

SUNDAY 18 February 2024 - St Paul's Cooma 10am, Nimmitabel 1145, Adaminaby 4pm

Introduction

Hymn 636 - God has spoken

Chorus

**God has spoken to His people, Alleluia
And His words are words of wisdom, Alleluia**

**Open your ears O Christian people
Open your ears and hear good news
Open your hearts O royal priesthood
God has come to you**

**They who have ears to hear His message
They who have ears then let them hear
They who would learn the way of wisdom
Let them hear God's Word**

**Israel comes to greet the Saviour
Judah is glad to see His day
From east to west the peoples travel
He will show the way**

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence of the day

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." Mark 6:4

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.'

Prayer of the Day

O Lord our God

You are always more ready to bestow your good gifts on us than we are to seek them and more willing to give than we desire or deserve; in our every need, grant as the first and best of all your good gifts, the Spirit who makes us your children.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word

Malachi 4:1-6

1 “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. 3 Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty. 4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

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

Psalms 25:1-10

1 In you, LORD my God, I put my trust.

2 I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

3 No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.

4 Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.

5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

7 Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

10 All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

James 5:13-18

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

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

Mark 6:1-29

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honour except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8 These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave

that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

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

14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

15 Others said, “He is Elijah.”

And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”

16 But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!”

17 For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, whom he had married. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” 19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, 20 because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

21 Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.” 23 And he promised her with an oath, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

24 She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?”

“The head of John the Baptist,” she answered.

25 At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

26 The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, 28 and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. 29 On hearing of this, John’s disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

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

Sermon - Honouring Jesus - Mark 6:1-29

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.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Gracious God, 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.

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.

The Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn 591 - Forty days and Forty Nights

**Forty days and forty nights
you were fasting in the wild,
forty days and forty nights
tempted, and yet undefiled:**

**let us your endurance share
and from earthly greed abstain,
with you watching unto prayer,
with you strong to suffer pain**

**And if Satan on us press
flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
grant we may not faint or fail.**

**Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
ever constant by your side,
that with you we may appear
at the eternal Eastertide.**

Offering

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

Blessed be God forever.

The Thanksgiving

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

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.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

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

Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May

we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. **Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.**

Hymn 685 - The Power of Your Love

Lord I come to You

Let my heart be changed renewed

Flowing from the grace That I found in You

And Lord I've come to know

The weaknesses I see in me will be stripped away

By the pow'r of Your love

Chorus

Hold me close, Let Your love surround me

Bring me near, Draw me to Your side

And as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle

And I will soar with You, Your Spirit leads me on

In the pow'r of Your love

Lord unveil my eyes

Let me see You face to face

The knowledge of Your love As You live in me

Lord renew my mind

As Your will unfolds in my life in living ev'ry day

By the pow'r of Your love [Chorus]

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 - Mark 4:1-29 - Honouring Jesus

Robert Gordon Menzies was our longest serving prime minister, but also one of our longest serving opposition leaders. Not only that, but he had two terms as prime minister. He lost support in 1941 after 2 years as prime minister, and then after establishing the Liberal party he was elected prime minister again from 1949 to 1966.

Leadership is a fickle game, with leaders gaining and losing honour at the whim of parties and voters for any and all sorts of reasons.

In our gospel reading today we see the honour in which Jesus was held, and a particular reason he was not honoured by some, but we will come back to that in a moment. First of all, I want to look at how John the Baptist's honour changed, and how Jesus's 12 apostles were honoured.

John the Baptist

Firstly, John the Baptist.

You may remember we first met John the baptist in our study of Mark's gospel back in chapter 1:

Mark 1:4 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.

We also know from Luke's gospel that John was related to Jesus, and like Jesus, his birth was foretold by an angel, and in our Old Testament reading this morning, we read that the Old Testament prophet Elijah was prophesied to return before the end days, and in Matthew 11, Jesus said that John the Baptist was the Elijah who was prophesied.

It certainly sounds like John the Baptist started off well with a great deal of honour, but then you read on in Mark, you start to wonder ...

6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. John was definitely a strange character.

