

Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA, OUR SAVIOUR LOWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, TRINITY MARBURG, TRINITY OAKEY
6th October Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

HYMNS: 361 893 280 101

INTROIT: Psalm 128

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His Ways!
You will certainly eat what your own hands have worked for. You
will be blessed, and it will be well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine inside your house. Your
children will be like olive shoots around your table.

This is how the man who fears the LORD will be blessed.

May the LORD bless you from Zion, that you may see the
prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!

May you see your children's children! **Peace be on Israel!**

COLLECT: Merciful Father, Your patience and loving-kindness
toward us have no end. Grant that by Your Holy Spirit we may
always think and do those things that are pleasing in Your sight,
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: Genesis 2:18-24 The creation of woman.

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12 Christ is superior to the prophets, and Lord of everything.

Mark 10:2-16 Marriage and divorce.

Genesis 2:18-25

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I shall make him
a helper, suitable for him."

¹⁹ The LORD God had formed from the ground every beast of the field and every
bird in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them.

Whatever the man named each living creature, that became its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the domestic animals, the birds in the sky and every wild animal. However, Adam did not find a helper who was suitable for him. ²¹ The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and, while the man was sleeping, He took out one of his ribs and closed its place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be named ‘woman,’ because she has been taken from ‘man.’” ²⁴ **Therefore, a man will leave his father and his mother. He will be united with his wife and they will become one flesh.** ²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked but were not ashamed.

Hebrews 2:1-18

¹ That is why we must pay closer attention to the things that we have heard, that we may not drift away. ² For, if the Word that was spoken through angels was valid and every trespass and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how shall we escape if we have neglected such a great salvation, which was proclaimed at first through the Lord and then was confirmed to us by those who heard Him? ⁴ God also added His testimony to it by both miraculous signs and wonders, by different kinds of miracles and by distributing gifts of the Holy Spirit as He wished.

⁵ For it is not to angels that He has subordinated the coming world, about which we are speaking. ⁶ However, somewhere someone has declared: “**What is man that You are mindful of him or a son of man that You are concerned about him?**” ⁷ **You have made him lower than the angels for a short time and have crowned him with glory and honour. You have placed him in charge of what Your hands have made.** ⁸ **You have subordinated all things under His feet.**” For, when God **subordinated all things to Him**, He left nothing that is not subordinated to Him.

At present, we do not yet see that all things have been made subordinate to him.

⁹ However, we see Jesus, who **for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour** because He suffered death, so that, by God’s grace, He might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, because of whom all things exist and through whom all things exist, that, when He brought many sons to glory, He should make the Author of their salvation complete through sufferings. ¹¹ For He who makes people holy and those who are made holy are all derived from one. That is why He is not ashamed to call them “**brothers.**” ¹² He says: “**I shall proclaim Your Name to My brothers.**”

Amid the congregation I shall sing Your praise.” ¹³ Again: **“I shall trust in Him.”** Again, He says, **“Here am I, and the children whom God has given to Me.”**

¹⁴ Therefore, since the **children** have shared in blood and flesh, He also in just the same way participated in the same things, that, through His death, He might destroy the one who has power over death, that is, the Devil, ¹⁵ and that He might release all those who were subjected to slavery all their lives by fear of death.

¹⁶ For surely, He is not **concerned with angels**. Rather, He is concerned with **the offspring of Abraham**. ¹⁷ Therefore, He was obliged to be made like His brothers in every way, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For, because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He can help others who are being tempted.

Mark 10:2-16

² Some Pharisees came to Him and asked Him, to test Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

³ He answered them by asking, “What has Moses commanded you?”

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man **to write a certificate of divorce and divorce her.**”

⁵ Jesus told them, “It was because your hearts were hard that he wrote this Commandment for you. ⁶ However, at the beginning of creation God **‘made them male and female.’** ⁷ **‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,** ⁸ **and the two will become one flesh.’** Therefore, they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore, no person should separate what God has joined together!”

¹⁰ When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹ He answered them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² If a wife divorces her husband and marries another man, she also commits adultery.”

