

Dear Beloved

Our readings this week focus on not being afraid of the future but trusting our Lord in all circumstances.



Blessings

Wendy

Canberra Brass 'Classic Brass' Today 2.30 pm Adult \$30, Conc \$25

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Steve Clark will do his next session on Saturday 1st July at 2.30 pm then 5th August and 2nd September

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Brendan Lukin is being ordained in the Uniting Church to serve in the Army service at 2pm on 2nd July (followed by Afternoon Tea in the church Hall).

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Sunday 9th July we will have morning tea to farewell Ruth and David Fletcher as they are moving to Canberra

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Community Day Saturday 23rd September

Anyone who is willing to help come to rectory Tuesdays 2.00 - 3.30

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Wendy's last Sunday in the Parish 24th September

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Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday please volunteer for the roster.

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Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30. all Welcome

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Please volunteer for the church roster, well in advance.

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Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Cooma

--

The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker
as he ministers from Bombala through to the mountains

--

for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

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People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

7 May 2023 2.3

Hymn TIS 136 There's a wideness in God's Mercy

Greeting

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

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake will find it. Matthew 10.39

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

Gracious God, we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death: we pray that, as you raised him from death, so by the power of the Holy Spirit we may live the new life to your glory, knowing ourselves to be dead in sin but alive for you in Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Genesis 21.8–21

⁸ The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. ⁹ But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, ¹⁰ and she said to Abraham, 'Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.' ¹¹ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. ¹² But God said to him, 'Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. ¹³ I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.' ¹⁴ Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba. ¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went off and sat down about a bow-shot away, for she thought, 'I cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there, she began to sob. ¹⁷ God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. ¹⁸ Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.' ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰ God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. ²¹ While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

Psalms 86.1–10, 16–17

¹ Incline your ear to me, O God, and answer me: for I am poor and in misery.

² Preserve my life, for I am faithful: My God, save your servant who trusts in you.

³ Be merciful to me, O Lord: for I call to you all the day long.

⁴ O make glad the soul of your servant: for I put my hope in you, O Lord.

⁵ For you, Lord, are good and forgiving:

of great and continuing kindness to all who call upon you.

⁶ Hear my prayer, O Lord: and give heed to the voice of my supplication.

⁷ In the day of my trouble I call upon you: for you will surely answer.

⁸ Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord: nor are there any deeds like yours.

⁹ All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you:

O Lord, they shall glorify your name.

¹⁰ For you are great and do marvellous things: and you alone are God.

¹⁶ Turn to me and be merciful, give your strength to your servant: and save the child of your handmaid.

¹⁷ Show me some token of your goodness: that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because you, Lord, are my helper and my comforter.

Romans 6.1–11

¹ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10.24–39

²⁴ 'The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household ! ²⁶ 'So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. ³² 'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law – ³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household." ³⁷ 'Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. God of all mercy, **hear our prayers.**

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.

Invitation to 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, with a sincere and a true heart.

Confession

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.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. **We meet in his name and share his peace.**

Hymn TIS 485 My God, accept my heart this day

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 3

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.**

It is indeed right, it is our duty, our joy and our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord.

For he is the true high priest, who has freed us from our sins and made us a royal priesthood to serve you, our God and Father.

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 and gracious God, all creation rightly gives you praise.

All life, all holiness, comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you sent to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

Hear us, merciful Lord; through Christ accept our sacrifice of praise; and, by the power of your Word and Holy Spirit, sanctify this bread and wine, that we who share in this holy sacrament may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

Who, when his hour had come, on the night before he went up to the cross to make full atonement for the sins of the whole world, offering once for all his one sacrifice of himself, took bread and gave 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.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink 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.'

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

Therefore, in obedience to his command, we commemorate and celebrate his saving passion and death, his mighty resurrection and ascension into heaven and we eagerly await his coming again in glory.

We thank you that by your grace alone you have accepted us in Christ; and here we offer you a spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight. Through Christ, receive this our duty and service, and grant that we who eat and drink these holy gifts may, by your Holy Spirit, be one body in Christ, and serve you in unity and peace. In your grace and mercy, bring us to the joy of your eternal kingdom with all the company of the redeemed. May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father eternal, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be 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 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

Living God, in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.

May the power of your love, which we have known in word and sacrament, continue your saving work among us, give us courage for our pilgrimage, and bring us to the joys you promise.

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 169 our God, we know your providence

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**



What commandment is most common in the Bible? Not most important but most common? You might think, having been listening to me for a few years that it was 'love God', that's the most important but actually the most common is actually 'Don't be afraid'. Think about it, every time God sends an angel to speak to someone the first thing they say is 'Don't be afraid', often when God speaks through his prophets the message is 'Don't be afraid' and in our passage today Jesus says 'don't be afraid' three times.

What might we be afraid of? In our own lives we might be afraid of the increasing signs of age and disability creeping up on us. We might be afraid for our families that they could get sick or suffer various misfortunes or make bad decisions. Or we could be afraid for the church, this church, whether a new priest will want to come, that there might not be enough people to keep it going, or that things will change so much that it no longer feels like church. To every one of those fears and all the rest we haven't mentioned, God says, 'Don't be afraid.'



