mark 6:1-13: **Then Jesus went away from there and came to His hometown and His disciples followed Him. ² When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard Him were amazed. They asked, “Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters also here with us?”**

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¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They also drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with olive-oil and healed them.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “amazing” as something that “*causes astonishment, great wonder, or surprise.*” We have all been amazed by things we have seen or heard.

God’s Word is full of amazing things. We only need to think of the mighty act of creation from nothing, the worldwide flood, the miraculous feeding of the Israelites with manna, the sun standing still for Joshua, Jonah being swallowed by a great fish, all the miraculous miracles Jesus performed – even raising people from the dead, and of course, His own death and resurrection. All these events are amazing, and there are many more, but today, our focus is on three amazing things that Mark records: amazing wisdom, amazing works, and amazing unbelief.

As we look at our text, we begin by seeing what amazes people.

Jesus had been ministering throughout Galilee and then “**went away from there and came to His hometown**” of Nazareth. “**When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard Him were amazed. They asked, “Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles?”**”

Jesus went to the synagogue where He had attended as a boy, a teenager, and a young man. The worshippers that day were all people who knew Him well. As He began to teach, they asked, “**Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters also here with us?**” Jesus had now come to share the Gospel with them. Now, one would expect that they would receive His words with joy. But no, Mark says, “**They took offence at Him.**” And that reaction causes even more amazement. This time, it is Jesus who is “**amazed at their unbelief.**”

Jesus showed amazing wisdom and works, yet the people showed amazing unbelief. In fact, in his Gospel account of this event, Luke writes that when Jesus had finished speaking in the synagogue, “*all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.*”²⁹ *And they rose up and drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff*” (4:28-30).

It is no different today. People still show the same unbelief as those whom Jesus spoke to in His day.

The people asked, **“Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him.”** What was the wisdom given to Jesus? It was the wisdom to know the truth about God and man and how to apply it to His hearers. It was the divine authority in Jesus’ voice and His person when He called men to be His disciples, saying, *“Follow Me.”*¹ It was His divine authority in correctly and directly expounding the meaning of God’s Law: *“But I say unto you.”*² It was how His Word pierced through to the heart, exposing men’s sins and revealing their thoughts. Jesus’ wisdom came through when He brought comfort and forgiveness to troubled sinners, giving them the right word to meet their needs. The wisdom Jesus displayed in His ministry went far beyond what people were used to getting from their rabbis, scribes and Pharisees. It was simply amazing.

“Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles?” What were the mighty works done by His hands?

As we track the opening chapters of Mark’s Gospel, we see mighty works such as Jesus cleansing a leper and healing a paralytic. Jesus cast out demons, restored people’s minds, and healed their bodies. Who can do such amazing things? Last week, we heard how Jesus raised Jairus’s daughter from the dead and healed the woman with the flow of blood. Who can do such things?

Amazing wisdom, amazing works. Now, what does that say about **“Where did this Man get these things?”**

Well, that was the point. People should have drawn the conclusion that *this man Jesus was more than just a man*, that He had access to divine, heavenly wisdom and power in a special, unique way. Then, knowing that, they should have listened readily and eagerly to His message of repentance at the coming of the kingdom of God, but they did not. Instead, **“They took offence at Him.”** The Greek word for “offence” is where we get our English word “scandalise.” These people were sceptical because of their prior acquaintance with Him and His family and were *stubborn* in their impenitence and unbelief.

The people in Nazareth thought of Jesus as just another boy living down the street who grew up before their eyes. But there was more to Jesus than met the eye. You see, for Jesus to do the job He had come to do, the one and only Son of God had to become a man like one of us. Only as a man, in the flesh, could Jesus

¹ Matthew 4:19

² Matthew 5:44

keep the Law and die for our sins and thus undo the damage man had brought on himself. In God's own wisdom, there was no other way to rescue mankind.

