

## SUNDAY 22 March 2026 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am - HC 2.5

### 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

### 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

I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Philippians 4:18

### 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 Two 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.

## Prayer of the Day (Collect)

Almighty and everlasting God, of your tender love towards us you sent your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death on the cross, that we may be united with him and all the faithful and one day enter with all the faithful may enter with triumph the city not made with human hands; the new Jerusalem, eternal in the heavens, where with you and the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in glory forever. **Amen**

## The Ministry of the Word

### Leviticus 7:11-15

<sup>11</sup> ““These are the regulations for the fellowship offering anyone may present to the LORD:

<sup>12</sup> ““If they offer it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering they are to offer thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in, thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with oil, and thick loaves of the finest flour well-kneaded and with oil mixed in. <sup>13</sup> Along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving they are to present an offering with thick loaves of bread made with yeast.

<sup>14</sup> They are to bring one of each kind as an offering, a contribution to the LORD; it belongs to the priest who splashes the blood of the fellowship offering against the altar.

<sup>15</sup> The meat of their fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; they must leave none of it till morning.

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

### Psalms 68:1-10

<sup>1</sup> May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him.

<sup>2</sup> **May you blow them away like smoke—as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God.**

<sup>3</sup> But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

<sup>4</sup> **Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.**

<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

<sup>6</sup> **God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.**

<sup>7</sup> When you, God, went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

<sup>8</sup> **the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel.**

<sup>9</sup> You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance.

<sup>10</sup> **Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor.**

### Philippians 4:10-23

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. <sup>17</sup> Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>21</sup> Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. <sup>22</sup> All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

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

## **The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, chapter 6 beginning verse 19**

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

<sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

<sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. This is the gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Sermon - Supporting the Gospel - Philippians 4:10-23**

### **The Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic**

**church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **Intercessions**

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.**

We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:2-3

### **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**

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together:

**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 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.

### **Prayer for Offertory**

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 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.

*The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.*

### **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 132 - Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!**

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!

### **Notices**

#### **Dismissal**

May God meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus, 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 - Supporting the Gospel - Philippians 4:10-23

As you look out on the church today, do you ever worry that God is failing? As you see the divisions, even the divisions within the Anglican church, but also between different denominations; as you see the church being actively opposed in governments that try, amongst other things to ban Christian education in schools, as you see the increase of rival philosophies, such as atheism, Islamism, individualism and humanism, and as you consider your poor contributions to the gospel, your meagre giving and your feeble evangelistic efforts, do you wonder if God has had his time and that the church is doomed?

It appears that the Philippians, who lived in one of the more impoverished cities in the first century, were concerned that their inability to give as much to Paul's work of the gospel might imperil it and impede God's work. They were not concerned about their own poverty or their own virtue, they were worried the gospel might fail because they couldn't financially support it enough. Paul reminds them of what Jesus has done for them, effectively asking do you think that the God who raised Christ from death for the church will let it fail?

We know that Paul has been going through a lot, including being in jail. But he rejoices that the Philippians can once again show their concern for him. This might seem to be a strange thing to rejoice about. In today's Australian society it is a point of pride to not have people be concerned about you. We show this is the way Australians greet each other - after all, what is the stereotypical greeting and response?

"Ow are you going?" "Good" or at least "Not bad". The problem is that that is the standard response even if you have stage 5 cancer, you've just lost your job, don't know where your next meal is coming from, your car has broken down and your kids and grandchildren have stopped talking to you. Nevertheless, you meet someone in the street, and it is exactly the same greeting and response "Ow are you going?" "Good"

We don't want people to be concerned about us, and we don't want to be a burden, and to some extent, Paul feels the same way, but he doesn't want to lie. In this letter he has freely admitted that he is in jail, and his readers would have had a very good idea of how hard that would have been for Paul. Back in Chapter 1 Paul has suggested that the end of his earthly life might be near, and he hasn't minced words about this, even though he expects that God has more work for him to do, so doesn't expect it to be just yet.

So Paul doesn't hide his troubles, but he rejoices in the Lord that the Philippians have revived their concern for him. The word that is translated as 'concern' could simply mean that he was 'in their thoughts and prayers', as we might say in a pious way when we aren't really providing any practical or other support, but the Philippians were obviously doing much more than this.

Because said there had been a period where they haven't been able to show their concern for him, it was obviously much more than thoughts and prayers, as valuable as these are, and we will get on to the nature of the support the gave Paul shortly, but first I want to highlight how Paul resolves the tension he has

between not overly concerning the Philippians and telling the truth. As I said, Paul doesn't do this by hiding his troubles or pretending that they don't exist. He does it by giving the bigger picture - and the answer is 'contentment in the one who gives him strength'.

Paul says he has learned to be content whatever the circumstances. He knows what it is to be in need, and he knows what it is to have plenty. He has learnt the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. He can do all this through him who gives him strength. Paul was going through all the troubles we all face and more, but his difference with so many in the world is that he is confident that God gives him the strength to endure the hardships and continue growing God's kingdom, whatever his earthly circumstances, God is strengthening him in jail, and as he prayed for the Philippians back in verse 7, guarding his heart and mind in Christ Jesus - ensuring he stands firm in Christ to the end, whenever, and however, that may come about for him.

The big picture is that God has strengthened him to continue all the things that are important to him - to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and growing God's kingdom, and provided he can continue doing that, Paul is content in all the circumstances he is in.

So, in a very real sense, Paul does not need the Philippians' concern, nor their support, but boy is he grateful, boy does he rejoice that they do, and they can, but the fact that they can do so once again after a period when it was impossible again gives Paul even more reason to rejoice.

