

## Cooma Anglican 7 July 2024 - 1st Order APBA

### Welcome

#### Hymn TIS 106 - Now thank we all our God

Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices  
Who wondrous things has done In whom the world rejoices  
Who from our mother's arms Has blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love And still is ours today

O may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us  
With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us  
Lord, keep us in your grace And guide us when perplexed  
And free us from all harm In this world and the next

All praise and thanks to God who reigns in highest heaven,  
to Father and to Son and Spirit now be given:  
the one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore,  
who ever was, is now, and shall be ever more.

### Greeting

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

### Sentence of the Day

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10-11

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

Gracious God of the covenant, in our baptism you called us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom: give us courage as you gave it to the disciples, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance in life; in the name of Jesus our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### The Ministry of the Word

#### Proverbs 6:20-23

<sup>20</sup> My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. <sup>21</sup> Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. <sup>22</sup> When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. <sup>23</sup> For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life,

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

### **Psalm 27:7-14**

<sup>7</sup> Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice!

**Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.**

<sup>8</sup> When You said, "Seek My face,"

**My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."**

<sup>9</sup> Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger;

**You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.**

<sup>10</sup> When my father and my mother forsake me,

**Then the LORD will take care of me.**

<sup>11</sup> Teach me Your way, O LORD,

**And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.**

<sup>12</sup> Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;

**For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.**

<sup>13</sup> I would have lost heart,

**unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.**

<sup>14</sup> Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage,

**And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!**

### **Ephesians 6:10-20**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

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

### **Luke 21:8-19**

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>8</sup> He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. <sup>9</sup> When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. <sup>12</sup> "But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. <sup>13</sup> And so you will bear testimony to me. <sup>14</sup> But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. <sup>15</sup> For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> Everyone will hate you because of me. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> Stand firm, and you will win life.

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

## Sermon Ephesians 6 - Be Strong in the Lord

### 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 569 Jesus, Lover of my soul**

**Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy refuge fly,  
while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;  
hide me, O my Saviour, hide, till the storm of life is past;  
safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last.**

**Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me:  
all my trust on thee is stayed, all my help from thee I bring;  
cover my defenceless head with the shadow of thy wing.**

**Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in thee I find,  
raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is thy name, I am all unrighteousness;  
false and full of sin I am, thou art full of truth and grace.**

**Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;  
let the healing streams abound, make and keep me pure within:  
thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of thee,  
spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity.**

### **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 569 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer**

**Guide me, O thou great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand:  
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore, feed me now and evermore.**

**Open now the crystal fountain whence the living waters flow:  
let the fiery, cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through:  
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield, be thou still my strength and shield.**

**When I tread the verge of Jordan bid my anxious fears subside;  
death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side:  
songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee, I will ever give to thee,**

### **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 you know, I have worked in Naval Engineering for about 30 years. When you are driving a navy ship, there is a mantra of your priorities, your three priorities are, in descending order of priority, to float, to move and then to fight. These priorities are particularly important when you take damage, and this is highly likely when someone is shooting at you, which is of course an occupational hazard for navy ships at war. They are even more important if you are out at sea and far away from repair facilities. The first priority, to float, is fundamental to staying alive at sea, moving to getting away from whoever is shooting at you, and fighting back is a good way to stop whoever is shooting at you.

As we work through Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Paul has been writing about similar priorities. Back in Chapter 4 - 2 weeks ago, he told the Ephesians to live a life worthy of the gospel. Last week in chapter 5, he said to walk in the way of love. In other words, he told us to live - the equivalent of float, and to walk, the equivalent of move, and this week he tells us to be strong in the Lord, strong in order to defend the faith and fight the spiritual battles.

So this week we are focusing on the fight aspect of persevering in Christ.

Verses 1 through 9, which discuss parent and children, masters and slaves, could easily apply to living or walking, but I don't think it is a coincidence that they are in this section which is talking about spiritual warfare. When the passage was read this morning, you would have noticed that Paul gave instructions for the four groups.

Children were told to obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right. The young are protected and defended by their parents, and Paul commands this so that it may go well with them and they may enjoy long life on the earth."

<sup>4</sup> Fathers, and in fact all parents, are told not to exasperate their children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Again, children's strength in spiritual warfare comes from the wisdom of their parents, and it is obvious that exasperating them, driving a wedge between the children and their parent's wisdom, can only weaken them in the spiritual fight.

