

**Sunday 25 February 2024 Lent 2**  
10am Cooma, 1145 Jerangle

### **Hymn - Begin my tongue**

**Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme  
and speak some boundless thing,  
the mighty works  
or mightier name  
of our eternal king.**

**Tell of his wondrous faithfulness,  
and sound his power abroad;  
sing the sweet promise  
of his grace  
and our fulfilling God.**

**His very word of grace is strong  
as that which built the skies;  
the voice that rolls  
the stars along  
speaks all the promises.**

**He said, 'Let wide the heaven be spread,'  
and heaven was stretched abroad;  
'Abram, I'll be your God,'  
he said,  
and he was Abram's God.**

**O might I hear your heavenly tongue  
but whisper, 'You are mine';  
those gentle words  
should raise my song  
to notes almost divine.**

**How would my leaping heart rejoice,  
and think my heaven secure!  
I trust the all-creating voice,  
and faith desires  
no more.**

### **The Grace**

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you.  
**And also with you.**

'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.**

### **Sentence of the Day**

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. Mark 6:34

### **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.

### Prayer of the Day

Eternal God

author of life and end of our pilgrimage; guide us by your word and Spirit amid all perils and temptations, that we may not wander from your way, but may run our course in safety until we come to our eternal rest in you; through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### Exodus 16:11-18

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’ ”

<sup>13</sup> That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

<sup>14</sup>When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. <sup>15</sup> When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. <sup>16</sup> This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’ ” <sup>17</sup> The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. <sup>18</sup> And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

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

### Psalms 147:1-11

<sup>23</sup> You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

<sup>24</sup> **For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.**

<sup>25</sup> From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.

<sup>26</sup> **The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him— may your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,

<sup>28</sup> **for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup> All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him— those who cannot keep themselves alive.

<sup>30</sup> **Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.**

### Hebrews 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup> We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

<sup>2</sup> For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. <sup>4</sup> God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

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

### Mark 6:30-56

<sup>30</sup> The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then, because so many

people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” <sup>32</sup> So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup> But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a

shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. <sup>35</sup> By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. <sup>36</sup> Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup> But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." <sup>39</sup> Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. <sup>41</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, <sup>43</sup> and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. <sup>44</sup> The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. <sup>45</sup> Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup> After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. <sup>47</sup> Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. <sup>48</sup> He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, <sup>49</sup> but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, <sup>50</sup> because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." <sup>51</sup> Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, <sup>52</sup> for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. <sup>53</sup> When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. <sup>54</sup> As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. <sup>55</sup> They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup> And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

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

## Sermon - Jesus and Miracles

### Question Time

### 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 worshipped 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.**

### The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

**Response:** Christ Jesus, intercede for us, and in your mercy. **Hear our 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.**

### Scripture Sentence

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25

### 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 - The Servant King

From heav'n You came helpless babe  
Enter'd our world Your glory veil'd  
Not to be served but to serve  
And give Your life that we might live

### Chorus

This is our God, the Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to the Servant King

There in the garden of tears  
My heavy load He chose to bear  
His heart with sorrow was torn  
Yet not my will but Yours He said

Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails, Surrendered

So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him  
Each other's needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we're serving

### Thanksgiving for 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 for ever.

### The Great 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.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

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 power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus 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 given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

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

### **The Holy Communion**

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

#### **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

Grape juice is available.

Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able, observing appropriate social distancing.

### **After Communion**

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

**Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen**

### **Notices**

#### **Hymns - God of Grace and God of Glory**

**God of grace and God of glory,  
on your people pour your power;  
now fulfil your Church's story,  
bring the bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour,  
for the facing of this hour.**

See the hosts of evil round us  
scorn your Christ, assail his ways.  
Fears and douts too long have bound us;  
free our hearts to work and praise.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
for the living of these days,  
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;  
bend our pride to your control;  
shame our wanton selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,  
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
let the gift of your salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom,  
grant us courage,  
serving you whom we adore,  
serving you whom we adore.

### **Blessing**

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**

### **Dismissal**

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

## **Sermon - The Kingdom of God - Mark 4:1-33**

Have you ever been watching a movie, when something comes from out of the blue, and all you can think of is "Where did that come from?"

Do you remember the 1979 Peter Sellers film "Being There"? In it, a simple-minded gardener Chance (played by Peter Sellers) has spent all his life in the home of an old man. When the man dies, Chance is put out on the street with no knowledge of the world except what he has learned from television. He becomes an unlikely political insider, and appears on a television talk show during which his detailed advice about what a serious gardener should do is misunderstood as his opinion on presidential policy. The film ends at Chauncey's benefactor's funeral where power brokers discuss nominating Chauncey for vice president. Chauncey just wanders off to a pond, and walks across the water, with the final line - Life is just a state of mind.

