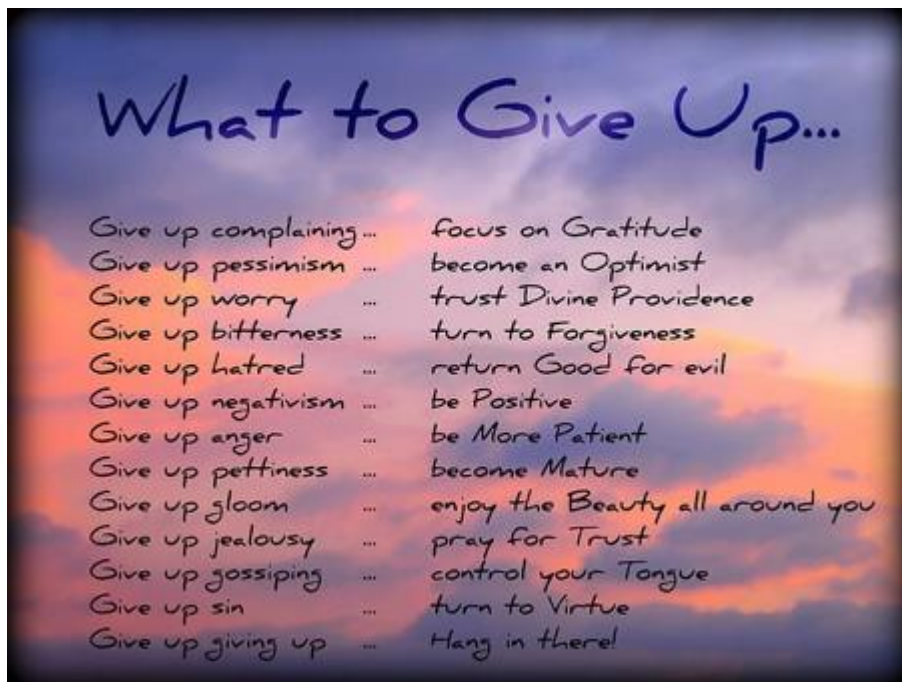


Dear Beloved,

Last week's reading included Jesus saying 'unless you are more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'. This week is a straight continuation from that passage in which we discover how to be more righteous.



Blessings

Wendy

**AGMS**

**Numerella 12th February**

**Nimitabel 19th February**

**Adaminaby 19th February**

**Cooma 26th February**

**Jerangle 26th February**

**Parish 2nd April**

--

**Morning Tea**

**after the Service**

**today and**

**every 2nd and 4th Sunday**

**please volunteer**

**for the roster.**

--

**Wendy has Lent Study Books**

**for group or private use.**

**They are \$12 each**

**Please see Wendy**

--

**PTO →**

**Autumn Open Garden Day  
16th April  
Please pot plants up now  
and tell Nella how you can help**

--

**Midweek Services  
every Wednesday at 9.30  
all Welcome**

**Ash Wednesday  
22nd February**

--

**Please volunteer  
for the roster,  
well in advance.**

--

Prayer and Praise

**Wendy**

**Edith and Colin Mayhew**

--

**Glenn Fletcher .. for his recovery**

**our wardens and Parish Councillors**

--

**Scott's wife Jennie.**

**Beattie Russell  
and Jenni Roberts  
in Yallambie.**

--

**Leanne Lowery**

**Mary Mitchell**

--

**Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo**

12 Feb 2023

## Hymn TIS At the name of Jesus

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

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Psalm 119.1

### 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

Almighty God, you gave the law to guide our lives: grant that we may never shrink from your commandments, but, as we are taught by your Spirit, may fulfil your law in perfect love; through Christ our Lord and Master, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.

#### Deuteronomy 10.12-22

<sup>12</sup> And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup> and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? <sup>14</sup> To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. <sup>15</sup> Yet the Lord set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations – as it is today. <sup>16</sup> Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. <sup>17</sup> For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. <sup>18</sup> He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. <sup>19</sup> And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. <sup>20</sup> Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. <sup>21</sup> He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. <sup>22</sup> Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky

#### Psalm 119.1-8

<sup>1</sup> Blessed are those whose way is blameless: who walk in the law of the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep his commands: and seek him with their whole heart;

<sup>3</sup> Those who do no wrong: but walk in the ways of our God.

