

SUNDAY 28 September 2025 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

Hymn - TIS 449 - At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow

Stand up, and bless the Lord, Ye people of His choice;

Stand up, and bless the Lord your God, With heart, and soul, and voice.

Though high above all praise, Above all blessing high,

Who would not fear His holy Name, And laud and magnify?

Oh, for the living flame, From His own altar brought,

To touch our lips, our mind inspire, And wing to heav'n our thought.

God is our strength and song, And His salvation ours;

Then be His love in Christ proclaim'd, with all our ransom'd powers.

Stand up, and bless the Lord, The Lord your God adore;

Stand up, and bless His glorious Name, Henceforth for evermore.

Greeting

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

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

Sentence of the day

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 (NIV)

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Prayer of the Day

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant us such a measure of your grace that, running in the way of your commandments, we may obtain your gracious promises and be partakers of your heavenly treasure, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Exodus 13:17-22 (NIV)

¹⁷ When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle.

¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the Israelites swear an oath. He had said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.”

²⁰ After leaving Sukkoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹ By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

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

Psalms 27 (NIV)

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation —whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

² **When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.**

³ Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

⁴ **One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.**

⁵ For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

⁶ **Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.**

⁷ Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸ **My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek.**

⁹ Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.

¹⁰ **Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.**

¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

¹² **Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.**

¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

¹⁴ **Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.**

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

John 8:12-20 (NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."
¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. ¹⁷ In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. ¹⁸ I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."
¹⁹ Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"
"You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

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

Sermon - John 7:12-20 - Jesus, Light of the World

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father, 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.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: God of Peace, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

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 - TIS 513 - Bread of heaven, on thee we feed

**Bread of heaven, on thee we feed, For thy Flesh is food indeed;
Ever may our souls be fed, with this true and living Bread;
Day by day with strength supplied, Through the life of him who died.**

**Vine of heaven, your blood supplies this blest cup of sacrifice;
Lord, thy wounds our healing give, to thy cross we look and live:
Jesus, may we ever be grafted, rooted, built in thee.**

The Thanksgiving

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

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread. The gifts of God for the people of God.**

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

After Communion

Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.

Hymn - TIS 143 - Immortal, invisible, God only wise

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.**

**Unresting, Unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, but ruling in might;
Your justice like mountains high soaring above
your clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**You give life to all Lord, to both great and small,
in all life now living, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on a tree,
and wither and perish, but ever unchanged you will be.**

**Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;
of all your rich graces this grace Lord impart
take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.**

**All praise we would render reveal to our sight;
what hides you is only the splendour of light
and so let your glory, Almighty, impart
through Christ is the story, your Christ to the heart**

Notices

Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the love of God, and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always **Amen**

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

Sermon John 7:12-20 - Jesus, the Light of the World

Do you ever watch courtroom dramas on TV? I've watched a few, and I quite enjoy them. I particularly enjoy the different ways the lawyers use to win their cases. The usual way to start is by examining whether the evidence shows whether the evidence shows whether the person is guilty or not, whether the accusation is true or not. The problem is that often there isn't enough evidence, or the evidence doesn't point the way the lawyers want it to, and they have to try a different tack. Generally they don't argue the truth, they attack the witness. Or in this grand final season, they tackle the man, not the ball.

In today's gospel, Jesus makes a pretty clear claim **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** The Pharisees challenge this claim, but do you notice that they don't say a single thing about the content of Jesus's claim. Not once do they mention light or darkness.

The Pharisees do not dispute whether Jesus is right or not. Instead, they challenge whether Jesus's testimony is valid under rabbinic law. They argue he can't testify about himself. It is important to realise that the Pharisees are not saying that Jesus is wrong, even though this is what they want to say. They just say that his evidence is not sufficient in court.

The Pharisees claim that you can't testify about yourself. This is obviously wrong, and every defendant in every trial gets to testify in their defence. They testify about who they are, what they have done and what they haven't done. More significantly, Jesus is uniquely positioned to testify truthfully. Only Jesus knows where he comes from, where he is going. He comes from the God of truth, the God of light, and so his testimony is true. God cannot lie, and nor can the one who comes from him.

