

**SUNDAY 26 January 2025 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am**

## **Introduction**

### **Hymn TIS 225 - My heart and voice I raise**

**My heart and voice I raise, To spread Messiah's praise;  
Messiah's praise let all repeat;  
The universal Lord, By whose almighty word  
Creation rose in form complete.**

**A servant's form he wore, And in his body bore  
Our dreadful curse on Calvary:  
He like a victim stood, And poured his sacred blood,  
To set the guilty captives free.**

**But soon the Victor rose, Triumphant o'er his foes,  
And led the vanquished host in chains:  
He threw their empire down, His foes compelled to own,  
O'er all the great Messiah reigns.**

**With mercy's mildest grace, He governs all our race  
In wisdom, righteousness, and love:  
Who to Messiah fly, Shall find redemption nigh,  
And all his great salvation prove.**

**Hail, Saviour, Prince of peace! Thy kingdom shall increase,  
Till all the world your glory see;  
And righteousness abound, As the great deep profound,  
And fill the earth with purity!**

## **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 of the day**

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 2 Thessalonians 1:11

## **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.'

### **Prayer of the Day**

Bounteous God, we give thanks for the ancient and beautiful land,  
a land of despair and hope,  
a land of wealth and abundant harvests,  
a land of fire, drought and flood

We pray that your Spirit may continue to move in this land and bring forgiveness, reconciliation and an end to all injustice, through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen**

### **The Ministry of the Word**

#### **Isaiah 25:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine— the best of meats and the finest of wines. <sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

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

#### **Psalms 105:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

<sup>2</sup> **Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.**

<sup>3</sup> Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

<sup>4</sup> **Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.**

<sup>5</sup> Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

<sup>6</sup> **you his servants, the descendants of Abraham, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.**

<sup>7</sup> He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

<sup>8</sup> **He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations,**

<sup>9</sup> **the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.**

#### **2 Thessalonians 1:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. <sup>5</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. <sup>6</sup> God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup> and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. <sup>8</sup> He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might <sup>10</sup> on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. <sup>11</sup> With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. <sup>12</sup> We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

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

### **Luke 20:34 (NIV)**

#### **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, <sup>36</sup> and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' <sup>38</sup> He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive." <sup>39</sup> Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" <sup>40</sup> And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

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

### **Sermon - 2 Thessalonians 1 - Worthy of your calling**

#### **Question Time**

#### **Prayers**

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Gracious God, 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.**

## **The 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, confident in God's forgiveness.

**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.**

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.**

## **Greeting of 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 145 - The King of love my Shepherd is**

**The King of love my Shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never  
I nothing lack if I am His, And He is mine forever**

**Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul He leadeth  
And where the verdant pastures grow, With food celestial feedeth**

**Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love He sought me  
And on His shoulder gently laid, And home rejoicing brought me**

**In death's dark vale I fear no ill, With Thee dear Lord beside me  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me**

**Thou spread'st a table in my sight, Thy unction grace bestoweth  
And O what transport of delight from Thy pure chalice floweth**

**And so through all the length of days, Thy goodness faileth never  
Good Shepherd may I sing Thy praise within Thy house forever.**

## The Thanksgiving

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.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you. He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you. He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

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

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

**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 with thanksgiving.

### **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. **Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.**

### **Hymn TIS 454 - Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,**

**Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness  
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name.**

**Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,  
high on his heart he will bear it for you,  
comfort your sorrows, and answer your prayerfulness,  
guiding your steps in the way best for you.**

**Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness  
of the poor wealth you would reckon to own:  
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,  
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.**

**These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,  
he will accept for the name that is dear,  
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,  
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.**

**Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness  
bring, and adore him: the Lord is his name.**

### **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 - 2 Thessalonians 1

This morning I am starting a new sermon series on Paul's Second letter to the church in Thessalonika. You may recall that just after I came to Cooma I preached a series on 1st Thessalonians, back in November 2023. Since then, in the last 14 or so months, I have got to know you, the body of Christ that is Cooma Anglican Church, as Paul got to know more about the church in Thessaloniki between his letters. Like Paul with the church at Thessalonika, and in fact like any pastor with their flock, I ought always to thank God for your growth, brothers and sisters, and in fact, I can honestly say that I do.