Getting back to how the Philippians showed their concern for Paul, which Paul hints about in verses 14-20.

Paul described their support as sharing in his troubles. For most Philippians, that did not mean actually being with Paul in jail, although Epaphroditus probably visited Paul in jail, when he brought physical or monetary gifts from the Philippians. Back in Chapter 2 we read that Epaphroditus didn't just bring gifts to Paul, he calls him his brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also their messenger, whom they sent to take care of his needs. Through Epaphroditus, the Philippians were vicariously sharing in Paul's troubles - in his experience with Paul, he not only provided gifts, he also shared in the work Paul was doing, contending for the gospel alongside Paul, and supporting Paul in all his needs - presumably food, drink, medical care and even emotional support - praying with him, sharing in worship and protecting him from harm. But Epaphroditus would also bring news of Paul back to the Philippians, that they might pray for him and his needs knowledgably, that they might be encouraged that he was still alive and faithful, that the gospel continued to go out despite the troubles, that they might be able to pray for the new Christians that were putting their faith in Christ through Paul's work.

Through Epaphroditus's messages, the Philippians could share in Paul's troubles. But they also financially support Paul. In the early days of the Philippian church, when Paul set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with Paul in the

matter of giving and receiving, except only the Philippians. We know that Philippi was a financially poor region, so Paul mentioning this would have been a great encouragement, particularly as their poverty would have been seen as a sign in Roman culture they were not faithful to God. He even reminds them that when he was in Thessalonica, they sent him aid more than once when he was in need.

Paul says that it wasn't that he desired their gifts - or possibly that he didn't seek them, but what he really wanted was that more be credited to their account. This obviously isn't a bank account, but more likely similar to what Paul was talking about in 1 Corinthians. There he says that he didn't accept support from the Corinthians, but preached voluntarily, that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, so that by all possible means I might save some. He does all that for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings - that some would be saved. There is also a real blessing for the Philippians that some be saved through the preaching of the gospel, when they themselves preach, and when others, like Paul, faithfully preach the gospel, with the financial and other support of the Philippians. This is that account that Paul wants to see credited, not his own financial security. As he says further down, their gifts are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. As with all sacrifices, the blessing is in the giving, not in any material consequence that might flow out from them.

Paul says this because he knows that he has received full payment and has more than enough. He says he is amply supplied - perhaps even more than amply supplied, now that he has received from Epaphroditus the gifts they sent. And so he prays "my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus, to the glory of our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

This teaches us what our own giving to the church should be like. God (through Paul) is calling us to share in the troubles associated with sharing the gospel and growing his kingdom, even though the gospel will not fail if we don't. God's people who share in the work of the gospel, like Paul, sometimes know need, and sometimes know plenty, but share in the gospel in for its own sake, that people might be saved. There had been circumstances where the Philippians had not been able to support Paul's ministry, and Paul does not criticise them in any way because of this. He knows that the gospel will not fail because the Philippians have not been able to support him as much as they think they should. In fact, he rejoices greatly that they do share. Their gifts are a fragrant thanksgiving offering, an acceptable sacrifice to God, to the glory of our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Their gifts, and ours are Thanksgiving sacrifices that our Old Testament reading spoke about.

Finally Paul calls on the Philippians to extend that fellowship by greeting all of God's people, as all of God's people greet them. This is not exactly a thanksgiving offering in the way that Paul has spoken about sharing in the gospel, but it is the appropriate response to being God's family, the church.

The church, the assembly of God's people, is a family - brothers and sisters in Christ. We should love each other, and to love each other, we should know each other - know each other enough to greet each other whenever we see each other, like the Philippians, know each other enough to pray intelligently for each others' need and troubles, and be able to share in each others' lives as we work for God's kingdom together.

Since I have been at Cooma Anglican, in addition to prayer, I have sought, in God's strength to support all of us to share in this fellowship, in knowing each other enough to greet each other by reinstating name tag so that we can know each other's names, and visitors can get to know our names. I regularly thank God for David Price's ministry in encouraging us to wear our name tags for this reason - we all know and love our brother David, and probably find it cute when he does this in such a gracious way, but I am convinced it is a real ministry, particularly if we are to grow in numbers and it becomes harder to know everyone - or even their names, and so to share in each others' lives, and pray for each other to the glory of God.

This is why I put such a high priority on morning teas after the services, and particularly rejoice when people organise them on weeks I am not here and have to rush off to other services. Morning teas are a great way for God's people here to get to know each other, and to learn from each other how we can share in each others' lives - our struggles, our troubles, but also our passions, our missions, where we are on our faith journeys, what God is teaching us through sermons, Bible study groups and our own personal Bible readings, and opportunities and passions to share the gospel, that others may be saved, to the glory of God the Father, of Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, who lives in us.

In conclusion, there have been two somewhat disparate themes in this passage from Philippians - sharing in the gospel, and greeting our brothers and sisters in Christ, our fellow members of God's family - sharing in fellowship. Both of these are responses to the salvation that Jesus has bought for us through his death and resurrection. God's plan of salvation will not fail if we cannot respond in these ways, but they are appropriate responses, they are good and right. As Christians we should share in the gospel financially and through our other gifts, our knowledge and time and by exercising the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us in proclaim the gospel, inviting our family, friends and neighbours to opportunities where they can hear and respond to the gospel, and greeting and welcoming them when they come, as well as encouraging those who are already Christians by greeting and welcoming them whenever we meet.

Can I encourage you to respond in these ways to the gospel, confident that whatever we do, God will not fail, and his church will ultimately be triumphant, sharing in eternal life with God in the new creation he will restore to its original perfection, with a perfectly restored relationships between God, mankind and his creation.

Amen