

Cooma Anglican 21 April 2024 - 1st Order APBA

Welcome

Hymn - We have a gospel to proclaim

We have a gospel to proclaim
Good news for all throughout the earth
The gospel of a Saviour's Name
We sing His glory tell His worth

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim
The Word made flesh a light for all

Tell of His death at Calvary
Hated by those He came to save
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all He loved His life He gave

Tell of that glorious Easter morn
Empty the tomb for He was free
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share His victory

Tell of His reign at God's right hand
By all creation glorified
He sends His Spirit on His church
To live for Him the Lamb who died

Now we rejoice to name Him King
Jesus is Lord of all the earth
The gospel-message we proclaim
We sing His glory tell His worth

Greeting

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

Sentence of the Day

Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" Mark 12:10,11

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.'

Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit

Prayer of the Day

Merciful God

Righteous judge of all, who sent Jesus among us to seek and save the lost, grant that we may eagerly seek the Saviour, and joyfully welcome him into our homes and lives.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Isaiah 5:1-7

¹ I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. ² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. ³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?" ⁵ Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. ⁶ I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it." ⁷ The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalms 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² **He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.**

³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

⁴ **Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.**

Romans 13:1-7

¹ Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.

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

Mark 12:1-40

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ² At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ⁶ "He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Haven't you read

this passage of Scripture: “ ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; ¹¹ the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes’?”

¹² Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away. ¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn’t we?” But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” ²⁴ Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” ²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” ³² “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’ ³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight.

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

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

Sermon Mark 12:1-40 -Jesus’s True Identity

Question Time

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead 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.

Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God forever.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Lord, 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.

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour.

Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.

We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ:

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the perfect offering for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2

Hymn TIS 132 Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy holy holy Lord God Almighty

Early in the morning to you our praise shall be;

Holy holy holy Merciful and mighty

God in three persons Blessed Trinity

Holy holy holy All the saints adore you

**Casting down their golden crowns Around the glassy sea
Cherubim and seraphim Falling down before you,
God everlasting through eternity**

**Holy holy holy Though the darkness hide you
Though the sinful human eye your glory may not see
You alone are holy There is none beside you
Perfect in power In love and purity**

**Holy holy holy Lord God Almighty
All your works shall praise your name In earth and sky and sea
Holy holy holy Merciful and mighty
God in three persons Blessed Trinity**

The Thanksgiving

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, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, Mighty Creator and Eternal God.

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 hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Glory to you, O Lord most high.

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.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed 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 which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Amen.

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.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.

After Communion

Almighty and everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as you have prepared

for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

Hymn TIS 237 Hail Redeemer, King Divine

Hail Redeemer, King divine!
Priest and Lamb, the throne is thine,
King, whose reign shall never cease,
Prince of everlasting peace.

Chorus

Angels, saints and nations sing,
'Praised be Jesus Christ, our King,
Lord of life, earth, sky and sea,
King of love on Calvary.'

King, whose name creation thrills,
rule our minds, our hearts, our wills,
till in peace each nation rings
with their praises, King of kings. **Chorus**

King most holy, King of truth,
guide the lowly, guide the youth;
Christ the King of glory bright,
be to us eternal light. **Chorus**

Shepherd-king, from mountains steep,
homeward bring the wandering sheep;
shelter in one royal fold
states and kingdoms, new and old. **Chorus**

Angels, saints and nations sing,
'Praised be Jesus Christ, our King,
Lord of life, earth, sky and sea,
King of love on Calvary.' **Chorus**

Notices

Dismissal

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.**

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

Sermon

As many of you will know, I was a commonwealth public servant for nearly 40 years. One of the things that was drummed into us public servants was the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. It is the doctrine, under our Westminster system of government, that the minister of state, in my case the minister for defence and later the minister for home affairs, was ultimately responsible for everything that happened in their departments. My job, as a mere public servant, was simply to do what the minister said, and provided I did that, no matter how messy the outcome was, it was the minister's fault.

This doctrine gives public servants a lot of protection provided we follow ministerial direction, but it also gives a lot of responsibility to the minister. Their words are law in their departments, and they can't be deposed except by parliament.

It is similar to a farm. The farmer has authority over what is planted or what livestock is reared, and wears the consequences if that is a bad decision. The farm hand implements the farmer's will, and gets paid their wage, provided they do their tasks properly, whatever the outcome.

In our gospel this morning, Jesus gives a number of different examples of the difference between the owner and the servant, and in each case he hints that he is more than just a servant - he had the authority of the owner, with all its responsibilities.

The first example we read this morning was the parable of the tenants. As was common then, and even now with absentee landlords, the landowner improved his land and rented it to farmers in return for a proportion of their crops. Despite benefiting from the generosity of the landlord, including the wall, the winepress and the watchtower, they refused to pay their rent, and they physically abused the servants he sent to collect it. The frustrated landlord eventually sent his own son to collect the rent, only to have him murdered in the foolish belief that without another heir, they would get the land. What could they have been thinking?

