

SUNDAY 27 April 2025 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

Hymn - O Valiant Hearts

**O valiant hearts who to your glory came
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame
Tranquil you lie your knightly virtue proved
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved**

**Proudly you gathered rank on rank to war
As who had heard God's message from afar
All you had hoped for all you had you gave
To save mankind yourself you scorned to save**

**Splendid you passed the great surrender made
Into the light that never more shall fade
Deep your contentment in that blest abode
Who wait the last clear trumpet-call of God**

**Long years ago as earth lay dark and still
Rose a loud cry upon a lonely hill
While in the frailty of our human clay
Christ our Redeemer passed the self-same way**

**Still stands His cross from that dread hour to this
Like some bright star above the dark abyss
Still through the veil the Victor's pitying eyes
Look down to bless our lesser Calvaries**

**These were His servants in His steps they trod
Following through death the martyred Son of God
Victor He rose victorious too shall rise
They who have drunk His cup of sacrifice**

**O risen Lord O shepherd of our dead
Whose cross has bought them and whose staff has led
In glorious hope their proud and sorrowing land
Commits her children to Thy gracious hand**

Greeting

**Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

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

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

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

God of Love and Liberty, we bring out thanks for the peace and security we enjoy. We remember those who in time of war served their country. We pray for their families, and for ourselves whose freedom was won at such a cost. Make us a people zealous for peace and hasten the day when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither learn war any more. This, we pray in the name of the one who gave his life for the sake of the world, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Leviticus 4:32-35

³² "If someone brings a lamb as their sin offering, they are to bring a female without defect.

³³ They are to lay their hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. ³⁴ Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵ They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.

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

Psalms: Isaiah 40:1-5

1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed,

that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

3 A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Acts 11:11-18

11 “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?” 18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

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

John 1:19-34

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

19 Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” 21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” 22 Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” 24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” 26 “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

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

Sermon - John 1:18-34 - The Voice crying in the Wilderness

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father, 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.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: God of Peace, 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.

Prayer of Preparation

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.**

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 - Abide with me

**Abide with me; fast falls the eventide:
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.**

**Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,
change and decay in all around I see:
O thou who changest not, abide with me.**

**I need thy presence every passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.**

**I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.**

**Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.**

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 - O God Our Help in Ages Past

**O God our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come
Our shelter from the stormy blast
And our eternal home**

**Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure
Sufficient is your arm alone
And our defense is sure**

**Before the hills in order stood
Or earth received her frame**

From everlasting you are God
To endless years the same

A thousand ages in your sight
Are like an evening gone
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun

Time like an ever rolling stream
Bears all of us away
We fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day

Our God our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come
remain our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home

Notices

The Ode

The shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
we will remember them

We will remember them

Lest we forget

Let we forget

Dismissal

Go out into the world in peace. Be brave, keep hold of what is good.
Never pay back wrong for wrong; encourage the faint hearted;
support the weak and distressed; give due honour to everyone,
Be always joyful and give thanks whatever happens.
For this is what God wills for you. **Amen**

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

Sermon - John 1:18-34 - A Voice crying in the wilderness.

At this time as we remember Anzac Day, we remember our forebears who were so committed to freedom, to their country, their families and their fellow citizens that they were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice. Do any of you have forebears who fought in wars? Any who never came back? It is so important that we remember them, lest we forget.

This morning we are continuing to work our way through the gospel according to John. We actually looked at the first 18 verses of John 1 some time ago, which is why we are staying at verse 19 today. Moving on with John's gospel, this morning John the evangelist (who wrote the gospel under the inspiration of God) is writing about John the Baptist. Last week I mentioned that there are lots of Mary's in the Bible, well there are nearly as many John's, so it is important not to get them mixed up. For today, just remember that the apostle who wrote the gospel of John is definitely different to John the Baptist, the main topic of today's sermon.

Today I want to look at two things: firstly, what do we know of John the Baptist, and secondly, what was his message?

John the Baptist

Firstly, what do we know of John?

When we started looking at John's gospel some months back, we read: John 1:6-8 *There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*

Today, John backs this up in his response to the priests and Levites who had been sent by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to ask him who he was. He was quite clear that he wasn't the expected Messiah, and also that he wasn't Elijah or the prophet. The Old Testament had foretold all three of these would come before the last days. With respect to the Messiah, not only is John not the

Messiah, he is clear that the coming Messiah will so outshine him that he won't even be worthy of untying the Messiah's sandals.

While John knew this about the Messiah, he also quite clearly did not know Jesus - he explicitly says this twice, in verses 31 and 33. Yet, despite this, John said "the one who sent me to baptize with water told me about Jesus, that I would see the Spirit come down and remain on him". So, God had spoken directly to John, telling him to baptize people in order to make straight the way of the Lord. He was quoting Isaiah the prophet, the reading we read as our psalm this morning, in which God is saying that he is *3 A voice of one calling In the wilderness.*

John was committed to proclaiming his message. His father, Zechariah had prophesied when he was born that *"you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High"* and he was committed to being that prophet.

John the Baptist's message

I now want to look at John's message. John summarises his message by saying that *"I testify that this (that is, Jesus) is God's Chosen One."* Putting it another way, John said the reason *he came baptizing with water was that Jesus might be revealed to Israel.*

John's job was to prepare the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance - that is, to turn away from their sins, and to signify this turning with water baptism - a washing away of sins. Not surprisingly, this was not a very popular message - people did not like to be reminded that they had sins that needed to be washed away. Nevertheless, this was a message that John was committed to proclaiming.

When John saw Jesus he proclaimed, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Calling Jesus the Lamb of God is quite meaningful. When he called Jesus the Lamb of God, he was alluding to Old Testament temple worship in which lambs were sacrificed as sin offerings. Leviticus chapter 4 says that you could bring a lamb as a sin offering and the priest would burn it on the altar. In this way the priest will make atonement for the sin you have committed, and you will be forgiven. Leviticus 4:32-35

John also said that Jesus was the one he meant when he said, I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

John may have assumed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would take away the sins of the world, and this of course is absolutely true. Jesus does take away the sins of the world by baptising with the Holy Spirit, but this is not the whole story. If this were all that needed to happen, this would certainly show God's grace, but it would not meet God's righteousness and truth. The price for the sins of the world has to be paid, and this requires a perfect sacrifice, not just a lamb, but the perfectly sinless lamb of God, Jesus, the son of God.

When John began his ministry preparing the world for Jesus, preaching that Jesus would take away the sins of the world, he may not have understood that Jesus would die for our sins, and he may not have understood that he himself would also brutally die for his preaching. However, we know John was mindlessly executed, and just for insisting that Herod marrying his brother's wife Herodias was immoral.

This ANZAC Day, as we remember those who were prepared to die for our freedom, for their families and their country, let us reflect on John the Baptist, who died for a far more important cause - for proclaiming that sin matters, and that Jesus, the Son of God, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

In dying, Jesus brings us far more than any of the wars through history. He brings us perfect freedom, eternal citizenship of the kingdom of God, and membership of God's family - brothers and sisters of Jesus. This was the message John proclaimed and died for, and despite the importance of what our forebears fought and died for, this is the ultimate message, the ultimate hope, graciously and righteously given by God the Father, through the death of his Son Jesus, and which we receive through the baptism of God the Holy Spirit.

This is what we need to remember on ANZAC Day, as well as every other day of the year.

Will you remember this?