In the story of Hagar in our Old Testament reading, it was not her fault or the child's that Abraham had had a moment of doubt and conceived a child through her but here she was, cast out in the wilderness, run out of water and food and afraid that she and the baby would die. She gave up but God never gives up, he showed her the way to go, rescued her and the baby and that baby grew and fathered a nation.

The Psalmist knew where he needed to place his trust, when he was in trouble he called to the Lord: ³ Be merciful to me, O Lord: for I call to you all the day long. ⁴ O make glad the soul of your servant: for I put my hope in you, O Lord. He knew that God was a great God and could be trusted to sort out all his troubles and be with him in every circumstance.



In our gospel reading the authorities were getting serious in their threats against Jesus and the disciples and the disciples could see that it was very possible that anything that happened to Jesus might well happen to them as well, and people may well start to say the things they are saying about Jesus about them, so they had reason to be a little scared. However, Jesus tells them not be afraid.

What reason does Jesus give for not being afraid? We would expect Jesus to tell them that God was in control and would look after them but that is not initially what he says although it is true, and he does say that eventually. However, what he says at first is that a time will come when everything that is currently secret will become well known. Why is that a reason to be confident? Many people would prefer to keep their secrets hidden.



Jesus is assuming that what will come to light is the disciples' loyalty and faith; they will be seen to have followed Israel's true Messiah, the world's real Lord. Their persistence and endurance will be seen by all. Where people might have thought them stubborn or arrogant, they will be shown as faithful followers who followed Jesus through thick and thin. Truth will out, justice will prevail and those who have lived with integrity and innocence will be vindicated. One day our truth will be shown as well, our love and loyalty will be shown and anything not worthy will be stripped away.



But Jesus also tells us to be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Many people have been puzzled by this verse and we must look at it very carefully. Why would Jesus tell his followers not to be afraid, then to be afraid and then not to be afraid again in just a few sentences? Is he being hard to understand on purpose or what is he saying?

Jesus saw Israel's enemies on two levels: there were the obvious ones- the Romans, and all who worked for Rome, they had the power to destroy the body, they could and did kill people. But there were other darker enemies who could kill the soul as well: enemies who were battling for souls even as Jesus was bringing God's Kingdom to earth, and they were using the more obvious enemies as cover. It never was and never will be God who destroys a soul.

God's enemies use the desires of God's people for justice as bait to lead God's people down wrong paths. Our enemies lure good faithful people into using darkness to fight darkness which pulls them away from following Jesus. That is what we must be afraid of. There is never a time when the end justifies the means, where we can do bad things because it will come right in the end. As Paul wrote: Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? We need to live pure and godly lives and stay away from anything which might lead us astray.



To offset that warning or to outweigh it altogether we have a wonderful passage about the detailed love and care of God, not just for his creatures including us but even for every hair on our heads. God is the one we never have to fear because he is the one, we can trust with our lives, our souls, our bodies and our very being.

If God knows every hair on your head, why would you ever think that he might not be interested in the mundane and trivial things in your life. Sure, pray for the big things, pray for healing for yourself and people you know, pray for guidance and wisdom, pray, please, for the future of this church but also chat to our loving Father about all the little things, sunshine for a special day, where you left your phone, how to talk to your kids and the people down the street. He loves you, all of you and wants to share every moment of your life.



Then Jesus talks about priorities, if you don't really love him, if he is not more important than your family then he is not Lord of your life. If your job or your hobby or your partner, or your best friends or your stuff is more important in your life than Jesus and following him, then in turn Jesus will have no choice but to leave you behind. Jesus is not saying that everyone who follows his will find themselves split off from their families, certainly not. What he is saying is that what matters is allegiance to him: allegiance to Jesus must come at the top of every list but as we read the gospels we see that he said that family and others come next.

We know that even those first disciples found it very difficult to stay faithful. Peter denied him, Judas betrayed him, and the rest all ran away. However all but Judas returned and were able to try again and again. None of them and none of us is perfect but Jesus keeps leading us to greater and greater heights. The challenge remains, embracing everything, demanding everything, offering everything, promising everything. Jesus never wanted to divide families just for the sake of it. but he knew that if people followed his way division would follow.



Jesus' challenge to the disciples and to us had to be sharp because people naturally prefer comfort to challenges. But the challenges of Jesus' sayings are matched by the remarkable promises he makes to those who accept them and live by them. He will 'own' us before his father in heaven. Those who lose their lives will find them. Give a cup of water to one of Jesus' least significant followers and you are giving it to Jesus himself. Whatever you do for Jesus, you are doing for the Father.

My life has not exactly been a bed of roses, I've been through some tough times: rejection, poverty, unemployment, misunderstandings, grief and various other troubles such as are common to people, there have been some good times too but through it all I have known the love and care of my Lord. When times were tough, I relied on him and when times were good, I thanked him but if God was not real and walking with me every day what would be the point of it all? Even the good times would be meaningless without knowing the loving God and the bad times would be intolerable.



Be not afraid. Whatever the future holds, getting older has its inconveniences, our bodies begin to wear out, but it has its compensations, our families and friends will live life and make good and bad decisions, and this church will continue to shelter God's people for many years and through it all God will walk with us in love. He will protect us and lead us in all our endeavours and finally bring us to himself. We will love him, follow him, and trust him all our days.