

## Cooma Anglican 4 August 2024 Jonah 4 - Proclamation, Prayer and Praise

### Hymn - I know that my Redeemer lives. TIS 376

I know that my Redeemer lives.  
What joy the blest assurance gives!  
He lives He lives who once was dead  
He lives my everlasting head

He lives to bless me with His love  
He lives to plead for me above  
He lives my hungry soul to feed  
He lives to help in time of need

He lives and grants me daily breath  
He lives and I shall conquer death  
He lives my mansion to prepare  
He lives to lead me safely there

He lives all glory to His name  
He lives my Saviour still the same  
What joy the blest assurance gives  
I know that my Redeemer lives

### Gathering in God's Name

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty God,  
you have shed upon us the light of your incarnate Word: may this light, kindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God,  
Whose beloved Son for our sake willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross, give us courage and patience to take up our cross daily and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen

### Jonah 4

<sup>1</sup> But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. <sup>3</sup> Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

<sup>5</sup> Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. <sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”

<sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup> And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

### Psalm 86:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Hear me, LORD, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.

<sup>2</sup> **Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you.**

You are my God; <sup>3</sup> have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.

<sup>4</sup> **Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.**

<sup>5</sup> You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.

<sup>6</sup> **Hear my prayer, LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.**

<sup>7</sup> When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.

<sup>8</sup> **Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.**

<sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.

<sup>10</sup> **For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.**

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

<sup>12</sup> **I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.**

<sup>13</sup> **For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead.**

### Ephesians 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup> As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

### Luke 15:25-32

<sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother

has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

<sup>28</sup> "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

<sup>31</sup> "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

## Sermon

### Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in one God, who made and loves all that is.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was born, lived, died and rose again, and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who calls, equips and sends out God's people, and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### Preparation for Confession

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. **Amen.**

### Confession

**Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.**

**We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.**

**By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### Promise of Forgiveness

God desires that none should perish, but that all should turn to Christ, and live. In response to his call

we acknowledge our sins.

God pardons those who humbly repent, and truly believe the gospel. Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Christ died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6.10–11

### Hymn - Lord Your Word Abiding TIS 427

**Lord, your word abiding,  
and our footsteps guiding,  
gives us joy for ever,  
binds us all together.**

**Who can tell the pleasure,  
who recount the treasure,  
by your word imparted  
to the simple-hearted?**

**Word of mercy, giving  
nourishment for living:  
word of life, supplying  
comfort for the dying.**

**O that we, discerning  
its most holy learning,  
Lord, may love and fear you,  
evermore be near you.**

### **Intercessions**

Let us pray for the world and for the church.

**Response:** Lord 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.**

### **Notices**

#### **Sending Out**

Loving God,  
we thank you for hearing our prayers, feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together.

**Take us and use us to love and serve you and all people, in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

#### **Hymn - You Servants of God TIS 215**

**You servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
and publish abroad his wonderful name;  
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;  
his kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.**

**Our God rules on high, almighty to save;  
and still he is nigh, his presence we have;  
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,**

**ascribing salvation to Jesus our king.**

**Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!  
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son:  
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.**

**Then let us adore, and give him his right,  
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,  
all honour and blessing, with angels above,  
and thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.**

### **Blessing**

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ Amen**

## Sermon - Jonah 4

We finished our sermon last week with the words: "God relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened". It would have been great to finish the book there, but instead, this morning we read "to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry."

We know from chapter 1 that Jonah isn't quite what we expect from a prophet of God. In chapter 1, Jonah went the completely opposite direction to the one God told him to, and today he gets the grumps because God relents and doesn't destroy the Ninevites, even after they repented and changed their ways.

You may well be asking what sort of attitude is this for God's prophet? Not only does he get the grumps, but he wishes he was dead. But please don't make any sort of theology of suicide out of this. After all, Jonah is such a bad example in so many ways. If you, or anyone you know if feeling suicidal, make sure you get proper help.

it is however important to see what God is saying in this passage.

In his graciousness, God doesn't rebuke Jonah. He gives him a demonstration of what is going on that he can understand more easily. Jonah goes outside the city, and sits in the sun. God send a plant to provide shade, and then sent a worm to eat the plant. At this point Jonah feels compassion for the plant that he had put no effort into growing. It was a bit like my pumpkin plants that self seeded in my compost heap. The pumpkins are great, but I get cross if they go mouldy before I get to eat them, even though they are genuinely a gracious gift of God at no cost to myself.