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ However, when Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He told them, “Allow the little children to come to Me and stop forbidding them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly, I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child does will certainly not enter it.”

¹⁶ He took the children in His arms, laid His hands on them and blessed them.

BECOME LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN
Sermon for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost, 2024
Mark 10:2-16

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 10:2-16: **Some Pharisees came to Him and asked Him, to test Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”**

³ He answered them by asking, “What has Moses commanded you?”

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and divorce her.”

⁵ Jesus told them, “It was because your hearts were hard that he wrote this Commandment for you. ⁶ However, at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ Therefore, they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore, no person should separate what God has joined together!”

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¹⁶ He took the children in His arms, laid His hands on them and blessed them.

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Part of our Gospel for today, from Mark 10, reads as follows: **“People were bringing little children to Jesus that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ However, when Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He told them, “Allow the little children to come to Me and stop forbidding them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly, I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child does will certainly not enter it.” ¹⁶ He took the children in His arms, laid His hands on them and blessed them.”**

This part of our text is what we want to focus on today.

Jesus says, “**Allow the little children to come to Me,**” and *He’s still saying that today*. Jesus is fairly adamant and insistent when He says, “**Allow the little children to come to Me and stop forbidding them!**” So, in what ways may we be stopping children from coming to Jesus? What are ways we can help bring them to Him? And what is Jesus talking about when He says, “**For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these**”? Does this mean there is something special about children that makes them especially qualified for the kingdom? Let us dwell on these questions and find the answers this morning.

“**Allow the little children to come to Me and stop forbidding them!**” This is one of the most delightful, most comforting, and, at the same time, saddest stories in the gospels. We can, of course, try to excuse the disciples by saying that they sought to protect Jesus from needless interruptions and thus save His time for more important things. But that’s exactly what is very sad about their action. Jesus tells the disciples this in no uncertain terms. It seems Jesus thinks His time is well spent blessing little children. He does not see them as unimportant or of no worth. On the contrary, we see Jesus over and over again in the gospels spending time and attention on people that the world - or even the respectable people in the church - may see as marginal or valueless: little children, lepers, a poor widow, a Gentile woman, a disreputable tax collector. These are people Jesus cares about, and thus God cares about - and thus we should care about them, too.

But surely we do not hinder children from coming to Jesus, do we? We wouldn’t do something like that! Well, maybe not intentionally, but then the disciples had good intentions, yet Jesus rebuked them about this.

The question must be asked: How do we hinder children from coming to Jesus? We’re not chasing the mums and dads away when they bring their children here, are we? No, we’d love it if more parents would bring their children to church. But when they do, let’s make sure we welcome them. Little kids sometimes make a little noise during the service. But surely we would much rather have that than no noise and no kids. That’s a small point.

But by far, the biggest problem is when parents *do not* take their children to church. We are talking about Christian parents, people who should know better. They are hindering the children from coming to Jesus. They are being derelict in their office as parents. Mums and dads - especially dads in the position of the spiritual head of the household - have the number one responsibility to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And that means, first of all, getting them baptised and bringing them to church. Nothing is more important than being in the Lord’s house on the Lord’s Day. To keep that day holy and hold it sacred means not letting anything else interfere with it. It means being in church with your children so you can hear God’s Word and gladly hear and learn it. When parents don’t do that, they

are failing in their responsibility. They are hindering the children from coming to Jesus their Saviour, who wants to bless them.

And then there's what happens in the home. Are the children being taught in the home? Are they being taught the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer? These are basics. Children need to learn the catechism from infancy; their parents are the primary catechists. Do you see that when the children get older, they take catechism instruction and get confirmed?

What a mess we make of God's good design for the family! We fail in our responsibility of faithfully and regularly bringing our children to Jesus, both in the church and the home, and this is to our shame. Surely, we have failed in many ways and at many times in our responsibilities as parents. Lord, have mercy upon us!

But here is the good news: The Lord does have mercy on us! God is in the business of forgiving sinners like you and me. He declares that His own Son, Christ Jesus, has died for sinners just like us. Christ has shed His holy blood to cover and atone for all our sins, including our failures in raising our children according to God's will. The slate is wiped clean.

