

**Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,**  
**ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY**  
8<sup>th</sup> September    Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**HYMNS:** 16 450 818 335 848 618

**INTROIT:** Psalm 146

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

Let me praise the LORD throughout my life; let me sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Do not trust in influential people, in a descendant of Adam, who cannot save. His spirit will depart, he will return to his earth; on that day his plans will have perished.

Blessed is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the LORD his God, who has made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who remains faithful for ever, who provides justice for the oppressed; and who gives food to the hungry. The LORD causes prisoners to go free.

The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD raises up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves righteous people.

The LORD watches over the resident aliens. He comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow. But He makes the way of wicked people crooked.

The LORD will reign for ever; Your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD!

**COLLECT:**

O Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask for may be in accord with Your gracious will; 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](mailto:paziebell@gmail.com) or to the church office at [ddaelc@gmail.com](mailto: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:** Isaiah 35:4-7a The salvation of our God.  
James 2:1-10,14-18 Do not prefer the rich. Keep the whole Law. Faith is active.  
Mark 7:31-37 The healing of the man who was deaf and dumb.

### **Isaiah 35:4-7a**

<sup>4</sup> Say to those whose hearts are dismayed: “Be strong, do not be afraid! Look! Your God will come with vengeance, with the retribution of God. He Himself will come and save you!”

<sup>5</sup> Then **the eyes of blind people will be opened, and the ears of deaf people will be opened.** <sup>6</sup> Then **the lame man will** leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb man will shout for joy. For water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. <sup>7</sup> Then the parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty ground will become springs of water.

### **James 2:1-10, 14-18**

<sup>1</sup> My fellow-Christians, as you hold the faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord of glory, do not show favouritism! <sup>2</sup> For, if a man with a gold ring on his finger and wearing fine clothes comes into your assembly for worship, and a poor man in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup> and, if you give special attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “You take this good seat here!” and you tell the poor man, “You stand there!” or “Sit at my footstool!” <sup>4</sup> have you not shown favouritism among yourselves and become judges with evil motives? <sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear fellow-Christians! Has God not chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> However, you have dishonoured the poor man. Do not rich people oppress you and are not they the ones who drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Are not they the ones who say wicked things about the noble name after which you have been called? <sup>8</sup> If you really fulfil the Royal Law, according to the Scripture passage: “**You shall love your neighbour as yourself!**” you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> However, if you show favouritism, you are committing a sin, and the Law convicts you as transgressors.

<sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles in one point has become guilty of them all...

<sup>14</sup> What good does it do, my fellow-Christians, if someone says that he has faith but if he does not have works? That faith cannot save him, can it? <sup>15</sup> If a Christian man or woman is without clothes and daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you tells them, “Go in peace! Keep warm and well fed!” but you do not give them what the body needs, what good does it do? <sup>17</sup> So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> However, someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without works, and I shall show you my faith by my works!”

## **Mark 7:31-37**

<sup>31</sup> Jesus again left the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee and through the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> Some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk and begged Jesus to lay His hand on him. <sup>33</sup> Jesus took him away from the crowd to be alone with him and put His fingers into the man's ears. Then He spat and touched the man's tongue. <sup>34</sup> He looked up to heaven, groaned and said to him, "Ephphatha!" which means, "Be opened!" <sup>35</sup> Immediately the man's ears were opened, the bond of his tongue was untied, and he began to speak plainly. <sup>36</sup> Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone. However, the more He forbade them the more widely they kept telling about it. <sup>37</sup> They were extremely amazed. They said, "He has been doing everything well. He even makes deaf people hear and dumb people speak."

## **JESUS HEALS ALL OUR DISEASES**

### **Sermon for the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 2024**

## **Mark 7:31-37**

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 7:31-37: **Jesus again left the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee and through the region of the Decapolis.** <sup>32</sup> Some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk and begged Jesus to lay His hand on him. <sup>33</sup> Jesus took him away from the crowd to be alone with him and put His fingers into the man's ears. Then He spat and touched the man's tongue. <sup>34</sup> He looked up to heaven, groaned and said to him, "Ephphatha!" which means, "Be opened!" <sup>35</sup> Immediately the man's ears were opened, the bond of his tongue was untied, and he began to speak plainly. <sup>36</sup> Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone. However, the more He forbade them the more widely they kept telling about it. <sup>37</sup> They were extremely amazed. They said, "He has been doing everything well. He even makes deaf people hear and dumb people speak."

