

## **Cooma Anglican 2 February 2025 - 1st Order APBA**

### **Welcome**

#### **Hymn TIS 449 - Stand up and bless the Lord,**

**Stand up, and bless the Lord, Ye people of His choice;  
Stand up, and bless the Lord your God with heart, and soul, and voice.**

**Though high above all praise, Above all blessing high,  
Who would not fear His holy Name, And laud and magnify?**

**Oh, for the living flame From His own altar brought,  
To touch our lips, our mind inspire, And wing to heav'n our thought.**

**God is our strength and song, And His salvation ours;  
Then be His love in Christ proclaim'd, with all our ransom'd powers.**

**Stand up, and bless the Lord, The Lord your God adore;  
Stand up, and bless His glorious Name, henceforth for evermore.**

### **Greeting**

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

### **Sentence of the Day**

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter —asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

### **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**

Righteous God, you confound the world's wisdom by giving your blessing to the lowly and pure in heart; give us such a hunger and thirst for justice and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the promise of your kingdom, which has been revealed in 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

### Joel 2:30-32

<sup>30</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

<sup>31</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>32</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

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

### Psalm 20

<sup>1</sup> May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; May the name of the God of Jacob defend you;

<sup>2</sup> **May He send you help from the sanctuary, And strengthen you out of Zion;**

<sup>3</sup> May He remember all your offerings, And accept your burnt sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup> **May He grant you according to your heart's desire, And fulfill all your purpose.**

<sup>5</sup> We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

<sup>6</sup> **Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.**

<sup>7</sup> Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

<sup>8</sup> **They have bowed down and fallen; But we have risen and stand upright.**

<sup>9</sup> **Save, LORD! May the King answer us when we call.**

### 2 Thessalonians 2

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter —asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup> Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup> He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. <sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup> And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. <sup>9</sup> The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, <sup>10</sup> and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. <sup>11</sup> For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie <sup>12</sup> and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

<sup>13</sup> But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>15</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. <sup>16</sup> May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

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

### Mark 13:32-37

#### Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

<sup>32</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. <sup>34</sup> It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. <sup>35</sup> “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. <sup>36</sup> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

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

### Sermon 2 Thessalonians 2 - The truth about when Christ will return

#### 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 254 O changeless Christ forever new**

**O changeless Christ forever new, Who walked our earthly ways  
Still draw our hearts as once you drew the hearts of other days**

**As once you spoke by plain and hill or taught by shore and sea  
So be today our teacher still O Christ of Galilee**

**As wind and storm their Master heard and His command fulfilled  
May troubled hearts receive your word, the tempest-tossed be stilled**

**And as of old to all who prayed, Your healing hand was shown  
So be your touch upon us laid, unseen but not unknown**

**In broken bread in wine outpoured, Your new and living way  
Proclaim to us O risen Lord, O Christ of this our day**

**O changeless Christ till life is past, Your blessing still be given  
Then bring us home to taste at last, the timeless joys of heaven**

### **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.

### **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 609 May the mind of Christ my Saviour,  
May the mind of Christ my Saviour, live in me from day to day,  
By His love and power controlling all I do and say.**

**May the Word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph only through His power.**

**May the peace of God my Father rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing.**

**May the love of Jesus fill me, as the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing, this is victory.**

**May I run the race before me, strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus, as I onward go.**

### **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 2 - The truth about when Christ will return

The world's preoccupation with the proximity of Jesus's return seems to wax and wane. Sometimes world events, like the war in Gaza seem to get the Bible prophecy industry in a frenzy, with everyone with a Facebook account desperately posting why Jesus has to return real soon. At the moment, the industry can't seem to make up its mind about Donald Trump and so is relatively quiet. He doesn't appear to be any of the figures, good or bad, that the Bible associates with the end times, so they don't know what to say. The situation was very different back in the 80s and 90s, where everything had some biblical significance and was pounced upon as evidence that Jesus was just about to return, except for the atheists that were saying that he never would.