More than that, God now picks us up and gets us going again in the right direction. There is hope for you and your family, no matter how badly you have messed things up. God is in the restoration business. He's even in the resurrection business. *He brings life out of death.*

So, with that new life from God, how can we let the children come to Jesus? How can we practically help? Of course, if you are parents of little children, the obvious thing is to flip around those failures: Start taking the children to church every Sunday. Start doing devotions in the home. Do table prayers together - which means having family meals together, by the way. Teach your children the Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. When they're a little older, get them catechised and confirmed to receive the Lord's Supper. Maybe it won't all come together at once - there will be fits and starts - but the main thing is to get going in the right direction. And when you stumble, ask the Lord for His forgiveness and help, and He will help you get back on your feet. He's also given you a church and a pastor, who are there to encourage and help you along the way.

But some here today may not have little ones in the home anymore. They've grown up and moved on. They have children of their own by now. So, grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, what can you do in your spheres of influence to help bring the children to Jesus? Many things. Pray for those children and pray for their parents. When you're babysitting, read them some Bible stories. Or, as some of you may have done, get a Bible storybook and give it to the parents for their home. The point is that there are lots of ways to help.

“Allow the little children to come to Me and stop forbidding them!” OK, we’ve covered that. But then Jesus adds this mysterious explanation: **“For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”** What does Jesus mean by that? Are children inherently qualified for the kingdom of God, as though they were somehow more innocent or sinless than the rest of us? No, the Bible certainly does not teach that. King David once said, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51:5). All of us are conceived in sin, born sinners. We all have inherited that sinful nature from our fathers, going back to Adam. So what is it about children that Jesus should say, **“For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”**?

The simplest way to explain this is to say that *children can only be given to*. If little children are to live, they need to receive everything from outside themselves. They must be given to. They cannot fend for themselves regarding food, clothing, shelter, and protection. They need to receive those things. Children inherently trust the ones who are caring for them.

The analogy is clear. All those who come into the kingdom of God get there by being given to. You and I cannot produce the righteousness we need to enter the kingdom of God. It’s not by our works we gain heaven. It’s by being given to by God. **“Truly, I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child does will certainly not enter it,”** Jesus says.

Dear friends, God our Father supplies us with everything we need to enter and live in the kingdom of God: the forgiveness, the righteousness, even the gift of faith itself, produced by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. And so we trust, like little children, that their parents will give them what they need. In like manner, God gives us all the gifts of His grace as pure gifts, and we receive them in childlike faith.

Yes, you see, you and I are also the children who are coming to Jesus, and He will bless us. Whatever your age, whether young or old, we enter the kingdom of God only as little children, being given to, trusting in and receiving from our gracious Lord. Amen.

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

PRAYER FOR THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Lord God, heavenly Father, You are our shelter and strength. You are always ready to help us, and never leave us. We praise You for the great mercy You have shown to us sinners in the gift of Your Son Jesus Christ. We glorify Him because He has come to remove our sins by His sacrifice on the cross, so that whoever believes in Him may not die but have eternal life. We praise You, O Father, for Your great love to us, for rescuing us from the power of sin and death, and for opening to us the gate of heaven.

We confess that we are worthless sinners, guilty of flouting Your will more than we realise. We humbly repent of our evil, and trust for our forgiveness only in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Pardon us, and cleanse our lives for His sake. Grant that we may continue in Your kingdom as Your dear children.

Renew us by Your Spirit and teach us to love what is pure, holy, true, and good. Take captive our every thought, word, and deed, and make them obey Christ. Give us the desire to walk in Your ways, to follow Your Word, and to grow in it. Touch us with Your grace, that we may be transformed in character, firm in faith, joyful in hope, patient in troubles, and persistent in prayer. Fill our lives with the hope that Christ will transform our humble bodies and make them like His glorious body.

Fill Your Church with Your Spirit, that it may have a power and wisdom superior to all human knowledge. Give to all preachers and teachers the conviction and courage of true prophets, that Your people may be built up in faith and love, strengthened in service, and kept faithful to the end.