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Many advances in medical science have given people who once had bad hearing the ability to hear. We can think of devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, and even the amazing surgery performed by ear, nose, and throat surgeons. Of course, there will always be those who are profoundly deaf, and nothing can be done for those people. Nevertheless, advances in the medical field have led to good outcomes for many suffering from bad hearing.

In our Gospel today, a deaf man hears for the first time, but it is not because he receives a cochlear implant or hearing aids or something else, but due to a simple word spoken by Jesus: **“Ephphatha!”** Jesus heals simply with His Word, and Jesus does all things well.

Actually, Jesus has been doing all sorts of good things in Mark’s Gospel up to this point. He has been healing the sick, casting out demons, calling people to repentance and faith, gathering disciples, teaching God’s Word, forgiving sins, and feeding a multitude. Jesus has been revealing Himself for who He is: the Son of God who had come on a mission to bless humanity. And He does this *very well.* So, word is going around that if you’ve got people who need help, bring them to Jesus. So it was that **“some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk and begged Jesus to lay His hand on him.”** Could Jesus help this man? Yes, He could. **“Jesus took him away from the crowd to be alone with him.”** Since this man could not hear, Jesus carried out a visual action to convey to the man the nature of what He was about to do. He **“put His fingers into the man’s ears. Then He spat and touched the man’s tongue.”** Why does Jesus spit? Our text doesn’t say exactly, but there was an old tradition that spittle could convey healing. But it also could mean that whatever was binding the man’s tongue was now about to be loosed since spit emanates from the mouth. In any case, Jesus, by visual signs and by the touch of His fingers, conveys to the man the kind of healing He’s about to bless him with. And where is this blessing going to come from? Jesus **“looked up to heaven.”** Why? As the writer of Psalm 121 says, *“I shall lift up my eyes to the hills. From where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who has made heaven and earth”* (Psalm 121:1-2). Yes, and as God’s Son, Jesus has the authority of heaven to help this man.

Jesus does one other thing before He heals the man. As Jesus looked up to heaven, He **“groaned.”** Jesus is moved with emotion as He deals with the damage that sin has done on the earth. It isn’t supposed to be like this: humans with their senses and faculties not working. The creation is all messed up. People are hurting. So Jesus, our Saviour, is moved with compassion at the human condition.

Now, Jesus is ready to heal the man. He speaks a word, that funny-sounding word, “**Ephphatha.**” It may sound strange, but still, it is a powerful word because Jesus speaks it. “**Ephphatha**” is an Aramaic word, the language that Jesus spoke. “**Ephphatha!**” which means, “**Be opened!**” And when Jesus speaks, things happen. “**Immediately the man’s ears were opened, the bond of his tongue was untied, and he began to speak plainly.**” Imagine the overwhelming emotion the man must have felt! Tears of joy! And it wasn’t just joy because his ears now worked, but also his tongue. What a joy! What a blessing! People are amazed and overjoyed when they discover what Jesus has done for this man: “**He has been doing everything well. He even makes deaf people hear and dumb people speak.**”

What a wonderful real-life story for us to read, but what does all this mean?

It means that Jesus will do the same kind of healing for us. Do you suffer from bad hearing? Guess what? It won’t be forever. You will not have that problem forever. What about your voice? We all get sore throats for various reasons at one time or another, even losing our voice at times. Some are even unable to speak at all. But we won’t have that problem once Jesus comes back. He’ll fix it. In fact, it doesn’t matter what sort of health problem you may have – Jesus will take care of all this damaged creation, raising our bodies whole and perfect and glorious, ready to live forever in a perfectly restored creation, a new heaven and a new earth. This is something to look forward to! This is our hope, our glorious hope: The return of Christ, the Fixer of what’s broken, broken people and broken world. *Jesus does all things well.*

All this comes about by way of a cross and an implanted word. The cross: That’s where Jesus does the fixing. All the damage in the world - disease and disability and death - all this bad stuff, all the faculties and senses not working right, all the people not working right or living right or doing right - this all is sin or the consequences and results of sin. Man got out of step with God, man disobeyed and rebelled against God, against our Creator, and everything got messed up: our bodies, our lives, even creation itself. You and I and everybody around us - we all have done this, cutting ourselves off from God, and we all bear the consequences and the curse of our sin, ultimately ending in death.