Jesus's point is obvious, he is more than a servant, more than just a messenger, he is the Son of the owner, with all the authority that comes with that compared with a servant. Moreover, given the responses of the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders, he was claiming to be the Son of God. The old testament often used the vineyard as a metaphor for Israel, as in our reading from Isaiah today. The landowner in Jesus's parable is obviously God, and so Jesus's claim to be the Son, the Son of God, is really claiming quite a lot, in fact more than enough to really upset the chief priests.

The second section is the context of Jesus's well known saying: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's". Here Jesus is clearly differentiating spiritual from temporal authority. He has the authority of the Son of God, but chooses not to execute that in the political sphere. More precisely, God can and does work through human politics to achieve his own ends, as Paul tells us in our new testament reading from Romans 13. Authorities are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, he says, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, which he says God has established. We, as Christians, therefore have a responsibility to submit to our political masters, in the same way that public servants submit to their ministers of state, at least whenever this does not conflict with our responsibility to God. This means we pay our taxes, we obey the laws, and in Australia, we vote in elections.

The next section in our gospel this morning talks about marriage in heaven, after we have died and risen to the eternal life that God promises. The Sadducees were a group of Jews of Jesus's day who only believed the first five books of the old testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and didn't believe in resurrection from the dead or life after death as they thought the 5 books didn't mention it. It always helps me to remember the Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection, which was why they were sad you see.

They wanted to push this theological point with Jesus, and so came up with an absurd situation that was very much purely designed to trick Jesus. The old testament has a requirement that if a man dies childless, a brother or a close relative has to marry his widow in order to maintain the family line, and particularly land holdings. This was very important following the Exodus where all the land in Israel was allocated to specific tribes, and was not to be transferred between tribes without messing up the system. We see the policy in practice in the book of Ruth, where Ruth's sons die, and so Boaz, a close relative, had to marry Naomi, her daughter in law in order to maintain the family line.

The Sadducees invent the situation where this happens to a woman seven times, with each brother dying childless, and then the woman dying and ending up in heaven with potentially seven husbands. Now, apart from any obvious suspicions as to how this woman's seven husbands died and perhaps her talents in the kitchen, Jesus tells the Sadducees they don't understand eternal life, as no one will be married there. He also gives a rather technical argument from Exodus where God tells Moses he's the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all who had died by that point. Since he's the God of the living, not the dead, they must have been resurrected and so there must be a resurrection.

In this context, Jesus is saying that he is God of the living, and this cannot be based on incorrect reading of scripture, it cannot be based on a lie. Also, he is looking to his own

resurrection, which is the guarantee of eternal life. If there is no resurrection, then he certainly wouldn't be the God of the living he says he is.

Next, the Pharisees and teachers of the law have their go at trying to trick Jesus. They try it by asking him which commandment in the old testament is most important. I imagine that there was a big theological debate going on about this at the time, with no two scholars agreeing. It was probably a bit like the scientific debates over interpreting quantum theory, where every physicist has a different view from the Copenhagen interpretation to multiverses to probability waves. The theologians of Jesus's day were hamstrung in that the old testament doesn't prioritise the commandments, and since they would only repeat what their bibles said, they couldn't prioritise the commandments with any authority. Jesus, of course inspired the writers of the old testament, and as God, it is His word. So Jesus is not restricted to simply proclaiming God's work, he can authoritatively interpret and prioritise his word, and when he does, the scribes have no answer and are highly impressed.

Jesus also gives a rather technical argument that the expected messiah is not simply a human son of king David, who was also the author of the psalms. Psalm 110 starts with God talking about someone who David calls 'my lord.' It is obvious from the context that it is the promised Messiah that God is talking to as he will be a mighty conquering king, a priest forever, with God at his right hand. However, you don't call your son 'my lord', so Jesus, the Messiah, must be more than merely David's human son.

Jesus rounds this section off by warning the apostles to "Watch out for the teachers of the law, who like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. I know there is an old expression that clothes maketh the man, but Jesus obviously didn't hold with it, or at least not with 'clothes maketh the Messiah.'"

So Jesus is not the sort of Messiah that relies on impressing people with fancy robes or a bunch of lackeys fawning over him at every step, or even seats at the high table at state banquets. As he had been at pains to show us today, he is not just a servant or a messenger, but God the Son. He's not the king of a nation state or a political ruler, but ruler of the spiritual realms, with even authority over the kings and rulers of this world. Thirdly, as God's son, Jesus is the author of scripture, of God's word. Not only is he never in conflict with his word, he alone has the authority to interpret and prioritise his word, not just proclaim it like I do. And finally, his identity, his authority as son of God isn't just fancy clothes and titles. Jesus is the only Son of God, the prince of peace, the Lord of Lord's and the king of kings. As our psalm this morning reminds us

He the LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Is he your Lord too?