Spread Your truth and love among the nations, that they may receive Your truth in repentance and faith. Rescue them from error and godlessness, and move them to offer You true worship and praise. Bless our country. Help all to understand that personal advantage, public opinion, and party politics do not make a nation great, but obedience to Your will. Give us public servants and leaders in management and labour who are unselfish and far-sighted, and whose concern is for the public good and the God-given dignity of every person.

Be gracious to our homes. Give to all families the gifts of faith, love, and obedience to You, so that each home may be a first taste of the joy and blessedness of our heavenly home.

We pray you to heal and comfort all who face sickness, pain, hardship, suffering, or danger. Teach them to turn to You for help, and to trust in Your mercy. Give them hope and a joyous release from all their burdens.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus, our sure refuge and eternal hope. Amen.

Article: THE READING OF LESSONS IN CHURCH BY WOMEN

The practice of having some lessons in churches read by women is a common practice across numerous Christian denominations today. In some places, it happens only in youth services and special services but not in regular services. In some places, it does not occur, and in other places, men and women read lessons indiscriminately. Allowing women to read an Old Testament Lesson or an Epistle, but not a Gospel is another practice that seems to lack any real principle.

There is also the practice of allowing women to vote in congregational meetings (women's suffrage). Debates over this have been had in Lutheran Churches over the years, where it has been debated whether meetings are 'church' or sharply distinct from worship services. It has been argued whether the casting of a vote by a woman or wife necessarily meant a wrongful exercise of authority over the man or the husband. And so on.

One of the principles of Scripture for good order is that a "woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent" (1 Tim. 2:11-12). God's Word traces this principle back to Adam's creation before Eve and Eve's deception in the fall (verses 13-14).

The relationship of women to men is the point at issue. Teaching children is not excluded at all. For example, Lois and Eunice taught Timothy. At schools, the most important principle to bear in mind is that the teachers function with the children in the place of the parents.

Another basic principle is the distinction between what is permitted in the home and what is permitted in public church services. This distinction could be made quite clearly in the New Testament times, even when church- services were held in private homes. The Scriptures say: "As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home: for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (1 Cor. 14:33-35).

So the question to ask is: Is it home, or church?

Sometimes, it has been argued that it is not really silence that is the issue here, but the submission of the women to the men. Not so. A woman's speaking in the church is what violates proper submission to her 'head.' (Compare the use of the word 'head' in 1 Cor. 11:3: "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God").

Some see it as a real difficulty that if silence is taken absolutely, then women cannot join even in the singing of hymns, confessing the creed, or praying the Lord's Prayer.

The context in 1 Cor. 14 is helpful, however. There are two previous references to silence in verses 27-30. If a person was going to speak in a tongue when there was no interpreter, he was to be silent. If a person was giving a prophetic revelation and a revelation came to someone else who was sitting down, the first was to be silent. What is involved is a person's speaking alone in a leading way before the congregation.

These principles are not just a matter of custom for St. Paul's Day or matters about which people today can please themselves. St. Paul insists that what he is writing is the Lord's command (1 Cor. 14:37), and it was the practice in all the congregations (v.33). It will not do to dismiss this command by saying that it is not connected with the Gospel.

It follows that while women do and should participate in unison singing and speaking in worship services, individual leading speaking roles in public worship services are not permitted. Home is the place for inquiring and questioning (v.35).

It is sometimes argued that there is a difference between reading and speaking. One who speaks is one who chooses his own words, but a reader simply keeps to the text before him. However, which is the more general term? And which is more important, the divinely-inspired words of Scripture themselves or the instruction and admonition that are based on them? There is no difference in principle between reading God's Word as a lesson and reading a sermon. If there are grey areas, the decision ought to go in the direction of God's command.

The real point is attitude. Do people care about the Lord's command or not? If the Lord says, "Women should remain silent," it is not permissible to come up with a direct contra: "She does not have to remain silent: she may read lessons, even if that is an individual leading role that involves speaking before the whole church." God says one thing: men, like a calf on a chain, get as far away from the central point of it as they can!

