

Cooma Anglican Sunday 30 March 2025 HC 2.1 (Sung responses)

Introduction

Hymn – TIS 580 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us, for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing if our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us; all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us, thou didst feel its keenest woe:
lone and dreary, faint and weary, through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending, fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending, pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided, nothing can our peace destroy

The Grace

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 Scripture

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it. Genesis 4:7

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.

The Great Commandments

'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.

[Sung] Lord, Have mercy x3

Christ, have mercy x3

Lord, have mercy x3

The Gloria (sung)

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of God the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the most high,

Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father, Amen

Prayer of the Day

God of Compassion, you are slow to anger, and full of mercy, welcoming sinners who return to you with penitent hearts: receive in your loving embrace all who come home to you, and seat them at your bountiful table, that, with all your children, they may feast with delight on all that satisfies the hungry heart. We ask this in the name of our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Genesis 4:1-16

¹ Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." ² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. ³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it. "

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know, " he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

¹⁰ The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth. "

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." ¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over. " Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

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

Psalms 18:46-50

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!

⁴⁷ **He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me,**

⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me.

⁴⁹ **Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name.**

⁵⁰ **He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever.**

Hebrews 11:4-6

⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

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

Matthew 5:21-26

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. ²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

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

Sermon - Genesis 4 - Cain and Abel

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.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

Response: Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Scripture Sentence

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3.16

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.

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.**

Agnus Dei (sung)

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, Redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

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 684 Love will be our Lenten calling

**Love will be our Lenten calling, love to shake and shatter sin,
waking every closed, cold spirit, stirring new life deep within,
till the quickened heart remembers what our Easter birth can mean.**

**Peace will be our Lenten living as we turn for home again,
longing for the words of pardon, stripping off old grief and pain,**

till we stand, restored and joyful, with the Church on Easter day.
Truth will be our Lenten learning: hear the Crucified One call!
Shadowed by the Saviour's passion, images and idols fall,
and, in Easter's holy splendour, God alone is all in all.

Thanksgiving for 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 for ever.

The Great 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.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

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:

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

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

[Sung] Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

[Sung] Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

The Holy Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord. Grape juice is available.
Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able, observing appropriate social distancing.

After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen

Notices

Hymn – TIS 132 Holy, holy, holy!

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

**Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.**

**Holy, holy, holy! tho' the darkness hide Thee
Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.**

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

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

Sermon - Genesis 4 - Cain and Abel

We are up to chapter 4 in Genesis this week. We had a bit of a break last week because Bp Mark thought that preaching about someone killing their brother might be a difficult topic for the Christ Church anniversary service, so we had Psalm 118 instead. That leaves me to preach about fratricide today, the Sunday of our parish AGM. Obviously I didn't plan it this way.

Anyway, if you have ever started to read your Bible from cover to cover, Genesis 4 is usually the last chapter you get to before it gets hard. Everyone knows the stories of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, most people have some recollection of Cain and Abel, but chapter 5 seems to be a long list of names. Please don't let that turn you off coming next week, it is vitally important.

But as I said, this week it's Cain and Abel, and I'm sure you've heard the story. After Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden of Eden they had two sons, Cain and then Abel. Cain worked the soil and Abel kept flocks. They both made offerings of their produce to God, and God was pleased with Abel, but not with his elder brother Cain.

When you read the chapter, it's not immediately obvious why this is so, but before we get to that, there are a couple of other things we should notice. Firstly, Genesis doesn't mention that God ever commanded the brothers to make a thanks offering, and nor were they given any direction regarding any directions of the offering, so you might think it is no wonder that Cain felt a little annoyed.

How did Cain get it so wrong? Cain brought some of the cross of the soil, but Abel brought fat portions from some of the first-born of his flock. This certainly suggests that Abel was at pains to give God the best - fat portions of the first born, and Cain made no similar effort - just 'some' of his produce. Another explanation is given in our New Testament reading this morning/. Hebrews tells us "By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. He gave a better offering', the best his labours had produced because of his faith. Every farmer knows that the first of your produce (either plant or animal) is not necessarily the best - but they also know that the first may be the only crop they harvest that year - the weather may change, fires, flood, locusts or disease may come and there may be no more that year. Giving the first fruits to God really takes faith in those circumstances. Similarly, giving the best, the fat portions, not only means you don't get to enjoy them yourself, it prevents you from realising the greatest profits when you go to market. Giving your best to God means really having faith that God will continue to provide.