Paul thanks God that the Thessalonians' faith is growing more and more, and that the love they all have for one another is increasing. I am sure there has been similar growth in our faith and love across the congregations in this parish. There has been some numerical growth, particularly at St Pauls, but there has also been growth where it really counts, but is harder to accurately assess; growth in faith and love. Before I arrived, Wendy boasted to me that she had never felt as loved and supported in a parish as she felt at Cooma. For me, since I have been here, the faith expressed through your commitment to each other, in our conversations, through your questions asked after sermons, and the love shown in the fellowship we share, including during morning teas after services, are all evidence of the growth in your faith and love.

Paul knew that he had particular cause to boast about the Thessalonian faith. He knew, even though he wasn't with them, that they were persevering even in many persecutions and trials that they were enduring. We can thank God that we do not have to endure much persecution in the same way for our faith in Cooma. Many of us have suffered on a personal level through sickness or personal loss, and in some cases have lost relationships, even in your families and friends, and in some cases employment opportunities because of the importance to you of being members of Christ's body. Nevertheless, it is hard to compare this to the violence, the prejudice and outright persecution that we know the Thessalonians endured in the first century. However, in your trials, and despite your apparent lack of trials, I am pleased to see that you still persevere, like the Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians takes an interesting turn in verse 5, when Paul says that the Thessalonians' perseverance through persecutions is evidence or proof of God's righteous judgment. He is saying that the affliction of the believers through



persecution, is part of God's judgment, and that it is right and just. But how can the persecution of Christians be right and just?

I know it doesn't sit well with many of you, but Paul is saying our persecutions and trials are not only right and just, but they are allowed by God. God lets us suffer persecution so that we will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which we are suffering. Paul is saying that God is so much in control of things that even the hostile and sinful acts of unbelievers in persecuting Christians are part of God's holy and just judgment. Our completely righteous God really governs the acts of sinful people, but he himself does not become sinful. Don't get Paul wrong, the persecution of Christians is sin; but in the wise and sovereign and holy hands of God it becomes the expression and proof of his righteous judgment.

Persecution, when it is an expression of man's unbelief it is sin. At the same time, it can be an expression of God's judgment, and it is righteous.

It is hard for us to grasp. Does God really want his people to be persecuted and suffer? Whether the answer is yes or no, we do know that God does not want anyone to be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of Him and from the glory of his might. As he is a perfectly righteous and just God, this is what must happen to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

God allows us to be persecuted and suffer to show, as Paul says, that we are worthy of his calling. In the last days, those who do not obey God, and Paul is particularly thinking about those who persecute Christians, will face the consequences of their sin, and will receive their judgement.

On the other hand, those who have persevered through the persecution that God has allowed, will have brought to fruition their every desire for goodness and their every deed prompted by faith. Christians who in their faithful desire for righteousness and have persevered the sin they constantly prayed that the world be delivered from, will have their prayers answered, through God's grace.

My prayer for Cooma, as you grow in faith and love, is the same as Paul's prayer for Thessalonika, that God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your

every deed prompted by faith. I do not pray that you will be perfect, that you will never sin, or that you will reach the necessary holiness by your own strength, because I know that that is humanly impossible.

My prayer that your worthiness is realised through faith in Jesus's holiness, a holiness imputed to you through his death and resurrection on your behalf. I do pray that you persevere in your faith through all the trials and temptations that God allows to come your way, and with the strength Jesus gives you through his Holy Spirit.

Like Paul, I pray that you believe my, and Paul's testimony to you, and that faith in it is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. If this is so, then you will be worthy of God's calling, and the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen