

## Cooma Anglican 1 September 2024 - 1st Order APBA

### Welcome

#### Hymn TIS 156 - Morning has Broken

**Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world**

**Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass**

**Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning  
Born of the one light, Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise every morning  
God's recreation of the new day**

### Greeting

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

### Sentence of the Day

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

### 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

O God, you invite the humble and the sinful to take their place in the festive assembly of the new covenant: teach your church always to honour the presence of the Lord in the poor and outcast, so that we may learn to recognise each other as brothers and sisters gathered together around your table. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

### The Ministry of the Word

#### Job 32:15-22

<sup>15</sup> "They are dismayed and have no more to say; words have failed them. <sup>16</sup> Must I wait, now that they are silent, now that they stand there with no reply? <sup>17</sup> I too will have my say; I too will tell

what I know. <sup>18</sup> For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; <sup>19</sup> inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. <sup>20</sup> I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. <sup>21</sup> I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone; <sup>22</sup> for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.

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

### **Psalm 2:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

<sup>2</sup> **The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,**

<sup>3</sup> "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

<sup>4</sup> **He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.**

<sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

<sup>6</sup> **"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."**

<sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

<sup>8</sup> **Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.**

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

<sup>10</sup> **Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth.**

<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

<sup>12</sup> **Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**

### **Acts 4:5-22, 32-35**

<sup>5</sup> The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" <sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup> then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup> Jesus is " 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

<sup>13</sup> When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.

<sup>16</sup> "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." <sup>18</sup>

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." <sup>21</sup> After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup> For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

<sup>32</sup> All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all <sup>34</sup> that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

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

### **Mark 12:18–27**

#### **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>18</sup> Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. <sup>19</sup> "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup> The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup> In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" <sup>24</sup> Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? <sup>25</sup> When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

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

### **Sermon Acts 4 - Defending the Gospel**

#### **Question Time**

#### **The Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 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: If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the perfect offering for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2

### **Hymn TIS 135 All things Bright and Beautiful**

#### **Chorus**

***All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful - the Lord God made them all.***

**The wildflowers in their beauty, the mountain ranges tall,  
the billabongs and rivers, and friendly birds that call, *Chorus***

**The cold wind in the winter, the bright, life-giving sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden—he made them everyone. *Chorus***

**The coloured walls of gorges, the gum trees green and tall,  
the rocks, and pools and palm trees, the sparkling waterfall. *Chorus***

**The many-coloured corals, the creatures of the sea,  
of bushland, field or desert, on farms, or roaming free. *Chorus***

**He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell  
how great is God Almighty who has made all things well. *Chorus***

### **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, Mighty 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 154 Great is thy Faithfulness**

**Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be**

### **Chorus**

**Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning New mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me**

**Summer and winter and springtime and harvest  
Sun moon and stars In their courses above  
Join with all nature In manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love *Chorus***

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside *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 Acts 4 - Defending the gospel

In the last two weeks we have heard how Peter proclaimed the gospel, first on the day of Pentecost, and then after healing the lame beggar. In both cases he was preaching to friendly audiences, although there were some that opposed the gospel, people with whom Peter had to defend the gospel. Two weeks ago it was people who said they were drunk, and last week, it was the priests, the captain of the temple guard and our old friends, the Sadducees.

Who can remember what was significant about the Sadducees? I mentioned it in my sermons on Luke. The distinctive thing about the Sadducees was that they didn't believe in life after death, which is why they were "sad you see".

This was the first objection that Peter had to deal with. Fundamentally, Christians believe in the resurrection of the dead, Sadducees don't and they couldn't agree.

In the gospel reading this morning, Jesus dealt with this objection by showing that the books that the Sadducees accepted, the first five books of the Bible, actually did teach resurrection from the dead, and so they should believe it. This is a similar problem to people objecting to Christianity because they say that science has disproved god. One way of dealing with this is to show that God really is consistent with science, and that many prominent scientists are also Christians and don't see a contradiction. Actually, science and religion seek to answer different questions and therefore don't contradict each other. God also answers the deepest questions that science doesn't even address like What is the first cause? Why is the universe the way it is?

This is the approach Peter takes when asked "By what power or what name did you heal the lame beggar?" There was no doubt that the beggar had been healed, but there was no way that the medical science of the day could explain it. The Sadducees wanted to know what caused the healing, and Peter explains that the primary cause is Jesus of Nazareth, whom they crucified but whom God raised from the dead. Peter in effect says that the healing was beyond their medical science. It didn't contradict science, it was just working outside it.

The next way of objecting to the gospel being proclaimed was by trying to bully the apostles into silence. This is a bit like my 2 year old grandson who, when Cath and I are talking about something he doesn't want us to (that is, anything not about him),

he yells at the top of his voice, Stop Talking! And insists on talking over us.