So, even though Jesus spoke divine wisdom and truth and did mighty works of healing and blessing, people took offence at Him and were hardened in their unbelief. Why? Because Jesus was calling them to repent, admit their sinfulness, recognise their own lack of goodness, and turn to God for forgiveness, but they would not.

Jesus "**was amazed at their unbelief.**" What about now? Are people still like that today? You bet they are. For example, the 2021 *Australian Community Survey* reported that only around 29% of Australians believe in the God of heaven and earth, although, for those who say they do believe in God, He remains hidden for many since they *don't truly know who He is*. That's not good, and I am sure it is getting worse.

Now, a couple of cautions here. To say that you know that God exists is not the same thing as faith. You'd have to be a fool not to know that God exists. Nature, reason, and conscience tell you there must be a God. But that is not the same as *knowing* who that God is and how you get right with Him and trusting in Christ Jesus as your Saviour. That comes only through the Gospel, by the Holy Spirit creating faith in Christ in your heart. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ*" (Romans 10:17).

But even so, the increasing godlessness and unbelief in our country is amazing. Both the federal and state governments have mandated laws that run contrary to God's Word - things like single-sex marriage, abortion, the legalisation of prostitution and so on. The decline in public morality is shocking. Seeing the rank of unbelief and the decline in religious affiliation is discouraging. Look at the poor church attendance in our community, even among church members. It is amazing how callous people's hearts have become toward God.

You would think that people who know about Jesus would be flocking to come and hear from Him and receive His gifts. To know who Jesus is and what He is doing here in church and then to stay away when there really is no excuse - you'd have to be absolutely nuts to do that. Who in their right mind would say "No!" to the Saviour of the world, the one and only Saviour, the Saviour who is calling you to follow Him? Who could say "No!" to divine wisdom for right living? Who could say "No!" to victory over sin and death? Who could say "No!" to eternal life? It's amazing that anyone would turn down such great and free gifts. But people do, *and it boggles the mind*.

But I suppose what is most amazing to think about today is the lengths to which God would go to save a pack of rebellious sinners like us. Truly amazing is God's great love for us that He would send His only Son into this world to rescue rebellious people. Jesus faced rejection and encountered unbelief repeatedly, yet He pressed on. He pursued His course to bring healing, blessing, and righteousness into our midst, and that course led Him to the cross. The kingdom of God would find its gravitational centre at the cross of Calvary. There, Jesus endured the ultimate rejection, which would paradoxically bring the ultimate blessing. Christ, the Son of God, died for the sins of the world, all the rejection and rebellion of all the sinners who ever lived. He did this so we would not die forever but rather live. Christ's resurrection shows us what is in store when we trust in Him: everlasting life, set right and restored to perfection. These gifts are for us through faith in Christ.

When the people at the synagogue in Nazareth marvelled at Jesus' amazing wisdom and works, they asked themselves, "**Where did this Man get these things?**" In a way, to ask the question is to answer it. For such wisdom and works can come from only one source: God. This is divine wisdom. These are divine works that Jesus is doing, and it is from heaven that He got these things.

But now the question comes to us: Where do we receive these things? And the answer is from Jesus. Today, Jesus is giving out His gifts, freely and graciously, for you. Divine wisdom, teaching you the truth in His Word, opening up your eyes to see reality from God's perspective, and helping you and me to live as God's people in the world by giving us His Sacrament. Mighty works, forgiving you your sins and, with that, giving you the sure hope of the resurrection and life with God forever. And that has to be the most amazing thing we see and hear! Amen.