So, since we messed things up, *we couldn’t fix it.* But there is One who could, and He did, and He does, and He will. It is Jesus, of course. The Son of God came down from heaven, took on our flesh, came face to face with our sin, came finger to ear and finger to tongue with the effects of our sin, and He fixed it. He did the big fixing job on the cross, where He bore our sins in His body, the innocent

bearing the penalty of the guilty, Jesus, our Substitute and our Saviour. This is the only way our sin could be forgiven and all our guilt atoned for, the damage undone. The great result of what Jesus did for us on the cross is shown in Jesus' resurrection from the dead, showing what is in store for all of us who trust in Him, namely, *complete healing and everlasting life*.

This was delivered to us when we were baptised. Because it's Jesus' baptism, His big fixing job was applied to us personally. There, Jesus touched and splashed us with the life-giving water of the Word. There, Jesus spoke His powerful Word when He said, "*I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*." And so it happened because Jesus spoke it. His Word delivers what it promises. Trust in this baptismal Word, which Jesus spoke over you when He placed the name of the Triune God upon you. It's yours. It's a gift. It's your new identity as a baptised child of God, loved by Him.

In the late fourth century, the early church father, St. Ambrose of Milan, wrote about a ceremony when a catechumen was baptised. You see, they picked up on the story of Jesus opening the deaf man's ears and applied it to the person being baptised. The pastor would moisten his fingers, touch the person, and say "**Ephphatha,**" which means "**be opened!**" Ambrose and others recognised that in Holy Baptism, Jesus was working once again to do eternal healing.

Dear friends, when Jesus speaks His word to us, things happen. Our ears are opened. We begin to hear the Word of the Lord aright, that is, in faith and bearing fruit. Our tongue is loosed, loosed to speak and sing the excellencies of our God - indeed, the wondrous healing and saving work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has done all things well. So "*Give thanks to the LORD! For He is good. For His mercy endures for ever*" (Psalm 136:1). "**He even makes deaf people hear and dumb people speak.**" Amen.

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

## PRAYER FOR THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Heavenly Father, we worship You as the creator of all things and the preserver of our lives. In Your goodness You care for every one of Your creatures. We come before You in prayer with sincere and trusting hearts.

We thank and praise You for all Your goodness, but especially for the gift of Your only Son Jesus, whom You sent to suffer and die to rescue us from sin, and to rise again to guarantee the final crown of life for us in heaven.

Through Him, we are Your children, enjoying the fullness of Your goodness and care. Give us firm faith in Your power and guidance, that we may continually trust You for all our daily needs, and carry out our daily tasks without worry about the future. No matter what may happen, give us the conviction that You direct all things in heaven and on earth by Your Word, and care especially for Your children.

Grant us Your grace that we may not live for the worthless values of this world or for the accumulation of wealth. We thank You for Jesus Christ, our most priceless treasure. Teach us to seek above everything else the blessings of Your kingdom in a life of loving obedience.

Make Christ's Word in all its richness live in our hearts and make us wise. Increase our love toward all people. Give us a special concern for those of the family of faith, and make us eager to help one another with our burdens and weaknesses. Fill Your Church with Your Spirit, that the compassion of Christ may be evident in the love and kindness we show to the fallen, the erring, and the heavy-laden. Let us never grow tired of doing good. Bless the AELC and cause growth, if it is Your will.

Grant that we, whose ears have been opened spiritually to hear Your Gospel, may speak it plainly to those who should hear it from us. Let Your light shine among the nations, so that the very ends of the earth may see Your glory, and people everywhere may learn to worship and serve You alone.

Bless our own country. May those in positions of government and authority honour You. May Your truth hold sway in politics, business, industry, education, and the mass media.

In every day's needs and crises, help all families with Your presence. Be with them in sorrow or joy, sickness or health, disappointment or success, and make them safe and content in Your love.