Anyway, when we get to our passage today, things have changed. Some people think Jesus is John the baptist raised back to life, after king Herod had had John murdered. John had been giving Herod a hard time because Herod had married his brother's wife Herodias and she had it in for John. However, Herod apparently feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. Herod continued to listen to John, and **when Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.**

Ultimately Herodias got her way in a rather sordid way: *On his birthday Herod gave a banquet and the daughter of Herodias came in and danced. She pleased Herod and his dinner guests and he said to her, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." 23 And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom." 24 She went out and said to her mother, Herodias "What shall I ask for?" She answered "The head of John the Baptist,"* Showing how weak he was, Herod gave in and gave her her wish, much to the detriment of John.

The point I want to make here is that Herod had steadily honoured John until that point. He feared John and protected him, he knew him to be a righteous and holy man. Despite being **greatly puzzled; he liked to listen to him.**

Even so, this wasn't enough to keep John safe, and it reflects many people's attitude to Jesus today, which I'll come back to shortly.

The 12 Apostles

The second example of honour today is Jesus' 12 apostles. *Jesus sent them out two by two to preach that people should repent and gave them authority over impure spirits. They took nothing but a staff—no bread, no bag, no money and not even an extra shirt. 10 Whenever they entered a house, they were to stay there until they left that town. 11 If any place did not welcome them, they left and shook the dust off their feet as a testimony against them.*” Despite these restrictions 13 *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.* Presumably held a reasonable degree of honour. However, like when Jesus taught the parable of the soils we looked at a few weeks ago, you wonder how much honour they really had. You wonder how much people really only wanted to get healed and were entertained by seeing others healed, just as it was with Jesus.

Jesus's honour

The third example of honour is Jesus himself. He'd gone to his home town and preached in the synagogue and all who heard him were amazed. This all sounds good, but the reason they were amazed was that he was just one of their neighbours, and they couldn't believe he was anything special. They'd seen him grow up with his brothers and sisters, so there had to be some trick to his miracles. Joseph's boy was no more special than they were, so something else had to be going on. They were sure he was tricking them, playing them for fools, so they took offence at him. The Greek word translated 'offence' here is the word from which we get scandalised, and, amongst other shades of meanings, can mean (according to the Olive Tree Enhanced Strong's Dictionary): to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority.

His neighbours didn't like that Jesus appeared to have made more of himself than they had, and this prevented them accepting the authority that he was obviously displaying, and of giving him the honour he deserved.

Honouring Jesus Today

As I suggested earlier, all these examples from 2000 years ago illustrate the way Jesus is and isn't honoured today.

Just as Herod was puzzled by John and liked to listen to him, so do many people like Jesus's teachings, but don't want to apply them in their lives. They don't want to accept that the source of his teachings isn't simply human wisdom and social theory, but is actually the author of life itself.

How often do people think that Jesus is a good teacher? Do they think that the world would be a much better place if everyone followed his teaching, or at least everyone else except themselves of course, because they are so much wiser.

How many people begrudgingly accept that Jesus appeared to perform miracles? They think that this was nice for those he healed in his day, but it's not relevant today. How often do these people explain away Jesus' miracles as merely the products of a scientifically ignorant and gullible former age, readily explainable by anyone willing to critically look at the evidence with the benefit of an open scientific mind? Yet how many are actually prepared themselves to look at his miracles in this way, or listen to the real experts who say that this cannot be done?

Or how many people relegate Jesus and his teaching to our parents age? They say that Jesus is someone our parents might have believed in, and we have moved on so it can't be relevant to us. This shows a great deal of disrespect to their parents and older generations, as well as their contemporaries who do believe?

Or perhaps they say that Jesus can only have been a mere human being like themselves, and cannot be worthy of any special honour.

The reality is that many people today will find any excuse to avoid giving Jesus the honour he deserves. He is too familiar to them, they are not familiar enough with him, they don't agree with his teachings, or his teachings are okay, but he isn't special enough. Perhaps like Herod and John the Baptist, his teachings interest them, but social pressures prevent them from taking them seriously, and they eventually get so inconvenient that they want to silence Jesus completely. Herod's wife had John silenced, and the High Priests silenced Jesus through the Romans, and so many people today continue that tradition through refusing to listen to Jesus's teachings that have been handed down through the generations to us today.

Yet, even as God resurrected Jesus from the dead, so God the Holy Spirit can open our ears, and the ears to our family, friends and neighbours, to Jesus's message today. They may find every excuse not to listen, but Jesus's resurrection provides proof that has never been really refuted. Jesus is God the Son, worthy of all glory and honour and power.

Do you give him the honour he deserves?