

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

5 March 2025

Bulletin for the 1<sup>st</sup> Mid-Week Lenten Service

**HYMNS:** 761 733 722

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

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

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

**Preparation for the Passover**

*Into Jerusalem*

LUKE 22:<sup>7</sup> Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. <sup>8</sup> And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

<sup>9</sup> So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?"

<sup>10</sup> And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. <sup>11</sup> Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' <sup>12</sup> Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready."

<sup>13</sup> So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

**Washing the Disciple's Feet**

*Jerusalem, Upper Room*

JOHN 13:<sup>1</sup> Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup> And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. <sup>5</sup> After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash

the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

<sup>6</sup> Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

<sup>8</sup> Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

<sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

<sup>12</sup> So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. <sup>14</sup> If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

<sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

<sup>16</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

<sup>18</sup> "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, '*He who eats* bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' <sup>19</sup> Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. <sup>20</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

## **The Lord's Supper**

MATTHEW 26:20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. <sup>21</sup> Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

<sup>22</sup> And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

<sup>23</sup> He answered and said, "He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

<sup>25</sup> Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?"

He said to him, “You have said it.”

LUKE 22:14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. <sup>15</sup> Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

<sup>17</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; <sup>18</sup> for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

MATTHEW 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

<sup>27</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <sup>29</sup> But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

### **Jesus Foretells His Betrayal**

John 13:21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

<sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

<sup>23</sup> Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup> Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

<sup>25</sup> Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*.” And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. <sup>27</sup> Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.” <sup>28</sup> But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. <sup>29</sup> For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy *those things* we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

<sup>30</sup> Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

### **Two Swords**

LUKE 22:35 And He said to them, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?”

So they said, “Nothing.”

<sup>36</sup> Then He said to them, “But now, he who has a money bag, let him take

it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. <sup>37</sup> For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: *'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'* For the things concerning Me have an end."

<sup>38</sup> So they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords."

And He said to them, "It is enough."

M: Here ends the reading.

## THE HAND OF THE LORD WHO FREELY GIVES

### Sermon for Ash Wednesday 2025

#### Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

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

The text for our sermon tonight is Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21: **Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.**

<sup>2</sup> "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

<sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you....

<sup>16</sup> "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where

**thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

The human body is amazing. Psalm 139 reminds us how God “*formed my inward parts.*” He “*knitted me together in my mother’s womb... My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth*” (v. 13, 15). Our very bodies, with their inner organs and biological complexity, knitted together with muscles, nerves, and veins, all built within a frame, that is, a skeleton, are the work of God. The human body is an artistically designed network. Yet we also know that we grow old and feeble, or our body wears out through sickness and disease, and so, we shall return to the “*depths of the earth,*” that is, using this metaphor for the womb, we recall that God has shaped us as He shaped Adam, and that we, too, are dust and to dust we shall return.

Anyway, part of our amazing bodies are the hands. Our hands are amazing instruments that, when working properly, showcase the amazing feat of the Lord’s engineering—they really are a gift from the Lord, and we can do so much with them. We can use them for work, sports, crafts, etc. In fact, hands are almost universally recognised as the symbols of our work, action, power, and control. Truly, without hands, we could not do much at all!

Yet, while our hands are important members of our bodies, all their controlling capabilities, powerful potential, and authoritative actions are not governed by our hands *themselves*. They have to receive some kind of signal from our brains on what to do. For example, for you to use your hands to turn your car to the left or right at an intersection, your brain has to signal them what to do.

Jesus, in our Gospel this evening, mentions hands when He says, “**But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.**”

This text is part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. For us to understand what the Lord is teaching us tonight, we have to go back to the beginning of this great sermon in Matthew chapter 5, where Jesus is addressing His disciples while a great crowd is overhearing. Jesus tells His disciples, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 5:3).

Jesus' disciples are the "*poor in spirit*" with nothing to offer God. They have only empty hands. They recognise their spiritual poverty, sinfulness and unworthiness in God's sight. They realise that they sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment from God. They admit their best efforts at living up to God's standards, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, fall miserably short. They know that of themselves they cannot do a single thing that is good and acceptable to God. However, the Lord takes those hands and fills them with good gifts. The same is true for us! We had nothing to bring before God to merit blessing because of sin, and yet, Jesus has exchanged that sin, taking it to the cross and filling our hands with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. We have this promise that is completely dependent on our gracious and merciful Lord. In Christ, our hands are full!