Continue to direct our lives in your loving providence. Give us opportunities to use your gifts as Your grateful stewards. Keep us in the faith by Your grace and power, that we may attain to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

## Article: Anger

Anger is a very tricky emotion. I have been told before that it is a secondary emotion. In other words, as a secondary emotion, anger typically is a response to some event or deeper emotion within a person. Let me explain this a bit more with a couple of examples.

If you find yourself out of control in life - say, with a medical condition - and you are not able to do the things you once did, anger will naturally arise as a secondary emotion. It will arise as a response.

Here is another example: if a neighbour's house is robbed and vandalised, and the crooks get away, this injustice causes anger to rise up as a secondary emotion. Anger will arise as a response to the situation.

This means that it is not necessarily a sin to be angry. After all, Jesus was angry in the temple and at the death of His friend Lazarus. Again, anger is not necessarily a sin when it is expressed as righteous anger toward sinful and bad things.

However, there are times when anger – as a secondary emotion – is indeed sinful. For example, anger becomes sinful when it is based on selfish reasons, pride, entitlement, jealousy, and so forth. For example, if a colleague at work receives a promotion or recognition that you wanted, well... it is easy to become sinfully angry towards that person and even to slander them behind their back. You get the picture.

But why mention all of this?

In Genesis chapter 4, we hear about two brothers, Cain and Abel. Long story short, they both brought offerings before God Himself. God liked Abel's offering but did not approve of Cain's offering. As a result, Cain lost his temper and went and put a scowl on his face. Now, one would think that Cain's anger was justified; however, it was not. In fact, God Himself told Cain that he did not have the right to be angry. God told Cain that he would have been smiling if he had done the right thing. Cain was to blame, not God. You see, Abel gave his offering in faith, whereas Cain gave his offering without faith. Abel gave his offering to God as an act of worship, whereas Cain gave his offering as a self-righteous way of trying to earn God's approval.



Cain's anger was not righteous. Cain's anger was not healthy. Cain did not have the right to be angry with God or Abel. And this is where we need to pay special attention. This is where we need to be alert. Instead of Cain's anger being a short-lived sinful secondary emotion, his anger developed roots and then burrowed into his heart, turning into bitterness, resentment, and hatred. Perhaps we could say it this way: Cain's sinful anger was crouching at the door of his heart; however, Cain was so fuelled by wrath towards God and Abel that this sinful anger ripped into his heart and pounced on his heart like a wild beast and began to devour his soul. Cain's anger went from a secondary emotion into the basement of his heart and took up residence in Cain's heart in the form of resentful rage.

We have all been there before when anger turns into bitterness, resentment, and hatred. It is an awful place to be. When sinful anger gives birth to bitterness and then takes root in our hearts, we begin to blame everyone else around us, while we are easily triggered and irritable. Indeed, when short-lived anger burrows into our hearts as long-term bitterness, our outlook on life becomes toxic, and there is no hope for anything. This deep-rooted bitterness can even bring about physical pain in our body, as our chest muscles are wrapped in frustration and our stomachs are tied up in knots. To make things worse, if left unchecked, bitterness leads to embedded hatred, and hatred then leads to spiritual suicide, which results in us being cut off from the Lord's grace.

In the case of Cain, we saw what happened; his raging anger and vindictive spirit poured out upon Abel, as he stoned and murdered Abel in a field.

Where do we go from here?

As we consider Cain, it is important to note that Cain's issue was that he got angry when he had no right to be angry in the first place. You see, there are times when we are not angry over a situation when we should be angry. And then, there are other times when we should not be angry over a situation, but we are. And that second example of being angry when we should not be angry is what we should pay special attention to. You see, Cain got so incredibly angry because he was not justified with his offering. God did not validate Cain's unfaithfulness.

Cain was easily given to anger because he was so invested in his works, his pride, his accomplishments, and his self-righteousness. Those who are self-absorbed in their own greatness are the most easily offended because they trust in themselves and not in Christ. However, I get the impression that Abel would not have been so easily angered - not because he was super pious or religiously good - but rather because he knew that he could bring nothing before God.

