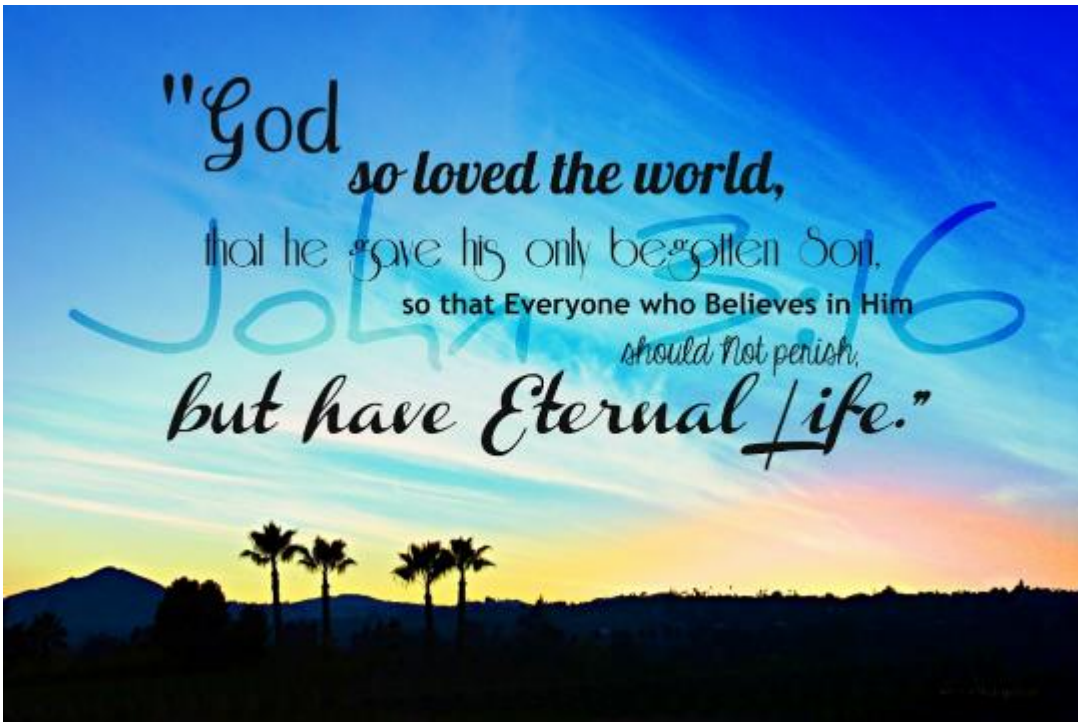


Dear Beloved,

Our gospel reading today is the story of the Canaanite woman who asks Jesus to heal her daughter. Initially Jesus ignores her and the disciples ask Jesus to send her away because she keeps asking but Jesus and the woman understand each other and she gets what she asked for. Sometimes it seems that God is ignoring us but he always has our best interests in mind.



Blessings

Wendy

Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please encourage any community groups you know to have a stall.

--

Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please think about how you can help on the day.

--

Community Day Saturday, 23rd September

Please take some posters and put them up wherever you can.

--

Wendy's last Sunday in the Parish 24th September

--

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

--

Midweek Services every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome

--

Please volunteer for the church roster, well in advance.

--

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Catherine

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

--

Beryl Lucas Mary Mitchell's sister in Palliative Care (Cancer)

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

--

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

20 August 2023 2.4

Hymn TIS 179 Praise with joy the world's creator

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

Thus says the Lord, 'Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.' Isaiah 56.1

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

God of freedom, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Genesis 45.1–15

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, 'Make everyone leave my presence!' So, there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still living?' But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come close to me.' When they had done so, he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no ploughing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸ 'So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, "This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me – you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks, and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise, you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute." ¹² 'You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father about all the honour accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.' ¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterwards his brothers talked with him.

Psalm 133

¹ Behold how good and how lovely it is: when families live together in unity.

² It is fragrant as oil upon the head, that runs down over the beard:

fragrant as oil upon the beard of Aaron, that ran down over the collar of his robe.

³ It is like a dew of Hermon: like the dew that falls upon the hill of Zion.

⁴ For there the Lord has commanded his blessing: which is life for evermore.

Romans 11.13–32

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be

superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. ²² Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! ²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.' ²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Matthew 15.21–28

²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.' ²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, 'Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.' ²⁴ He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.' ²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. ²⁶ He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' ²⁷ 'Yes, it is, Lord,' she said. 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' ²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed at that moment.

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.

Loving 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.

Whenever you stand praying forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven will forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11.25

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

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.

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.

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 254 O changeless Christ, for ever new

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.**

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

All thanks and praise, glory and honour, be yours at all times, in every place, holy and loving Father, true and living God. We praise you that through your eternal Word you brought the universe into being and made us in your own image. You have given us this earth to care for and delight in, and with its bounty you preserve our life. We thank you that you bound yourself to the human race with the promises of a gracious covenant and called us to serve you in love and peace. Above all, we give you thanks for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ: born as one of us, he lived our common life and offered his life to you in perfect obedience and trust. By his death he delivered us from sin, brought us new life, and reconciled us to you and to one another. Therefore with angels and archangels, with apostles, and prophets, with holy men and women of every age, we proclaim your great and glorious name: **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

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.

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 627 Praise and thanksgiving

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**



Did you ever have a picture of Jesus with children from all nationalities clustered around? I had a print very like that one on my bedroom wall as a child. Do you remember that hymn, 'Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.' But thoday's story today doesn't quite fit that picture or that song, does it? Or not at first glance. Was Jesus racially prejudiced? Didn't God make all the nations, so what is going on here? When we read this story from our cultural perspective, we find it quite surprising.

