

Sunday 21 September 2025 Cooma Anglican HC 3

Hymn: TIS 231 At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of Glory now:
this the Father's pleasure that we call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious, when from death he passed.

In your hearts enthrone him, there let him make new
all that is not holy, all that is not true.
He is God the Saviour, he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped, trusted and adored.

When this same Lord Jesus shall appear again,
in his Father's glory, there with him to reign,
then may we adore him, all before him bow,
as our hearts confess him King of Glory now.

Sentence of Scripture

Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly. John 6:14

The Great Commandments

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 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.' 'This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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

God and Father of all, you have taught us through your Son that the last shall be first, and have made a little child the measure of your kingdom. Give us the wisdom from above, so that we may understand that in your sight the one who serves is the greatest of all. We seek 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**

Proverbs 1:1-7 (NIV)

¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
² for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight;
³ for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair;
⁴ for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—
⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—
⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.
⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

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

Psalms 119:65-72 (NIV)

⁶⁵ Do good to your servant according to your word, LORD.
⁶⁶ **Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust your commands.**
⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.
⁶⁸ **You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.**
⁶⁹ Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your precepts with all my heart.
⁷⁰ **Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law.**
⁷¹ It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.
⁷² **The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.**

Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV)

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

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

John 7:14-52 (NIV)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹⁴ Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?" ¹⁶ Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. ¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"
²⁰ "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

²¹ Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. ²² Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. ²³ Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? ²⁴ Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.”

²⁵ At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? ²⁶ Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? ²⁷ But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”

²⁸ Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, ²⁹ but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

³⁰ At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

³³ Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. ³⁴ You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

³⁵ The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?”

³⁶ What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

⁴⁰ On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”

⁴¹ Others said, “He is the Messiah.”

Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴² Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” ⁴³ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵ Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

⁴⁶ “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.

⁴⁷ “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. ⁴⁸ “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? ⁴⁹ No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked,

⁵¹ “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” ⁵² They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

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

Sermon - How do you assess Jesus? John 7:14-52

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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and 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.

Scripture Sentence

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1 Cor 11:26-28

The Confession

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together:

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.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **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 - TIS 217 Love divine, all loves excelling

**Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown:**

Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave:
thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be,
let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

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.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your son, our saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to 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, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and his blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

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

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 which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.**

We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and united in the body of your Son. Bring us with all

your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise.

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever. Amen

The Holy Communion

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.

After Communion

Gracious God, thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are living members of Christ's body.

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.

Notices

Hymn - TIS 106 - Now thank we all our God

Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices
Who wondrous things , has done, In whom the world rejoices
Who from our mother's arms Has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love And still is ours today

O may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us
Lord, keep us in your grace And guide us when perplexed
And free us from all harm In this world and the next

All praise and thanks to God who reigns in highest heaven,
to Father and to Son and Spirit now be given:
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore,
who ever was, is now, and shall be ever more.

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 - John 7:14-53 - How do you assess Jesus?

I've often wondered if people would know who Jesus is, if he walked the streets today. I know it's entirely hypothetical since Jesus will return in the clouds in glory, and it will be obvious to everyone who he is.

Nevertheless, it's got me thinking how we know who Jesus is, and how his first century contemporaries knew who he was. Our gospel reading this morning from John says a lot about this question.

One obvious point that Jesus makes in verse 24 is that we aren't to judge by **appearances**. In the context, he was saying that the crowds were judging him to be demon possessed because he appeared to have broken the Sabbath. That appearance was mistaken because the work that he had done to break the Sabbath was healing people, and healing, like circumcising 8 day old babies, should be done whenever it needs to be done, whether its a Sabbath or not.

In our modern context, on a basic level, some expect Jesus to be a handsome blue eyed blond man like many movie depictions. This is crazy when you think about it, however, we also should assess people who say they are from Jesus because they appear to do miracles like the ones Jesus did. We must not judge based on appearances.

Secondly, we shouldn't judge on the basis of **what others think**, even if the others appear to be the majority. Verse 25 tells us that some from Jerusalem were asking, isn't this the one they are trying to kill? And in verse 47 the Pharisees justified their assessment of Jesus by implying that none of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him. Instead of thinking for themselves, they appealed to others' assessments. Just like so many today, they weren't prepared to examine the evidence, the words Jesus spoke as we have recorded in the Bible, or even the experience of Christians who have experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. No, they just go along with the mob.