In our text, Jesus says, "**When you give to the needy...**"

It is not a question of whether Jesus' disciples will be using their hands to help the needy or to do good for the sake of others. On the one hand, it was already an expectation among the Jews that they give money or food to the poor. On the other hand, regarding what Jesus is giving you, empty hands, filled with the Gospel, will simply share both the gifts of creation and salvation with other empty, outstretched hands. While it is true that one does not need to be a Christian to give earthly gifts to the needy, Jesus is saying that *the heart* of the Christian life of giving is completely different, and He is using poignant language to do it.

Jesus starts by contrasting the hypocrites who trumpet their deeds for the synagogue and streets. He says, "**When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.**"

Hypocrites only give to others so that everyone else can see them and praise them. They seek the rewards of the world because they close their hands to God's gifts and promises. Nobody likes a show-off. We know all too well what it means to seek the praises of this world. We know it when we see it in people who love to trumpet their successes so as to hold the rewards or praises before the world like a trophy in their hands, saying, "*Look at the good that I am doing!*" If we are honest, we see that same desire in ourselves, but those rewards still fade.

Jesus' words grab hold of the heart of the matter. It's one thing to sound the trumpet to let others know what you are doing, but don't think for a moment that keeping your good deeds to yourself gets you off the hook. Jesus says,

**“Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing”!** On the one hand, the moment that we start to dwell on what our hands are doing, we take our focus off our neighbour and his or her needs to make our giving all about ourselves. Our neighbour is no longer best served. On the other hand, there is a greater spiritual concern. Our sinful condition has so distorted our lives that we can *outwardly* appear humble, keeping our giving to ourselves, but inwardly be brimming full of arrogant pride in the work of our own hands. It may not look like the praise of others, but it is the praise of self, a reward that also soon fades. Closing our hands to God’s gifts to quietly praise ourselves leads us to the same place as the hypocrites. Jesus shows us that our sin is much worse than what we do or don’t do with our hands. Even anonymously giving to the needy can be distorted into our own selfish praise.

The real problem is a **heart condition**. Jesus says, *“Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person”* (Matthew 15:19-20). This condition of the heart puts us in the throes of judgment and death. That is what we are reminded of this evening as we gather for Ash Wednesday. If our lives were left in our own hands—as amazing instruments as they may be—the only reward we will have earned is God’s judgment and wrath.

However, this evening, we heard the words from Joel: *“Nevertheless, even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning! <sup>13</sup> Tear your hearts and not your clothes!”* (Joel 2:12-13). The recognition of sin is not merely something that we can take into our hands by an outward display of contrition. No, the Lord is calling sinners to true repentance of the heart.

David also knew about this heart condition. He wrote about it in Psalm 51: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit inside me!”* (v. 10). David knew that he could not heal himself by the work of his hands. He needed the hand of the Lord. He needed the expert Physician who can create a clean heart to blot out David’s iniquities, to restore the joy of the Lord’s salvation.

In Matthew 9:12, Jesus said, *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”* If you are like David and know that your heart is not well, then hear the words of Jesus. He has come for you as the only One who can cure the sinful disease of the heart. He has come as the good physician who can give you a new heart and make it beat in His expert hands

according to the steady rhythm of God's mercy, and He continues to give and hold your heart captive in His hands.

How has He done it? How is it that He gives and gives? Christ is your Lord and the Great Physician who has come to bring you life in Him. He has done so by the work of His hands, *purely out of love for you*. He has selflessly given His very life for us. His right and left hands were stretched far apart upon the cross for us—His death for our lives. He has taken our sins upon Himself all the way to death on the cross. God has taken our sins and put them out of His memory. Our sin is now as far from us as the east is from the west.<sup>1</sup> In return, He has filled our empty hands with His forgiveness. He has taken care of not only the sinful deeds of our hands but also the sinful condition that lies in our hearts. He does so to create new hearts within us. He has given us hearts that do not need to remark on what our hands are doing. Christ has done it all.

With a new heart, you know that your empty hands have been filled with God's good gifts and are not concerned with rewards of praises from others or ourselves. You have the reward from your Father "**who sees in secret.**" Now, as you live your life, as you give to the needy, as you share the Gospel of Jesus with others, keep your right hand and left hand ignorant of each other in daily repentance. Your giving is the Lord's work through you. Remember that there is no need to gain the rewards in this life through the works of your hands because you already have the reward of your Father who sees in secret. Your life has been marked and sealed by the redeeming hand of the crucified and risen Lord. To Him be all honour and glory! Amen.

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 103:12