The third group, Slaves (and in today's society, workers), are to obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. I don't know about your bosses, but I didn't consider that many of my bosses were necessarily worthy of that sort of obedience. I certainly wouldn't compare them with Christ, and I couldn't see why I should give them the same respect and fear I give to Christ. The point, however, that Paul is making is that in the scheme of things, provided your masters are not asking you to do things that are completely immoral or illegal, obedience to them will ultimately put you in a position of greater strength in your spiritual warfare. You don't want to be fighting wars on two fronts, and the greater the rewards you gain from your employment, the greater strength you will have where it really counts, in your war against the spiritual powers and principalities of darkness.

Paul tells those of us who are masters (or employers, supervisors or managers) to treat your slaves (and workers) in the same way, without favouritism, and without threatening, just like God treats us without favouritism or threats. This also ensures the people we work with also have the strength they need for the spiritual battle.

This brings us to the section on the spiritual armour, the armour of God. Unlike modern warfare, first century warfare relied heavily on personal armour. While navy ships may have armour plating, and even that is of limited value against modern missiles, first century soldiers were protected by belts, breastplates, foot protection, shields, helmets and their swords. Paul equates these with the protection we need in our spiritual warfare.

Paul equates the belt buckled around your waist, holding all the armour in place to protect the vital organs with truth. He equates it with the truth of the gospel, with who God is, who Jesus and the Holy Spirit are, and the salvation they have won for us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Truth ensures the greatest possible spiritual protection in battle because it allows every other element to do its job properly.

The next element is the breastplate of righteousness. If truth keeps it in its place, truth protects the heart - the heart that loves, the heart that beats for what is right and true, not for what is convenient or expedient.

You must also be mobile in your spiritual battle. Just as a ship needs to move to get away from danger, or even to position itself in the best place to attack or even to

defend itself, your feet must be protected during spiritual warfare with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. The gospel of peace gives our feet the freedom to fight our spiritual battles from the place of best vantage, firm in the love of God, amongst his people, in God's territory, not the devil's.

In addition to all of these, we are to take up the shield of faith. The evil one attacks us with flaming arrows, multitudes of attacks that seek to penetrate our defences. But what are the attacks of the evil one?

The evil one attacks us with temptations that try to turn us away from Jesus. Sometimes there are temptations to turn away from Jesus because no one believes in religion any more. Sometimes it is to sin because it seems so free, or something that you are missing out on. Sometimes its an intellectual argument - where is your good God when this world is so evil, or even that science has disproved God.

Whatever flaming arrows that afflict you, faith can shield you, faith in Jesus' death and resurrection will help you stand firm until you personally experience the joy of the perfectly restored, sinless world when Jesus returns.

Your head will also need to be protected in this fight. Sometimes all it needs is a little common sense to see through the enemies lies, so see through the deceptions of the devil as he tries to entice you away from God. Your head needs to be protected with the helmet of salvation. We need to keep our heads focussed on the salvation that Jesus' death and resurrection brings us, to protect us from those attacks.

Finally, equipped with all our armour - belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, we can go on the attack. It is often said that attack is the best form of defence, and so we can take up the sword of the Spirit. Just in case you weren't sure, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit isn't just some impersonal force that inspires us in this fight, like the spirit of Nelson might inspire the crew of a modern warship. No, the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is fully God, and God fully fights for us as the sword of the Spirit so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes, not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We need to go on the attack with the sword of the Holy Spirit so that when



the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Finally, this is a very personal fight. The devil wants to drag you away from Jesus to be his own. Of course, he wants the whole church, but he specifically wants every one of you here this morning for his own. He wants me, he wants you, and at the end of the day, the only one that I can defend from him is myself, and you are the only one who can defend yourself. You don't do it on your own, you defend yourself with the Holy Spirit and the support of the Christians around you, but you are ultimately responsible for standing firm in Christ, for persevering until he returns.

It is your personal relationship with Jesus that is at stake, and that is why Paul keeps it personal. You will notice how Paul finishes his letter on this personal note, remembering specific individuals. He reminds the Ephesians of Tychicus, their dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord who he is sending to them, so that they may know how Paul and his colleagues are, and that he may encourage them.

Similarly, each one of us here today has been sent to encourage everyone else here. Please take this opportunity to specifically encourage someone else here this morning in their spiritual battles. Check out the conditions of their spiritual belt, breastplate, feet, shield, helmet of salvation and sword. Encourage them to float, move and fight: to live a life worthy of their calling, to walk in love and to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

And Peace to you brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.