In the middle of the first century AD, at least in the region of Thessalonica, there seemed to have been a different focus again. There, the industry was busy saying that Jesus had already returned - and that the Thessalonians had missed him, and presumably missed out on heaven as well. This would obviously upset everyone in that church, everyone who thought they were a Christian. If it were true, it would be no surprise that they were unsettled and alarmed.

Paul however is clear that Jesus will not return until 'the rebellion' occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed. It was obvious to Paul that this hadn't happened when he wrote his letter, just as it is obvious today that Christ has not returned yet, despite Wikipedia listing fifty or so failed prophecies of, and five that haven't failed yet, but probably will this year, in 2028, 2029, 2057 and 2060. Of course, the times might just be right for one of these to be true, but I do know that God hasn't given a special insight to any of those who made these prophecies, and incidentally, none of them make any reference to a rebellion or a man of lawlessness.

So, if these are all lies about the second coming, what is the truth?

Paul had a particular knowledge of the things preceding the second coming that he had previously shared with the Thessalonians, we have no record of it, so like everyone in the years since Paul, we are in the dark.

Paul does tell us some things about this man of lawlessness: He is doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose God and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself

to be God. However, we are likely only to be able to recognise that these are fulfilled after they have happened and subsequently Jesus returns.

We don't know whether some of the prophecies are literal or symbolic. For example, we don't know if the man of lawlessness will set himself in a rebuilt Jewish temple, or in a metaphorical temple, or even if it will be the Jewish temple, or perhaps in some sense a Christian church or church government. It could even be some other symbol of authority, possibly political and possibly (although unlikely) not even directly associated with the Jewish or Christian faiths.

Similarly, we don't know the nature or the extent of the rebellion that Paul mentions - it is likely to be worldwide, but it might just be limited to the church or the Jewish faith. We just don't know from this letter.

Paul also says he had previously told the Thessalonians that this man of lawlessness was already active, but he was restrained somehow. Unfortunately the details that Paul told them aren't in any documents we still have, so we don't know the details. We do know that, directly or otherwise, God is holding the man back, but there may also be some other, human or a political organisation directly restraining him. In any case, Paul is clear that after the lawless one had been fully revealed, Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of Jesus's coming. As terrible as it will be when the lawless one appears, and despite his use of all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve his lie, and all the ways his wickedness deceives those who are perishing, we can be sure that God is ultimately in control, and that there is no doubt that Jesus will prevail.

This reminds me that last week I mentioned that God ultimately allows all the trials and persecutions that Christians experience, and the man of Lawlessness's actions are no exception to this. The only reason that he can do anything is that as I said last week, so that Christians who persevere will be shown as worthy of the calling Jesus had made of us.

And this is the theme of the rest of the chapter, from verse 13 onwards. Paul calls the Thessalonians, as well as us, to stand firm and hold fast to the teachings that Paul and the apostles passed on to us, whether they were passed to us by word of mouth or by letter. The activity of the man of lawlessness may be scary and difficult, but the gospel of God is so much more powerful and so we can persevere.



Paul tells us that despite the persecutions we may suffer, Christians are brothers and sisters of Christ loved by the Lord. God chose us as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called us to this through the gospel, that we might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the truth about when Jesus will return is that as our gospel reading told us, that about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Jesus the Son, but only the Father. Despite the information that Paul had given us about the rebellion occurring and the man of lawlessness being revealed, anyone who tells you they know when Jesus will return does not know their Bible, and is a liar.

The one thing you do need to know about the second coming is that you need to be ready. We need to be on guard and keep watch. Or as Paul tells us, to stand firm with our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encouraging our hearts and strengthening us in every good deed and word. Since we don't know the day or the hour, this does mean that we always have to be ready. As I was told many times while I was in Sunday school, we need to live every moment as if Jesus were in the room watching everything we do and hearing our every thought.

We don't do this because we are afraid that we won't be saved. We do it because we want to please the one who loves us and saved us by his grace, by dying on the cross in our place, taking the punishment we deserve. As Paul reminds us, He gives us eternal encouragement and good hope and we delight in this truth - and we need to persevere in delighting in that truth and hope until Jesus returns - whenever that may be.

Do you persevere in that truth and hope?