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

The Lord's Supper has always been seen as a sign of unity between those who commune together at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 10:17). When Christians partake of the Lord's Supper in a church body that has a confession of faith, they thereby declare that they believe that they are one in faith with those who commune with them. Since people cannot honestly hold two differing confessions at the same time, they cannot honestly commune with those whose confession is in conflict with their own. If any do this nevertheless, they deny their own confession, and so deny Christ Himself (2 Cor. 6:14-18). **We ask visitors who are communicant members in a church not in fellowship with the AELC, or are not familiar with the *AELC Statement of Faith*, to refrain from communing today. If you have questions, please speak with the pastor after service.**

PRAYER FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Almighty and merciful God, we praise Your holy name. We praise You for Your witness to Yourself in your glorious creation, with all its wisdom and its wonders, and in all the blessings that come to us through them. We thank You, Father, for giving us a clearer and fuller message of Your truth in the Holy Scriptures. By the Spirit who inspired them, make us living stones in Your temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Above all, centre our lives in Your Son, whom You have sent as the living Word, to convey to all people Your full grace and truth.

We praise You that Your Son became a human being like us. We praise You that He has given us His life of perfect obedience to redeem our lives, and to set His example before us. We praise You that He has died to take on Himself our sins; and that He has risen to give us unending life. We praise You for making these blessings of Christ our own through Baptism and the gift of faith.

Grant that we may grow in them day by day, so that we may always be clothed with His righteousness and live the new life. By Your Spirit, help us to put to death the desires of our sinful natures, to put away all hatred and bitterness, to conquer all evil habits, and to live in fellowship with You.

Spirit of the living God, we praise You for bringing the Church into existence. By Your gracious power, renew it daily in faith and life. Move Your people to offer their whole selves to their Lord and to proclaim His saving love.

Give saving faith to the nations of the earth, that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and live before You in obedience. Bless our country Australia with leaders whose consciences are guided by Your voice, and with citizens whose minds are fixed on doing Your will.

Bless all who are in some special need of Your help. Remember, in particular, those who are sick, or suffering physical or mental distress. Touch them with Your healing love, and show them what great things You have prepared for them.

O God, Creator, Saviour, and Advocate, help us during our days on earth to let Your light transform every area of our lives, and, when death comes, keep us for Your eternal kingdom. These things we ask in the precious name of Jesus Christ, who, together with You and the Holy Spirit, lives and rules, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Article: Why the Pulpit?

Many Lutheran churches are doing away with their pulpits. Instead, the pastor will walk from side to side up the front of the church when delivering his sermon. This is sad. Pulpits were created to assist the proclamation of the Word. How so? They do so by focusing the eye where the Word is proclaimed and preached. They also do that by elevating the speaker to help the voice reach the ears of the hearers. If the pulpit is tucked in a corner or has some kind of surface like a wall close behind, that further helps to provide a soundboard or solid surface behind the preacher, which makes the voice louder.

If we forget all that, then pulpits became mere pieces of furniture, more for the appearance than for what they are designed for. It is a sad day when we begin to think of the pulpit as an art design exercise more than a useful tool of the Word to aid the preacher. Perhaps it began when church buildings started to be expressions of the imagination of the designers and builders more than the assembly of the faithful around the Word and Sacraments of our Lord. Perhaps it is related to the advent of public address systems, which tend to make preachers lazy and rely more on sound enhancement than the use of their voices and the locus of their voices in a pulpit.

I do not view this as a conservative or liberal issue but one of effective use of the tools for the preaching task. The pastor ought to stay in the pulpit. But do not hide in that pulpit as if it were a refuge. Rather, use that pulpit as a tool and an aid. It gives presence to the Word and the one who preaches that Word. It draws attention to the solemnity of the Word that is preached and reminds the preacher and hearer that this is not about the pastor or his opinions or his storytelling ability, or how well he entertains.

He is a servant of the Word, and the pulpit can be an effective tool for the servant to perform his tasks.

Some may think it is cool to be set free to roam around, but I think it feeds the preacher's ego as much as the pulpit can humble it. We are here for a holy purpose, and the Word entrusted to us is not something to be toyed with. The sooner we learn this, the better. I am all for serious preachers and serious preaching, for pulpits that display the gravitas of the Word preached from them, of pulpits that give visual weight and prominence to the importance of God's Word proclaimed and preached, and of the ease of our people both hearing and understanding what is preached.