If it isn't the mob, others base their decision on what the so called **authorities** say, or at least the authorities they want to follow. The problem is, in Jesus day, as well as today, the authorities aren't disinterested or impartial. The Jewish leaders on Jesus day, and the atheistic authorities of today have their own agendas, their own interests to maintain that colour their view of Jesus. They both have their own perceived power and authority to protect that they fear losing to Jesus's authority, and will never give unbiased support for Jesus.

Others in our gospel this morning judged based on where they thought Jesus had come from combined with their **faulty understanding of scripture** or of Jesus. Some understood the Messiah to come from Bethlehem, but didn't realise Jesus was born there, not in Galilee as they assumed. Similarly others assume that no one could know where the Messiah was to come from, and since they knew (or at least thought they knew) where Jesus had come from, then Jesus couldn't be the Messiah. The problem was, they were wrong on both counts, scripture didn't say they can't know where the Messiah would come from (it certainly suggests he will come from Bethlehem as the wise men were told, and as some of the leaders understood), and secondly, while Jesus had been in Galilee, he didn't come from there, he was born in Bethlehem.

Moreover, Jesus didn't just come from Bethlehem, he claims he was sent by, and came from God. He says his teaching comes from God, the one who sent him, and this is evident to all who choose to do the will of God.

Appearances, what others think, human authorities and faulty understanding of scripture are all poor ways to assess who Jesus is, and can lead to incorrect conclusions. However, sometimes, people come to the right conclusion about Jesus, even if they have the wrong reasons. Some believed because he did the number of miracles they thought the Messiah should do. This seems to me to be a poor reason

for identifying Jesus, but it does seem to have been used by God to draw people to Jesus.

Our gospel also gives us proper ways to assess Jesus: it tells us that the one who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. This tells us that one way to assess is not by the way he glorifies himself, but the way he glorifies the one who sent him, God the Father. Throughout the gospels we don't see Jesus talking himself up, but only pointing to the glory of God - He says his teaching comes from the one who sent him, he is not there on my own authority, but the one who sent him is true. Jesus rightly said that we shouldn't trust whoever speaks on their own, because they do so only to gain personal glory. How many so-called prophets do we see today, even in the church, who are so obviously talking themselves up and not God - surely these people cannot be from God and must not be trusted.

Perhaps Jesus's clearest instruction for those who would assess him is found in verses 37 and 38. Here he says in a loud voice: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

In assessing Jesus, we need to ask ourselves whether his words truly quench a spiritual thirst in us, a thirst for living water. As you read his word and look around you at this world that we are in, do Jesus's words meet a thirst the world does not even recognise? Jesus had spoken of living water earlier with the Samaritan woman at the well, helping her to understand that the water he offered was not physical water that would leave her thirsty again, but spiritual water, ending her spiritual thirst forever. Jesus had also said that he was the bread of life, eternally assuaging a spiritual hunger.

John helpfully tells us that when Jesus was talking about the spiritual water, he actually meant the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Not only would he give those who believed in him his Holy Spirit to quench their spiritual thirst, this living water, this Holy Spirit, would flow out from within them to others.

Once again, Jesus is not focussing on himself, but on God the Holy Spirit. And, in assessing who Jesus is, we need to see the work of the Holy Spirit through his words. As you read and hear Jesus's words, are they having a spiritual, supernatural effect on you? Are they meeting a spiritual thirst that you have, and are those words clambering to flow out of you to meet the spiritual thirst in others? Peter said only Jesus had the words of eternal life, and devoted his life through the Holy Spirit to sharing Jesus's words with all who would hear. He would preach on the day of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit would bring 3000 people to believe in Jesus.

As we assess Jesus, we need to more than think as the guards did, the guards who said that "No one ever spoke the way this man does." We need to be like Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus and heard him earlier and who was now one of Jesus's number. Nicodemus asked the officials,⁵¹ "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?" He assessed Jesus, not by appearances, not on what others think, the authorities, or even faulty interpretations of scripture. John tells us that Nicodemus listened to Jesus and what he had been doing and came to understand that Jesus had come from God, and God was with him. He came to understand that he needed to be spiritually born again and joined their number, having his spiritual thirst quenched by living water, the Holy Spirit that was given once Jesus was glorified.

This is the way we need to assess Jesus, hearing his words with spiritual ears, being spiritually born again and having our spiritual hunger and thirst quenched by Jesus, never to hunger and thirst again.

Have you assessed Jesus this way?

Amen