The Pharisees are also saying that Jesus needs two witnesses for his testimony to be valid in court. They are probably thinking of Deuteronomy chapter 19:15, which says: One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Jesus disputes this because he says there are actually two witnesses - himself and God the Father who sent him. God wouldn't have sent just anybody into the world to save the world. God obviously knows who Jesus is and why he sent him. The very fact that God sent Jesus into the world gives testimony to who Jesus is, and combined with Jesus's own testimony, meets the rabbinic requirement for at least two witnesses.

Jesus also criticises the Pharisees, because they are completely unable to judge Jesus. They have no idea where he has come from or where he is going. They only judge by human standards - how can they possibly judge the judge of the world? The Pharisees judge purely on what is visible, not recognising Jesus's divine origins. The Pharisees, who claim special knowledge of God's word and their ultra-strict observance of it. They claimed to know what God wanted, but they didn't know God, and they would not accept the one he had sent.

Jesus said they could not know God without looking to the one he had sent. The way to know God is to know Jesus, the son who he sent, and to know Jesus is to know God.

If we are to relate this to Jesus's assertion that he is the light of the world, part of what Jesus is claiming is that that "light, in a sense, bears witness to itself. Every other object in the world requires light in order to be witnessed. You need light to see anything else, but you don't need anything else to see light. Light always illuminates, is never illuminated. Jesus, as the light of the world, illuminates everything.

Unlike ordinary light, which only illuminates physical, material objects, Jesus illuminates spiritual objects. That is how we can know God because Jesus illuminates him. In fact, Jesus's illumination is the only way we can know God, and Jesus is the only way to God.

So Jesus completely refutes the Pharisees' arguments about his claim to be the light of the world. The Pharisees wanted to claim that he couldn't be who he said he was, but Jesus said he and God testify to who he is, only he and God (and definitely not the Pharisees) understood his divine origin and nature. While the Pharisees wanted him dead, they could do nothing about him because Jesus's time was not yet come.

I mentioned earlier that this whole argument said nothing about Jesus's claim to be the light of this world. that "He is the light of the world. Whoever follows him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

What does this mean?

We have already mentioned that Jesus as the light illuminates the world, and God himself.

It is significant that Jesus makes this claim at the festival of tabernacles. I actually got it wrong a couple of weeks ago when I said that Jews ate all their meals during the festival in tents so they could see the sky and remember they lived in tents during the Exodus from Egypt. The real reason they spent the time outside was to remind themselves that during the Exodus they looked to the skies to see God's leading them in the column of smoke by day and the light of the pillar of fire by night. They look to the skies for God's light to guide them and illuminate the way.

Also, during the festival of tabernacles, brilliant gold lamps were lit that were said to be so bright that they illuminated all of Jerusalem. I John 1:5 says that God is light, and perhaps the most well known biblical reference to light is in

the first verses of John's gospel, which reads ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5. John is clearly talking about Jesus, and says that in Jesus is life, and that light is the light of all humankind, shining in the darkness, never to be overcome. This reflects God the father being our light in our psalm this morning, The LORD is my light and my salvation. Since John tells us that Jesus, the word (or logos in the Greek in John 1) was God and with God, so Jesus is our light and salvation.

I want to conclude with the words of our New Testament reading from 2 Corinthians 4, that unbelievers cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Christ is the light of the world, no matter how much the Pharisees tried to argue his testimony was not valid. They could not show that Jesus was wrong, only that they wouldn't believe Jesus. They showed that they were unbelievers who cannot see the light of the gospel illuminating the glory of Christ, the very image of God, whose light shines in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory.

Today, I want to ask you is, "Is Jesus, the light of the world shining in your hearts, illuminating God's glory in Christ Jesus."

Do you live still in darkness, or do you have the light of life?