If there are widows and women whose husbands are not Christians, this should not be a reason for ignoring the Lord's command. It places an additional burden on people like pastors and elders to make doubly sure that they are cared for properly.

The principles described here are borne out by the universal practice of the church. In the early church, lectors were regarded as a minor clerical order. At Rome, the arch-deacon read the Gospel. Certainly, there were deaconesses in the early church, but there is no indication that even a deaconess read lessons in public worship services. They had an important role to perform in the baptism of women, but even in the baptistery the presbyter or the bishop behind a screen took the spoken part of the baptismal service, including the creed in question-form.

When women read lessons, disobedience looms large.

Children's Message:

In the beginning, God created many kinds of animals. He created funny monkeys, the speedy cheetah and beautiful birds. And when God created all those wonderful animals, He presented them to the first man, Adam, and asked him to give them all names. And so, Adam did. That's because Adam was created to take care of God's creation.



But God wasn't finished yet. Adam didn't have a helper. All the animals had both boy and girl animals, but Adam did not have a helper for him. God knew he would be lonely. So you know what God did? He created a wonderful helper for him. He created Eve. God made them so wonderful together that they were married and could have children. And to this day, people grow up, get married, and have children.

Adam and Eve were happy, but one day the serpent - who was really the devil - tempted them, and instead of being happy living with God's blessing, they decided they wanted to do things their own way. They went against, rebelled against, God. Sometimes we rebel against God too, don't we? For example, when we don't treat our friends and families in a kind way, or when we get mad and disobey our parents. That is to rebel against what God wants for us.

But you know what? God loved Adam and Eve, and all of us, so much that He told Adam and Eve right away that one day He would send His Son to be our Saviour, to rescue us from our rebellion. In fact, the Bible teaches us something I'd like you to never forget: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Dear God, thank You for the beautiful creation You've given us. Thank You for the funny animals, for the beautiful birds, and for our friends and family. Especially we thank You because You loved us so much that You sent Your Son, Jesus to forgive our rebellion and to grant us eternal life with You. Amen.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

13 October 21 Pentecost	20 October 22 Pentecost	27 October Reformation Day
8.30am OAK LR 9.00am TMBA HC Harvest 9.00am GRN LR 10.45am AUB HC Harvest 9.00am MARBURG LR	8.30am OAK HC Harvest 9.00am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 10.15am GRN HC Harvest 9.00am LOWOOD LR	10.00am HC GRN AELC Service and St Paul's Lutheran Church Greenwood 125 th anniversary.
Sunday, 13 October		
READINGS: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Hebrews 3:12-19; Mark 10:17-22 (Tmba & Aub) Deuteronomy 26:1-11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Luke 12:13-21		
HYMNS: 345 359 178 556 TMB/AUB: 563 814 566 (53 293) 437		
Sunday, 20 October		
READINGS: Ecclesiastes 5:10-20; Hebrews 4:1-16; Mark 10:23-31 (Oak & Grn) Deuteronomy 26:1-11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Luke 12:13-21		
HYMNS: 502 372 377 426 OAK/GRN: 563 814 566 (53 293) 437		
Sunday, 27 October		
READINGS: Revelation 14:6-7; Romans 3:19-28; Luke 19:1-10		
HYMNS: 183 195 201 69 287 (292 if needed) 257		

Tuesday, 8 October. 7.30pm. Men's Fellowship at Aubigny. Opening devotion: Grant.

Wednesday, 9 October. Women's Guild at Bethlehem Toowoomba. Opening devotion: *Nola*. Choose a Bible verse from Deuteronomy 4-7. Item of Interest: *Something silver*.

Saturday, 12 October, 1pm. Fellowship afternoon at Bethlehem Toowoomba. All are welcome to attend. Please bring a shared afternoon tea.

Saturday, 12 October, 7pm, 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 an evening of fun, food and a devotion. Please remember to bring your Bible and something for supper.

OCTOBER Bible Study dates:

Sunday, 13 October, 8.00am Toowoomba.

Wednesday, 16 October, 7.30pm Greenwood.

Thursday, 17 October, 10.00am Lowood.

Friday, 25 October, 7.30pm Oak/Aub at Aubigny.