<sup>4</sup> For you, Lord, have commanded us: to persevere in all your precepts.

<sup>5</sup> If only my ways were unerring: towards the keeping of your statutes!

<sup>6</sup> Then I should not be ashamed: when I looked on all your commandments.

<sup>7</sup> I will praise you with sincerity of heart: as I learn your righteous judgements.

<sup>8</sup> I will keep your statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

#### 1 Corinthians 3.1-9

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly – mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not mere human beings? <sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. <sup>7</sup> So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. <sup>9</sup> For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

## Matthew 5.21-37

<sup>21</sup> 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, "Raca," is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, "You fool!" will be in danger of the fire of hell. <sup>23</sup> 'Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup> 'Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you; you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. <sup>27</sup> 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. <sup>31</sup> 'It has been said, "Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce." <sup>32</sup> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. <sup>33</sup> 'Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "Do not break your oath, but fulfil to the Lord the oaths you have made." <sup>34</sup> But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne ; <sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> All you need to say is simply "Yes," or "No"; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

### Sermon

#### 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.

Let us pray for all people and for the Church throughout the world.

Holy God 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.**

Jesus said, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and who ever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6.35

#### 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.

#### Confession

Christ the Son of God has been revealed as a light to the nations.

Let us bring our darkness to his light, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**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.**

## Absolution

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.

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 145 The king of Love my shepherd is

## OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

## Thanksgiving 4

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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 and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

We thank you that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence stand before him who redeems us from sin and death and makes us heirs of everlasting life.

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. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that we who eat and drink them in obedience to our Saviour Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may be partakers of his body and blood, and be made one with him and with each other in peace and love.

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.

As we eat and drink this holy sacrament, renew us by your Spirit that we may be united in the body of your Son and serve you as a royal priesthood in the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Receive our praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:

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

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 by faith with thanksgiving.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

### **After Communion**

God of the nations, we thank you for nourishing us with this holy sacrament. Guide us by your presence, that we may bring your light to those who dwell in darkness, and establish your justice in the earth.

**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.**

Hymn TIS 596 Fill my whole life, o Lord my God

### **Blessing**

May Christ the Son of God be manifest to you, that your lives may be a light to the world; 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**



And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup> and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep his commands: and seek him with their whole heart.

<sup>3</sup> Those who do no wrong: but walk in the ways of our God.

Last week our gospel reading reminded us to walk in the truth that we are salt and light in the world and that we are not to strive to be salt and light, but we are to accept that that is what we are and let God work through us in this world. The passage also ended up by saying that unless we are more righteous than the scribes and pharisees we will not enter the kingdom of heaven. And this week's gospel is a straight continuation of that passage, In this section Jesus takes the commands of the law and shows how they provide a design for a way of being fully, genuinely and gloriously human and fully righteous. This new way, which Jesus had come to pioneer and make possible, goes deep down into the roots of personality, and produces a different pattern of behaviour altogether.



Imagine a smouldering anger against someone close to you. OK it is not going to result in murder; but the real point of the commandment against murder was not that you should stop short of killing someone, but that you should never get near even the thought that you would wish they were dead. Every time our anger smoulders inside us we become a little less human, a little less what God asks us to be, we belittle ourselves.

And if you allow your anger to rise, it turns into foul or abusive language and you might indeed end up in court, you might become estranged from family or friends and that anger might become what drives you in every situation.



The picture of hell used here is based on the local garbage dump where people threw their rubbish off a cliff at the edge of Jerusalem where there was a fire that burnt continuously, and the smoke and smells were horrible. No one wanted to end up there.