Consider that old hymn, Rock of Ages (330), for a moment. Verse 3 states,

*Nothing in my hand I bring,*

*Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

*Naked, come to Thee for dress,*

*Helpless, look to Thee for grace;*

*Foul, I to the fountain fly;*

*Wash me, Saviour, or I die.*

It is hard to get offended before God when you have nothing in your hands to give Him. It is hard to get angry in life when you have nothing to cling to in life except the cross. It is difficult to get defensive when you know you are helpless to begin with. For, when you are empty-handed, naked, helpless, and foul, you are not keeping score of what you didn't get or should have received but are grateful for what has already been given to you. And that is the key difference between the way of Cain and the way of Abel.

You need not get defensive, angry, or lash out like Cain at your neighbour or God Himself. The reason why? When the Lord God confronts our sins through His Holy Word, He is right about our sins. Also, when we are called out on our sins by loved ones, chances are, they are probably right as well. And when your conscience bothers you, more often than not, you have probably failed again. But take heart, you are never left in your condemnation to be given over to anger, bitterness, and resentment, for you no longer live; you have been crucified with Christ. One does not need to be easily triggered or defensive over one's life when one's whole life is found in Christ, especially when there is more grace in Christ than there is bitterness in one's heart.

## Children's Message:

What are you looking forward to? I am sure there are all sorts of things you look forward to. But there's one thing every Christian looks forward to most of all. Almost every week we say we're looking forward to it. In our hymnbooks, we have a Creed that we confess every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Do you know what that Creed is? It is the Nicene Creed. In that Creed that we confess, we say we're looking forward to something spectacular: *"I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."* That is what we're all looking forward to.

Now, why would we be looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come? In our reading today from Isaiah, we heard about what will happen in the resurrection and the life of the world to come. Jesus will return and get rid of all the evil in this world. He'll save us. And all those who were blind will be able to see. All who were deaf will be able to hear. All who were unable to walk will leap like a deer. All who couldn't talk will sing for joy. Any problem with your body or the bodies of any believer will no longer be a problem. All that's wrong with the world will go away. There will be no sin, no Satan, no sorrow, no sickness, no suffering. There will be nothing but joy and gladness with Jesus and all who trust in Him. That is something to look forward to, isn't it!



Why can we be so certain Jesus will do this for us? Because of what He already did. In the Nicene Creed, we say who Jesus is. He is the *"Son of God"* who *"was made man."* Why? So He could be *"crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate."* On the cross, He died for our sins. And then on *"the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures."* So, *"just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity"* (Small Catechism, Second Article), all believers in Christ will rise to eternal life too.

What are you looking forward to? I know what I am! *"The resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."*

*Dear Jesus, help me to keep my mind focused on the eternal life You have promised to give me. Amen.*

## WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<b>15 September 17 Pentecost</b>	<b>22 September 18 Pentecost</b>	<b>29 September 19 Pentecost</b>
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA LR 9.00am GRN LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am MARBURG HC	8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC 9.00am LOWOOD LR	8.30am OAK HC 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC 9.00am MARBURG LR
<b>Sunday, 15 September</b>		
READINGS: Isaiah 50:4-10; James 3:1-12; Mark 9:14-29		
HYMNS: 336 241 447 (847 289) 383		
<b>Sunday, 22 September</b>		
READINGS: Jeremiah 11:18-20; James 3:13-4:10; Mark 9:30-37		
HYMNS: 54 356 277 (282 283) 199		
<b>Sunday, 29 September</b>		
READINGS: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29; James 5:1-20; Mark 9:38-50		
HYMNS: 119 341 179 (84 842) 346		

Saturday, September 14, 1.00pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are welcome to attend. Please bring a shared afternoon tea.

Saturday, September 14, 7.00pm, YAY (Young Adults and Youth) is on at Aubigny. The hall will be open for games and socialising from 6:30pm. All young adults and youth are most welcome to attend. Please remember to bring your Bible and something for supper.

### SEPTEMBER BIBLE STUDIES

Lowood: Thursday, 12 September, 10.00am.

Marburg: Sunday, 15 September, after worship. (please bring something for a shared morning tea)

Greenwood: Wednesday, 18 September, 7.30pm in the hall.

Toowoomba, Sunday, 22 September, 8.00am.

Aubigny/Oakey: Friday, 26 September, 7.30pm at Aubigny.