

## Cooma Anglican 7 January 2024 - Epiphany - 1st Order APBA

### Welcome - Epiphany, Mark Sermon Series

#### Hymn We three kings of Orient are

We three kings of Orient are;  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

#### CHORUS

O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem plain,  
Gold I bring to crown Him again  
King forever, ceasing never,  
Over us all to reign. CHORUS

Frankincense to offer have I;  
Incense owns a Deity nigh:  
Pray'er and praising, all men raising,  
Worship Him, God on high. CHORUS

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
Sorr'wing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
Seal'd in the stonecold tomb. CHORUS

Glorious now behold Him arise  
King, and God, and Sacrifice,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Heaven and earth replies. CHORUS

#### Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you .**

#### Sentence of the Day

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 2:14-15

#### Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit**

## Prayer of the Day

Eternal God who by a star led Magi to the worship of your Son: guide the nations of the earth by your light, that the whole world may see your glory; Through Jesus Christ our Lord, him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit One God, now and forever **Amen**

## The Ministry of the Word

### Exodus 18:17-25

17 Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19 Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20 Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21 But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23 If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

## Psalm 29

1 Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

**2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The LORD is over many waters.

**4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

**6 He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

7 The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire.

**8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.**

9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

**10 The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood, And the LORD sits as King forever.**

**11 The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.**

## 1 Peter 1:3-7

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

## Mark 1:1-20

### Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" — 3 "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" 4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his

message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." 9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." 12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. 14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

This is the gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

### **Sermon Mark 1:1-20 -The start of Jesus's ministry**

#### **The Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.**

#### **Offering**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

**Blessed be God forever.**

#### **Prayers**

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

#### **Exhortation**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour.

Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

### **Confession**

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.**

**We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

### **Hymn TIS 314 As with gladness men of old**

**As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led to Thee.**

**As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger-bed;  
There to bend the knee before  
Him whom heaven and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek the mercy-seat.**

**As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ to Thee, our heavenly King.**

**Holy Jesus! every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.**

**In the heavenly country bright,  
Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
Thou its sun which goes not down:  
There for ever may we sing  
Alleluias to our King. Amen.**

### **The Thanksgiving**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, Might Creator and Eternal God.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Glory to you, O Lord most high.**

### **Prayer of Approach**

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord

whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Amen.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.

### **After Communion**

Almighty and everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as you have prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

**Hymn TIS 589 Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
of our life's wild restless sea,**

day by day his voice is sounding,  
saying, 'Christian, follow me':

As of old, Saint Andrew heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred  
leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us, saying,  
'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us! By your mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear your call,  
give our hearts to your obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

### Notices

### Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## Sermon

### Introduction

I've had a few jobs in my time. I think my first real job was as a public servant engineer with the navy which I had for about 30 years. They started by paying me to study full time at uni, and after about 3 years of that, I really started working in the office in Canberra, and various navy bases around Australia.

Like most jobs, there were various things that normally happen when you start your new job, that kind of happened with greater or lesser degrees of success, when I started my job.

I mention this, because the stay of my job sort of parallels the stay of Jesus's ministry career that we read about in mark 1, our gospel reading this morning. Note that I'm not saying that Jesus's ministry is anything at all like navy engineering. If anything, they are quite the opposite in that if the naval engineer does their job properly then people, or at least ships crew won't need saving, yet Jesus's ministry was to save people. Also Jesus could walk on water, even seriously lumpy water, and therefore did not have a lot of need for naval engineers.

Nevertheless, my starting a job and Jesus starting his ministry does have their parallels, and our common experience of starting jobs helps us to understand the different aspects of the stay of Jesus's ministry in Mark 1. So let's take a look at mark 1, and see what we can learn from it.

Firstly, Mark tells us that Jesus's ministry job was announced just before he started by John the baptist. Not only that, but the fact that John would announce Jesus's ministry was itself announced well in advance by Isaiah the Old Testament prophet.

When I started working, you normally got formally told that you have a job before you started. Usually, it was with a letter and notification in the public servant gazette. This was supposed to happen some time before I started, but in my case, I was well into second year and I hadn't been told I was successful in my application. I just happened to know a couple of the other cadets, and wandered along to a meeting they had with their supervisor. The supervisor looked at his list, and promptly advised me that I was a cadet, and they eventually got around to starting to pay me. Since they were so late, I got quite a nice back payment to start.

When John the baptist announced Jesus ministry, he not only told people that it was happening, he also prepared the way. As I mentioned, Jesus' job was to save people, and in announcing Jesus, John also warned people to be prepared for that salvation by turning from their sins and repenting. This is a bit like my new supervisor having tasks with all the required data and background information ready so I could immediately start on the required calculations, precisely the way they didn't in my case.

The next step in Jesus's ministry was a kind of induction ceremony. In Jesus's case John baptised him in the river Jordan, and there was kind of a welcome speech by God the Father who said from heaven: *"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

I don't recall any formal welcome when I started navy engineering, although I have had a few welcomes into jobs I have had since. When I became a chaplain in the navy reserves I had quite a formal commissioning ceremony with a nice morning tea, and I have also tried to organise similar welcomes when new starters start in the various workplaces where I have had leadership roles.

