

SUNDAY 25 May 2025 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

Hymn - TIS 411 - Filled with the Spirit's power

Filled with the Spirit's power with one accord

The infant church confessed its risen Lord

O Holy Spirit in the church today

Again Your power of fellowship display

Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire

That unity may be our great desire

Give joy and peace give faith to hear your call

And readiness in each to work for all

Widen our love good Spirit to embrace

The people of all lands and every race

Like wind and fire with life among us move

Till we are known as Christ's and Christians prove.

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 friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. John 3:29

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

Grant O Lord, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your church may serve you in all Godly quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Malachi 2:17-3:5

¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words.

“How have we wearied him?” you ask.

By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?”

¹ “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

⁵ “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

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

Psalms 98

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

² **The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.**

³ He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

⁴ **Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;**

⁵ make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,

⁶ **with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn — shout for joy before the LORD, the King.**

⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

⁸ **Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;**

⁹ **let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.**

1 John 1:1-7

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched —this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and

heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

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

John 3:22-36

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

²² After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. ²³ Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. ²⁴ (This was before John was put in prison.) ²⁵ An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶ They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷ To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰ He must become greater; I must become less."

³¹ The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³ Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

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

Sermon - John 3:22-36 - Complete Joy

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 - TIS 406 - Spirit divine, attend our prayers

**Spirit divine, attend our prayers,
And make this house thy home;
Descend with all thy gracious powers
O come, great Spirit, come!**

**Come as the light! to us reveal
Our emptiness and woe;
And lead us in those paths of life
Where all the righteous go.**

Come as the fire! and purge our hearts
Like sacrificial flame;
Let our whole soul an offering be
To our Redeemer's name.

Come as the dew! and sweetly bless
This consecrated hour;
May barrenness rejoice to own
Thy fertilizing power.

Come as the dove! and spread thy wings,
The wings of peaceful love;
And let thy church on earth become
Blest as the church above.

Come as the wind, with rushing sound
And Pentecostal grace!
That all of woman born may see
The glory of thy face.

Spirit divine! attend our prayers,
Make a lost world thy home;
Descend with all thy gracious powers,
O come, great Spirit, come!

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 409 - O breath of life, come sweeping through us

**O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.**

**O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore: for this we plead.**

**O breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.**

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
equip your church to spread the light.

Notices

Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the love of God, and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always **Amen**

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

Sermon John 3:22-36 - What brings you joy?

We all have different needs: physiological needs(food, drink, shelter), safety needs, social needs, esteem or status needs (what other people think of us) and what are known as self-actualization. Of these, according to a fellow called Abraham Maslov, self actualisation, or achieving personal meaning, self-expression, and purpose, is the highest need, the one we strive to meet, that motivates us, when all our more basic needs are met. Meeting these needs can also bring us joy - having a fine meal, a comfortable home, living in safe relationships, good friends, being recognised for our contributions and so on. John the Baptist, in our reading today, said that his joy was complete, and we see the fulfillment of these needs at play in his joy, and we will see, can bring us complete joy as well.

So, today I want to look at John's joy in the framework of Maslov's needs: physiological, safety, social, status and self actualisation. These may not be the best categories to examine John's joy, but I think that they can help us look at this passage and see how it can apply to us.

1. Physiological

Our physiological needs include food, drink, clothing and shelter. Matthew and Mark both tell us that John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. I guess these met this need after a fashion, but I also don't think they gave him a great deal of joy.

2. Safety

Our safety needs include feeling safe from physical and psychological danger. John was probably reasonably confident of his safety at the time of our reading, but we know this was to change. After criticising Herod for marrying his sister in law, Herod had John imprisoned, and eventually Herod's wife arranged to have him executed. Leading up to this, it didn't seem that safety was a big motivator for John - he kept criticising Herod even after he was imprisoned despite the danger to his life. On this basis, his own personal safety was also probably not a big contributor to his joy.

3. Social

There was more joy to be found in John's social situation at the time. He was preparing the way for Jesus and people were coming to him, they were hearing his message and were being baptized by him. He had loving parents, although they were very old when he was born, so probably weren't still alive. They were highly respected in the temple and in the community, and this no doubt contributed to John's fulfillment and joy. He also had his disciples, although he had, very amicably, lost two of his disciples who had left him to become disciples of Jesus, but since they did this at John's prompting, still held him in great esteem.

4. Status

This was the fourth element contributing to John's joy: status, or the esteem in which he was held. He had his followers who held him in esteem, and of status and importance. Not the least, he was achieving his mission God had set for him before he was born, when the angel said to his father: "He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

So, not only was John held in high esteem by people - his disciples, his followers, and even Herod, who liked to listen to him, John was held in high esteem by God - He was chosen by God to bring Israel back to their God. Jesus even esteemed John, saying that among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist. This is certainly high praise - and from the Lord of the Universe. There is every reason that the esteem that John was held in by people and by God would indeed bring him joy. Yet, just as Maslov did not see esteem as the highest motivator, nor was it likely to bring John the greatest joy.

John's greatest joy.

Before we get to Maslov's highest need, we should see that despite the joy that John derived from his social circumstances, the esteem he was

held by God and many, and possibly even from itchy camel skin and tasty locusts, these were not the things that gave John the most joy.

John was filled with the Holy Spirit, and had been since before he was born. He was the one who was proclaiming the coming of the law, proclaiming the need to repent, and despite being out in the wilderness, he was the one people were flocking to repent and to be baptized. John was the one prophesied in Malachi, our OT reading, who would prepare the way for God.

Despite this, another had turned up and had set himself up in apparent competition with John by baptizing. When John was told that Jesus was cutting in on John's gig, John replied with genuine modesty: "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven." John realised he is only the friend of the bridegroom, He attends the bridegroom, he listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. John is the one whom God has sent and who speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. But still, John is not the main player, John does not marry the bride.

Jesus Christ is the main player. He's the Messiah, the bridegroom, whose bride is the church. Jesus is the one who comes from above is above all. God the Father loves Jesus the Son and has placed everything in his hands. So, John must become less so Jesus greater.

Maslov's highest need, his greatest motivator. is self actualisation. He described this as the complete realization of one's potential as manifest in peak experiences which involve the full development of one's abilities and appreciation for life (Maslow, 1962). But this is not John's greatest motivator. Maslov's self actualisation is all about self - your potential, your peak experiences, your abilities and your appreciation for life. That is not what John is all about: his potential, his experiences, his abilities and indeed, his life are his only because he has been given them from heaven.

John's greatest joy is Jesus Christ, and in proclaiming him. As John the evangelist wrote in our New Testament reading from his first letter, he

and his readers' fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and that he wrote that to make his joy complete.

Proclaiming Jesus was John's greatest joy, and should be ours as well. No matter what Maslov said about our physiological, safety, social, status and self-actualization needs, and despite the fact that fulfilment of the these needs can bring joy, perfect joy can only be found in Jesus Christ. John the gospel writer tells us that "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them." This is the perfect joy that motivated John the Baptist, and the only perfect joy that should motivate us.

What gives you complete joy?