In the apostles' case, the priests, the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Well, this was like a red rag to a bull with the Holy Spirit: the leaders were nothing without God, and they were in no position to try to tell God what people could or couldn't say about him. The apostles let them know it: Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!"<sup>20</sup> As for the apostles, they cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

There was no first amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech like in the US, nor any international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Australia's freedom of speech is based on. There was nothing stopping the Jewish leaders from saying what they liked, and trying to restrict the apostles from saying anything. However, the leaders were a bit over a barrel as it seemed everyone knew the man had been healed, and no one could explain it any other way, so they just tried to bully the apostles into silence.

While they weren't explicit, the leaders certainly inferred that there were significant threats to the apostles' freedom, livelihoods and wellbeing if they went on preaching, but that wouldn't stop Peter. He knew what is right in God's eyes, and as he said: he cannot help speaking about what he had seen and heard.

Where does that leave us today? We have an imperative to proclaim the truth - that Jesus died and rose again for the world's salvation, but all manner of authorities will try to limit what we say. Even as a chaplain, Navy restricts what I can say, school chaplains are similarly restricted, and speaking out in various media, while not explicitly banned, is extremely restricted: try condemning particular sins on Facebook or print media and see how far you get.

It is even more complicated as Christians are commanded to submit to the governing authorities in Romans 1 and Titus 3 - so what are we to do when it is those authorities that are restricting us from preaching the gospel, as it is with schools?

Part of the answer is that we must do what is right, irrespective of what human authorities tell us to do. It is always right to share the good news of Jesus Christ, although as the apostles found out, there may be consequences. While the



consequences of preaching the gospel in some countries may involve huge personal cost - costs to freedom, livelihood or personal safety, as they were to the apostles, to us the consequences are usually much milder - loss of friendship of non-believers, reduction in employment and promotion opportunities, and loss of access to opportunities for you or other Christians to share the gospel in the future.

This brings another side to sharing the gospel, and that is how we share the gospel. We may not be able to help speaking about what the apostles have seen and heard, but are to do it with wisdom. God gives us wisdom and insight firstly because we cannot physically share the gospel with everyone in the entire world, and so we must prioritise who we share it with and take care how we share it.

We must always accompany our speech with prayer, and be particularly careful when who we share the gospel with, and the way we share the gospel, could reduce future opportunities to share the gospel by us or others. There are times it is ok to be blunt, but often, being too blunt closes off opportunities to the gospel. How often have you tried to speak to someone about your faith, only to be cut off mid sentence because of a previous experience that person had with someone sharing in an inappropriate fashion? How often have access to particular media, and even entire communities been lost because of the ways particular individuals or groups have alienated the hearers from hearing the gospel?

Like Peter, we cannot help speak about what we know, but we have to do it carefully, with wisdom and prayer so that people can listen, and that God may continue to water the seeds that are planted so they grow into eternal life.

Finally, Acts gives another example of wisdom in responding to objections to the gospel. Sometimes words are not appropriate and it is more wise to let others see how Jesus has changed our life for the better, and make our faith appealing to outsiders. I don't know if the early believers were living out their faith deliberately to attract new believers, but they were.

The end of the chapter says that <sup>32</sup>*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all* <sup>34</sup> *that there were no needy persons among them.*

Can you imagine how much a community like this would appeal to those outside looking in? It would certainly appeal to those who have physical needs, but it must also appeal to those with social and spiritual needs. How often have you seen loving, tight knit communities and wished your community were like that?

Of course, the believer's community wouldn't be like this, or even exist except for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and while people were attracted by the freedom it gave them from their needs, the apostles needed to continue to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, which they did with great power.

And so, in conclusion, today we have seen not only how the early church proclaimed the gospel, but also how they, with the help of the Holy Spirit, overcame the obstacles and objections that the devil put in their way. We saw how sometimes it was more of an intellectual argument, such as the way Jesus dealt with the Sadducees' denial of resurrection, and sometimes how it was to keep speaking with wisdom, as it was when the leaders threatened them. Finally, we saw how sometimes it didn't involve speaking at all, but living a life worthy of the gospel, living a life, living a community, founded on the saving death and resurrection of Jesus in such a way that people can't help but want what we have, can't help but need to hear the gospel of salvation to share in the life that Jesus died and rose for, and that we have by his grace.

So today, I pray that you will share the gospel, and that you deal with inevitable opposition with wisdom in the power of the Holy Spirit, through intellectual argument, through persistence, or through displaying a life and community worthy of the gospel that many who hear the message will believe; and the number of those who believe continue to grow through the work of the Holy Spirit.