In explaining this to Jonah, God says "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup> And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

God is saying that he has nothing but love for the Ninevites. He made them and cares for them, no matter how much they have ignored him and disobeyed him. Sure he has to be just, but if the opportunity come to relent from judging them, God will take it, even if it offends Jonah's sensibilities.

So, what is the point for us in all this? In spite of all the sin and rebellion and immorality and cynicism in the city, God pities Nineveh; he has compassion on the city. He wants us to feel that compassion with him as we consider Cooma today.

I believe the Lord will use us to show compassion on his city of Cooma, and the towns in our region: Bredbo, Numeralla, Jerangle, Adaminaby and Nimmitabel. As God commissioned Jonah to preach his message to Nineveh, so he commissions us to preach his message in our region.

We probably aren't called to preach the wholesale destruction of Cooma in 40 days, but we must proclaim God's message of salvation through Jesus Christ. We must proclaim the gospel that I keep talking about.

I realize this isn't as simple as it sounds. It is very hard to bring the gospel into normal conversations, so it helps to plan ahead.

The first thing we should do is pray that God will show us the people he wants us to talk to. It often helps to pray for some specific people that you already know - members of your family, work colleagues, neighbours. Pray for them specifically, and pray for opportunities to chat with them about general stuff. Take the opportunity to develop your friendship with them by talking about the usual things you talk to people about - your family, the weather, your work. Get to know them as friends, for them to trust you and be comfortable sharing more personal matters and this will make it easier to eventually move the conversation to your faith, but this will take time, so don't rush it.

As your friendship develops, think about the sort of things that excite you about your faith and you could share with them. If you really enjoy meeting with your church family during our church services, or when we have morning tea afterwards, then think about how you can share that with your friends. Perhaps you have read something really helpful in your Bible or a Christian book, or have used something that really struck you in a sermon. Perhaps you really enjoyed a hymn during the service, or some fellowship activity with church members. Think about how you can talk about these with your friends, not necessarily to invite them along at this stage, but just to share what is important to you. While you are talking with your friends, make sure you listen carefully as they share what is important to them. How can you expect them to listen to you if you don't listen to them?

Once you have got to that point in your friendship, there are a number of different directions you might try. Some people might be receptive to an invitation to come to church, or perhaps another function that might be less threatening. Guys might invite friends to the men's breakfasts, and we can arrange other activities that could interest different groups. I have thought about running regular high teas for the women, but if you have ideas, let me know and we can see if they can be organised.

But you need to be careful in this stage. Many will decline your invitations, at least to start with, and we can't give the impression that that is the only reason we have developed the friendship. Friendships are valuable in their own right, and God can use faithful friendships, perhaps many years down the track.

Another direction God might lead you is to talk to your friend about what you believe as a Christian. My last sermon series about the gospel should give you some ideas.

Perhaps circumstances of life - a death in the family, crime, birth, baptisms, marriages, conflict and so on, are things that Christians may have a distinctive view of, or get of comfort from their faith. These may be the sorts of things that are worthwhile sharing with your friends, and that God can use to open their hearts to the gospel.

Do not be surprised if you don't get a response like Nineveh's king straight away. If you do, praise God, and keep praying for your friend that the word of God be firmly established in their heart. And if you don't get that response, keep praying that God will open their heart.

Also, don't be resentful like Jonah, not really wanting your friends to turn to Christ. Jonah didn't want the Ninevites to turn back to God, partially because they were foreigners, not God's chosen

people like Jonah, and partially because he thought that they hadn't earned their salvation. In Jonah's mind they were too evil, and to repent so easily seemed to cheapen Jonah's faith. In fact it really reflected that God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity, and loves every member of humanity, hoping they will turn back to him, no matter how much they have sinned.

This is the message from Jonah this week. Jonah begrudgingly worked with God to save the Ninevites, and the evil, unlikely Ninevites repented and turned back to God. Will you joyfully work with God to save your family, your colleagues, your neighbors and ultimately, Cooma and the region, no matter how unlikely they seem?