Consequently, Cain's inferior, faithfully offerings were not looked on with favour by God, and Cain was very angry.

Other people, you or I perhaps, might learn a lesson from this to do the right thing next time, but not Cain. Cain was the elder brother and expected himself to be better than his pesky little brother. He wanted to make sure he was never shown up by him again. But he didn't do this by making sure he put the extra effort in in the future. He got rid of his brother completely. Jesus probably had him in mind in our gospel reading from the Sermon on the Mount - he was angry with his brother, and this led to him leading Abel out into the field where he murdered him, and hopelessly tried to deny all knowledge of this to God.

Here we see sin making its way into the world. What started out as greedily grasping at the tree of life, quickly transmutes into the sin of murder, directly taking a life, even a brother's life to avoid having to face up to your own shortcomings, your own sin.

And just as sin permeates the world, so do the consequences of sin. Cain is put under a curse and driven from the ground which swallowed up his brother's blood.¹² When Cain works the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for him. He will be a restless wanderer on the earth. " Cain was condemned to a nomadic existence, never able to settle down, always on the move to find sustenance where he could. God's continuing judgement is real - not only did Cain not enjoy God's pleasure for his half hearted offering, he was banished from the good land he had grown up in to wander the earth. The consequences of sin are not pleasant, and Cain learnt this.

But Cain also learnt God's grace. When he felt that the punishment he was to suffer was too much for him to bear, God showed his grace. God said anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over. " Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

Thus we see the pattern of human life in the world after the fall: Humankind rebels against God, disobeying God explicit commandments, having no faith in the good creator who provides for and sustains all his creation, not giving him the honour and respect due to the almighty, and suffering the consequences. Not only is mankind put out God's perfect creation, they now have suffer hardship, sickness and even death. They also have to suffer the sinfulness of each other: breakdown in relationships, lies, theft, envy and even injury and murder. This sin and its consequences continued within humankind through the ages, from Adam, eight generations down to Lamech and his sons Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain, the parents of livestock farmers, musicians and metal workers. Lamech even compounded the sin of Cain, killing a young man for wounding him.

Yet, while sin and its consequences abound through the generations, so does God mercy. God granted Adam and Eve another son, Seth, and God gave Cain a mark so that no one who found him would kill him as he justly deserved for the murder of his brother. Seven generations later, Lamech was also protected after murdering the man who injured him, protected with the threat of a seventy seven fold revenge.

Even to today we see these three elements continually repeated: sin, judgement and God's mercy. But it cannot last forever as some realised in our reading this morning. Some knew that mankind was not able to fix what sin had destroyed, and so called on the name of the Lord. Mankind was starting to come to their senses and turn to the only possible solution: to call out to God. Despite this, as we will see in the coming weeks, sin still abounded throughout humankind, as it wasn't yet time for the fullness of God's mercy to be demonstrated.

God's full mercy in defeating sin and restoring the world would only be fully demonstrated when some of Adam's descendants would murder their brother Jew. Except this brother was completely sinless, because he was God the son incarnate, and sinless in every way. He died as the just judgement for all the sin in the world since Adam. God had promised a seven fold revenge for murdering Cain, and a seventy seven fold revenge for murdering Lamech, but through his own son Jesus's death, he gave the infinite forgiveness for the sins of the whole world.

It was truly right that people began to call on the name of the Lord. From the generations from Seth onwards they would have to start to hear what the response would be without seeing it fully. They would hear through God revealing himself to the patriarchs and the prophets, they would hear through the model of salvation given in the Old Testament laws and temple worship, but they would only truly hear when Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world. In him, the sin that entered the world in Adam and Eve and was propagated when Cain murdered his brother Abel, and has been present in every human heart (barring Jesus) since then, including us, was truly defeated. Sin, or Satan, while defeated still lurks around us trying to entice us, but it has in fact been truly defeated. It is only waiting for Jesus's return to be entirely banished from creation and for creation to be restored to the perfection it was originally made.

In the midst of all the sin still lurking around us, are you calling on the name of the Lord, who through the death of his son on the cross is our only true hope - nay, our absolute certainty of salvation?

Do you call on the name of the Lord?
Amen