Jesus has withdrawn to get away from the antagonistic authorities, perhaps his message is hitting too many buttons and he avoids any premature hostilities by going to a predominately gentile area. 'Tyre and Sidon' was traditionally an area of demons which was avoided by the Jews.



Jesus had a specific task on earth, God's people needed to know that God was now at last fulfilling his promises. The kingdom for which they had waited and prayed was beginning. Jesus was the herald, and as the disciples are beginning to realise, He is himself the Messiah, God, and the coming king. His message was always aimed at Israel itself because they were the ones who had been chosen and appointed to be the promise bearers through whom the Word and all the fulfilment of God's oaths would come.

What Jesus had come to do, as he said in Matthew 5, is not to abolish the law but fulfil it: not to do away with God's chosen people but to realise the purpose for which they had existed all along. That is why Israel had to hear the message first, they needed to be reminded of the promises which were now being fulfilled. He knew that it was his task to tell the Jews and then he would be able to pass the mantle to his disciples after the resurrection, and they would fulfil their purpose by taking the message to the whole world.



Paul in writing to the Romans is living in the post resurrection era, and he looks back at the first Easter while he is explaining how it all works. He has taken up his mantle to bring in the gentiles but still longs to see his own nation come to belief. There are many echoes of all those Old Testament stories when the younger brother is chosen over the older one: Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob and the story we have been reading lately of Joseph and his ten brothers, in every case the younger brother is vindicated. What Paul is doing in this passage is telling a similar story but working it through to a fresh and positive conclusion. Israel is now in the position of the older brother; the gentile Christians are the younger brother. This is bound to cause jealousy, as in all the OT stories but Paul has glimpsed that this jealousy which might bring more jews into faith and salvation. And he even suggests that this is why God allowed it to happen.



Like Joseph explaining to his brothers that God had used their intentions to bring good, Paul explains that the stumble of Israel has been used and even intended by God to bring the Gentiles flooding into the people of God, to the family of Abraham.

Paul, a Jew, has been sent with a special commission to the gentiles, but this has a second, hidden purpose: Not only was Paul's work supposed to be making the name and work of Israel's God known and loved in the non-Jewish world: it was also, supposed to be making his fellow Jews 'jealous, and come to see that they were missing out on the fulfilment of their own heritage, and so come to faith and salvation.



Olive trees were very common in Biblical lands and Paul uses them as an illustration of what God has done. Olive trees are very durable, unless you cut them down and uproot them or burn them to the ground, they will live on for centuries. And gardeners from time-to-time graft branches onto healthy, even wild, roots to gain more fruit. What Paul is suggesting is that wild branches have been grafted on to the cultivated root, the exact opposite of what happened in real life. The Gentile Christians are the new wild branches, God is the root and all the branches combined form the new Israel.



All this is in the future for the woman in our gospel story today but as so often happens in Jesus' public ministry the future keeps breaking in to the present. By faith she claims a reality that does not yet exist, and Jesus acknowledges her faith and grants her request. Jesus as already commented on the remarkable faith of the gentile centurion and now he comments on the equally remarkable faith of the Canaanite woman. Not only does this woman clearly believe that Jesus can heal her stricken daughter, but she addresses Jesus as 'son of David', the Jewish messianic title which the disciples themselves were only just beginning to associate with him.

And most remarkably she understands and, uses to her advantage in the banter with Jesus, the way in which God's choice of Israel to be the promise-bearing people for the sake of the world will work out in practice. Yes, she says the dogs can't simply share the children's food, but they do get to eat what the children drop. In effect she is saying that Gentiles are not (yet) part of the chosen race, but they can still receive blessings from God which spill over from his blessing on Israel. If Israel is indeed the promise bearing people, then Israel's Messiah will ultimately bring blessing to the whole world, and she doesn't have the leisure to wait for it.



What we have here is as startling to us, perhaps as it was to Jesus' followers at the time. The woman's faith broke through the waiting period, the time in which Jesus would come to Jerusalem as Israel's messiah, be killed, and raised again and then send his followers out into all the world. The disciples, and perhaps even Jesus, are not ready for Calvary and this woman is insisting on Easter.

It is also remarkable that she accepts the designation 'dog', which was a regular way of dismissing the Gentiles as inferior. In Jewish culture dogs were feral animals, who took advantage of anything that they could get and were regarded as pests, but the word Jesus used was the word for household animals of the gentile culture who cleaned up after the children. This is nothing like our pets who are often spoilt and certainly regarded as members of the family but slightly less harsh than strays, perhaps a little closer to working farm dogs.



Theology is the science of thinking about God, trying to understand how he works through history and in our faith. St Marks library is full of books about theology, I studied there for 6 years and only read portions of a few of those books, but God is bigger than any theology man can devise. God is not bound by any theology, even one announced by his son. Theology, valuable and necessary as it is, need not stand in the way of divine compassion or human faith. This story stretches the boundaries of theology, without breaking or abandoning it.

It should not be ignored that the example of such victorious faith and theology is a gentile woman, rejected both as a gentile and a woman but that does not mean that she somehow outdid Jesus. We need to read this story hearing Jesus' love for this woman and her daughter, knowing that he never rejected anyone and hear this as teasing banter with both of them knowing the outcome.



This story is a challenge to us to give up our sexism, racism, and prejudices of every kind. Whenever we consider anyone else as 'the other' and therefore somehow more distant from God and the divine order than ourselves, we are not loving them as our heavenly father loves them. We tend to identify with Jesus in this story but the challenge for us it to identify with the 'other', to struggle not only with God on their behalf but also with our own perceptions of them.

Jesus ultimate goal was to restore Israel as the promise bearers so that ever other human being would come to be blessed by the promises as well. Anytime we exclude someone from those blessings we are failing to act as Jesus would have us act. Our goal is to spread those blessing to everyone we meet whether we think they deserve them or not.