Children's Message:

Have you ever tried to teach something to your friend, brother, or sister, and they didn't listen? Maybe you wanted to show them another way to draw a cat or help them



build their LEGO set. Sometimes, people will listen and accept our help, and sometimes, they just don't. It can be frustrating.

You know what? Jesus experienced the same thing! In our Gospel today from Mark 6, Jesus was sharing His wisdom and teaching people in the synagogue. Not only did the people not

listen to Jesus, but they were even offended by what he was saying! "Offended" means they were angry and insulted by what Jesus said. He was teaching them about God, and they didn't want to hear. Jesus felt sad for them because they needed to hear these words and believe in Him. He was frustrated, like we are when others won't accept our help.

But here's the good part of the story: Jesus didn't give up. He sent out His disciples two by two, and they went to all the towns and villages, healing and teaching people! Some people listened to them, and some didn't. But they just kept going, sharing the love of God, just as Jesus sent them to do.

The truth is that sometimes we don't listen to Jesus, either. We know the commandments, and we often ignore them. We know that we should love our neighbours as ourselves, even when we're frustrated, but we don't always do it. Sometimes, we even think that we know best and that Jesus has nothing to teach us. How embarrassing!

But Jesus doesn't give up on us, either! He keeps coming to us in His Word, speaking to us through His pastor, forgiving our sins and teaching us about Himself. He healed us by His death on the cross, and He makes us new through His resurrection. He loves us so much that He will never give up on us.

Now we get to be like the disciples - to share Jesus with others. Some friends will listen and love to hear what you say, and others may feel offended. But you'll keep on sharing the love of Jesus your whole life.

Lord Jesus, You taught the people and healed them even when they didn't want to listen. Thank You for teaching us and loving us and never giving up on us. In your name we pray. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

14 July 8 Pentecost	21 July 9 Pentecost	28 July 10 Pentecost
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am LOWOOD HC	10.00am HC Parish Service at Bethlehem Toowoomba	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR
Sunday, 14 July		
READINGS: Amos 7:7-15;	Ephesians 1:3-14;	Mark 6:14-29
HYMNS: 124 149 327 (839 840) 512		
Sunday, 21 July		
READINGS: Jeremiah 23:1-6;	Ephesians 2:11-22;	Mark 6:30-44
HYMNS: 505 191 289 465 287 604		
Sunday, 28 July		
READINGS: Genesis 9:8-17;	Ephesians 3:14-21;	Mark 6:45-56
HYMNS: 422 409 578 (763 292) 608		

Tuesday, 9 July, 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at **Aubigny**. Opening devotion: John.

Saturday, 13 July, 10.00am. CoC & Sem. Committee meeting at Our Saviour Lowood. Please forward any agenda items to the Secretary, Ian Manz, or through your representatives. Also, at this meeting, a special parish meeting will be held to add Peter Ziebell as a signatory to the parish pastor's Heritage Bank Fringe Benefit account (no. 16453824). Please ensure representatives are in attendance to make a quorum. According to the Parish Rules, a quorum needed is 20% of the members representing at least 2 member-congregations.

Saturday, 13 July, 1.00pm. The next fellowship afternoon will be held at Nola's home in Middle Ridge. All are welcome to attend. Please bring a plate for afternoon tea.

Saturday, 13 July, 7pm. YAY (Young adults and youth) is on at Aubigny. The hall will be opened for games and socializing from 6.30pm. All young adults and youth are welcome to attend. Please bring your Bible and something for supper.

JULY BIBLE STUDIES

18 July, 10.00am Our Saviour Lowood
24 July, 7.30pm St Paul's Greenwood

21 July, 8.30am Bethlehem Toowoomba
26 July, 7.30pm O/A at St John's Aubigny