These welcomes are of course not as special as the one Jesus had. The best that I could organise was local management to speak, Jesus had the God of the entire universe at his, and he was very vocal about how pleased he was with Jesus, even though he had only just started his ministry.

Then, I guess like many jobs, Jesus had a bit of a trial to start his. No sooner had the welcome speech finished than the trials started. *At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*

I know a lot of jobs have a particular period of testing early on to ensure the new employee is able to do their job properly. Sometimes, as it was when I started naval engineering, it was simply a period where all my work was carefully checked by a more senior engineer to pick up any mistakes I made. In other jobs, like my navy officer training, it was more formal, and part of my initial training was that I was put in stressful situations to ensure I still performed the way I should. This is kind of like what happened to Jesus, the Spirit led him into the wilderness, a stressful environment where Satan tested him to see if he would respond the way he should, which of course he did.

Sometimes in our ministry we also find ourselves tested, as our 1 Peter reading tells us: *for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

In Jesus's case there was of course no doubt that he would withstand the trials he would be subjected to, so the trials were not for his benefit, but for us, that we might see that Jesus was stronger than any trial sent his way, and demonstrate the praise, honour and glory due to him.

Jesus then got into his job properly, going into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 *"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"* Jesus's ministry had started, and he was getting on with the job, just as I did when I started.

As I worked through my career, it became more and more obvious to me that I needed a team around me to work efficiently, just as Moses needed a team around him in our Old Testament reading. Initially, when I was extremely junior it was mainly people who were checking my work, and I just thought they were just annoying and slowing me down. I quickly learnt that we were all part of a team and we all worked so much better when we worked together. We all had our roles: investigating, calculating, checking, planning, managing projects and so on. When I started, I didn't get to select my team members, but as I went along I gradually had a greater role in selecting the people I worked with, both informally as small teams were drawn from the wide workforce to do specific

tasks and projects, but later also in recruiting new staff once I got to management level. The teams were critical to getting the job done, and it was important that everyone's skills and approaches complemented other members of the teams. It was important that we had team members with good engineering skills, but also with planning, management and communication skills, as we could never find these all in the one person.

Jesus also started his ministry by selecting the team of people he would work with. As Mark tells us, *He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*

We don't know a lot about why Jesus chose these team members, or what he knew of their specific skills and personalities, but as we read through the gospels we particularly learn of how they grew in knowledge, skills and understanding as they worked with Jesus, both as he disciplined (or mentored) them, and as he sent them out, empowered and helped by the holy spirit.

Now, you may have noticed that I haven't really spoken about what Jesus' job was. It was obviously quite a bit different from my engineering job, even though Jesus apparently came from a trade, a carpentry background.

Verses 14 and 15 describe Jesus's job when it says *Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"* In modern terms, he was in a communications or advertising role, informing the public that God's kingdom was near, and what everyone should do to be ready for it. Since it was a team ministry, this is also the job that he called his apostles, his team to do, except for them he described it as fishing for people. He, and the apostles were casting out the message of the coming of God's kingdom, and drawing people into that kingdom.

At this point you might be asking what this means for us today. You may be saying it is great to compare the start of Jesus's ministry with the start of our careers, but what does this really teach us?

The reality is that every Christian is called into that same communications or advertising role that Jesus was in and that the apostles were called to: informing the public that God's kingdom was near, and what everyone should do to be ready for it; or as it was described to the apostles, to be fishers for people. This of course is what every Christian is called to do today, to proclaim God's kingdom and to help people into that kingdom.

Not only are we called into that same job, but we should expect that for us it should be like it was for Jesus and the apostles. Like Jesus and the apostles, we need to be qualified for it. We may not physically hear God's voice proclaiming that we are qualified like Jesus did, but we should expect

God the Holy Spirit to assure us that God had indeed called us to this ministry, and qualified, empowered and strengthened us to it.

Secondly, as Jesus endured trials and temptations in his ministry, and as the apostles endured them, so should we expect trials and temptations. As our reading from 1 Peter tells us: *now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Thirdly, our ministry is a team ministry, conducted in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and with the Christian brothers and sisters around us. Each of us should grow together as members of that team, and to help others grow through the method that Jesus modelled amongst the apostles, the model of discipleship, or elder Christians coming along younger Christians to teach, encourage, and even rebuke, and to build each other up to the maturity of the faith.

In all these things, the final goal is the same, to proclaim God's kingdom and to help people into that kingdom. As 1 Corinthians tells us 1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV) *9 we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. Will you, as the apostles did, accept Jesus's invitation to fish for people for his kingdom in this mission, alongside him, with similar calling, trials and methods, in a team ministry, growing through discipleship?*

Do you accept his invitation to be fishers of people with him in this way?

Let me pray.