My childhood was not perfect, sometimes punishment was inflicted arbitrarily, sometimes my brothers were horrible, life was not fair, and I had no way to balance things. My first marriage was rotten, my husband was emotionally abusive, and he lied and stole from me. I had no recourse; I was a good Christian wife. In the years that followed I swallowed my anger, but it leaked out at inappropriate times, especially by yelling at my kids more than they deserved. Through counselling I dealt with my anger and my kids still remember the change.



It is not always easy to give up our anger, bad things do happen, people let us down or do unkind and evil things, but Jesus offers very specific and practical commands.

Be reconciled: make friends. Sounds simple and yet so difficult and costly. It might involve abandoning our position of self-righteousness, it will almost certainly involve forgiveness and letting those habits go. Sometimes the person is no longer available to be friends, sometimes the person is not safe to be friends, either way you can forgive them but not let the person hurt you anymore. Sometimes, like me you might need to talk to someone else to help you deal with it, whatever it takes it is worthwhile.



The idea of leaving an offering at the temple and being reconciled was perhaps not practical for someone who had travelled for days to come to the temple, but Jesus is making a point. The point is that we must live, day by day, in such a way that when you come to worship there is no division between us and anyone else. And if you are on your way to court, be reconciled, it is all the one point, no anger no division: live in love.

How is it possible? We look to Jesus. Jesus himself refused the way of anger. Instead, he took the anger of his enemies within Israel and of Israel's own enemies, the Romans, on himself and died under its load. Reconciliation is not simply an ideal we strive for. It is an achievement, an accomplishment, which we in turn must embody.



The same attitude applies to lust, and adultery. The real point of the command against adultery is that we go nowhere near it, no lustful thought, no treating other people as sexual objects. This is so important that Jesus exaggerates again by saying that if any part of our body leads us into temptation, then we should dispose of that body part. In reality we know that it is our mind which leads us into temptation and what we need to do is turn our mind to real love, actually wanting the very best for that other person so that we are not tempted.

We won't deal in depth with divorce today, but the principal is the same, when we live in love there is no need for divorce. However, divorce happens and like any other sin it can be forgiven, and God does not hold it against us. And swearing oaths is the same, tell the truth in love and you don't need to embellish. Jesus is not just giving moral commands. He is unveiling a new way of being human, living his way, living in real love for our families, our neighbours, and our community.





If you can take any commandment and look at the root cause of whatever we are commanded not to do be that anger, lust, greed, envy or whatever and that is what we are really asked to avoid. In every case what we are avoiding is the antitheses of love, if we always act in love, we will obey ever command. That is how we are to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees, they followed the letter of the law, but we are to follow the spirit of the law.

Perhaps the most important thing here is that Jesus certainly didn't want his hearers or the church to get embroiled in endless debates about what precisely is allowed. Far more important to think and pray about how to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth in every situation.



Choosing not to be swept along by temptation may well feel sometimes like cutting of a hand but the rewards of obedience and self control are greater than any temporary thrill. Agreement with God is never repression, it is like pruning a rose, cutting off unhealthy growth so that the plant can grow stronger and produce even more beautiful flowers. God truly loves us, he wants the absolute best for us and he knows that all those things he warns us about will harm us so when we follow him he guards us from all that damage.

That is why the writer of deuteronomy says: observe the Lord 's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good. **God has never wanted to turn us into robots, robots do not love, God wants to bless us with every blessing. Just as we love our little children and grandchildren and want them to live happy and fulfilled lives God wants us to be joyful throughtout our lives. And the thing that makes him happiest is when we love him in return.**



<sup>1</sup> Blessed are those whose way is blameless: who walk in the law of the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep his commands: and seek him with their whole heart.

<sup>3</sup> Those who do no wrong: but walk in the ways of our God.

<sup>4</sup> For you, Lord, have commanded us: to persevere in all your precepts.

<sup>5</sup> If only my ways were unerring: towards the keeping of your statutes!

<sup>6</sup> Then I should not be ashamed: when I looked on all your commandments.

<sup>7</sup> I will praise you with sincerity of heart: as I learn your righteous judgements.

<sup>8</sup> I will keep your statutes: O forsake me not utterly.