Filmgoers have been arguing ever since what the scene means. Some people suggest that Chauncey was just so innocent he didn't know he couldn't walk on water, so he just did it. Others think he was some kind of guardian angel, others that Chauncey was some sort of a Jesus figure. At the end of the day it is a movie, and you are fully entitled to make your own mind up as to what it means for you.

I remembered this scene because of today's reading, in which we heard that Jesus walked on water. It says *45 Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. 47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake.*

As I read this, I wondered why Jesus performed this miracle. All the other miracles that Jesus performed benefited people in some way. People were healed, raised from the dead and fed when they had no food. Even in Jesus's first miracle, the bride's family was saved from social embarrassment when Jesus turned water into wine.

But what did walking on the water achieve, apart from getting him to the other side of the lake? The disciples were straining at the oars, but it doesn't sound like he saved them - he could just as easily have calmed the waves from the shore. It sounds a bit like he was just showing off!

As we read on, we are told: They were completely amazed, *52* for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. Obviously there was significant meaning to the miracle, and it was somehow related to the feeding of the 5000, but the hard hearts of the disciples were not able to understand it.

So, let's work our way through the passage, and see what other clues we are given.

### **Sheep without a Shepherd**

Back in verse 34 we are told: *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

You or I might have missed this, but this comment, the crowd being like sheep without a shepherd, is actually a quote from the Old Testament.

In Numbers 27:16 and 17 Moses asks God: "May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community **17** to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Moses was asking God to provide a successor who would shepherd Israel after he had died, after the Exodus. Also, in Ezekiel 34 God also says that the human shepherds over Israel have been a major disappointment, and will be removed because they are corrupt, with God himself taking on the job. God would be shepherd over this people without a shepherd.

### **Feeding the 5000**

As we go on with Jesus feeding the 5000, we also get another Old Testament image. Can anyone guess which one I am talking about?

As we know, the great moment in Israel's history was the Exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Pharaoh has placed the Israelites under harsh slavery, and God sent 10 plagues to convince Pharaoh to let them go. He eventually did, and they wandered in the wilderness, running out of bread and meat. God miraculously provided manna and quail in the wilderness, as we read in our Old Testament reading today.

To Jesus's Jewish followers, the link would have been unmistakable - the events were re-enacting Israel being saved from slavery in Egypt - Jesus was doing what God had done generations previously.

### **Walking on Water**

This brings us to Jesus walking on water. This also would have reminded the Jews of that other great water miracle during the Exodus - the parting of the Red Sea. While Jesus didn't part the Red Sea like God did for Moses, he walked over the lake dry shod as the Israelites did when escaping Egypt.

Then, to confirm the allusion even further, when Jesus gets into the boat he tells them "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid"

The little phrase "it is I" or more literally "I am I" was a clear reference to God's special name that we know as Yahweh, or Jehovah.

When Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt at the burning bush that was not burning up, he asked God in Exodus 3, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

**14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"



It is possible that Jesus was just telling the disciples "It's me", but often, when Jesus said "It is I", the Jewish leaders got very upset. For example in Matthew 9, Jesus asks "Do you believe that I am able to heal the blind men?" This led the Pharisees to say: "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

And in Mark 14, the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" **62** "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." **63** The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. **64** "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.

So often, when Jesus uses the phrase I am, we are supposed to think about God's special name Yahweh, and whether it is a reference to Jesus's divinity.

### **Conclusion**

So, again and again, Jesus is comparing his ministry with God's ministry in the Old Testament, and particularly during the Exodus from Egypt. His miracles reflect the miracles that God did, and even his language reflects God's language - particularly with God's special name Yahweh, or I am.

Even the name that Gabriel gave to Mary to name him before he was born, Jesus means God Saves.

Jesus certainly saw his ministry as being to save his people from slavery to sin and death. As he said in John 8: "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. **35** Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Also, as we read in our reading from Hebrews: **1** We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. **2** For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, **3** how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. **4** God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

In former times, God saved the Israelites by signs, miracles and wonders from harsh slavery to Egypt.

Now Jesus testifies by his signs, wonders and miracles to salvation from just punishment of sin.

He shows that he is not only Lord of creation, walking on water and calming the sea. He providing food miraculously, he shows, as we have seen previously that he is Lord over life itself, saving us from slavery to sin and death and raising us up to eternal life.

And so we must pay the most careful attention to Jesus, 'God Saves' the Lord of Salvation, so we do not drift away from a salvation, greater even than the salvation he won for the Israelites from slavery to Egypt, the salvation from the slavery to death by sin.

Are you paying careful attention?