

Cooma Anglican 12 July 2026 2nd Order 1st Thanksgiving APBA

Welcome

Hymn - TIS 135 - All things bright and beautiful,

**Chorus All things bright and beautiful,
 all creatures great and small,
 all things wise and wonderful—
 the Lord God made them all.**

**The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call, [Chorus]**

**The cold wind in the winter,
the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden—
he made them everyone.[Chorus]**

**The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum trees green and tall,
the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall,[Chorus]**

**The many-coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert,
on farms, or roaming free,[Chorus]**

**He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty
who has made all things well.[Chorus]**

Greeting

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you. **And also with you**

Sentence of the Day

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich. Genesis 14:22-23

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 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.

'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it:

You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit

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.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ever ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Genesis 14:11-24 (NIV)

¹¹ The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. ¹² They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom. ¹³ A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people. ¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek, king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”

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

Psalm 110 (NIV) Of David. A psalm.

¹ The LORD says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

² **The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!”**

³ Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning’s womb.

⁴ **The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. ”**

⁵ The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

⁶ **He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.**

⁷ **He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high.**

Hebrews 7:1-10 (NIV)

¹ This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” ³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

⁴ Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ⁵ Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people —that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. ⁸ In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹ One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰ because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

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

Mark 12:41–44 (NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

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

Sermon - Whose Debt are you in?

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.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

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.**

The 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 607 - Make me a channel of your peace

Make me a channel of your peace:

**Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your healing power,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

Chorus O, Master, grant that I may never seek
 so much to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace:
where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy. [Chorus]

Make me a channel of your peace:
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life. [Chorus]

Prayer for the 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 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:

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.'

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:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

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

The Communion

After Communion

Gracious God, thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are living members of Christ's body.

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.

Notices

Hymn TIS 687 - God gives us a future

**God gives us a future, daring us to go
into dreams and dangers on a path unknown.**

**We will face tomorrow in the Spirit's power,
we will let God change us, for new life starts now.**

We must leave behind us sins of yesterday,
for God's new beginning is a better way.
Fear and doubt and habit must not hold us back:
God gives hope, and insight, and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us how to read the signs,
how to meet the challenge of our troubled times.
Love us into action, stir us into prayer,
till we choose God's life, and find our future there.

Notices

Dismissal

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

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

Sermon - Whose debt are you in? - Genesis 14

Whose debt are you in? Financially speaking, between household debt and government debt, every man, woman and child in Australia owes an average of \$135k / person. By comparison, in the US it is \$152K/person but it's about \$773k/person in Switzerland. In Brunei, it is about \$5k dollars per person, so ours isn't that great! However, financial indebtedness isn't the only sort of debt, there is also political debt, and intangible debts such as family responsibilities and favours owed to friends.

Today as we continue looking through the book of Genesis, we will be looking at indebtedness, and what that meant for Abraham.

But first a bit of background. In a bit of generosity to our Bible reader this morning, we didn't actually read the first half of chapter 14. There are lots of difficult names including Kedorlaomer and Zeboyim and many others. However, every word in the Bible is significant, so I definitely encourage you to read the whole chapter for yourselves, long names and all! If you are like me, you might need to do it with a pencil and paper to work out who is fighting who, and who is allied to whom to understand what is going on. It is also worthwhile checking if any of the players, or the peoples, turn up elsewhere in the Bible and are significant for other reasons. If you do this, a bit of a spoiler alert: at least Abram, Sodom and Gomorrah show up later, as well as Melchizedek, the king of Salem, whom I will talk about shortly.

Anyway, checking my notes, four kings from the East (led by Kedorlaomer of Elam) had subjugated five local kings of the Jordan Valley (including the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah) for 12 years. The Jordan valley was where Lot lived, nearby to Canaan, where Abram was. In the 13th year, the local kings rebelled. The allied eastern kings marched in, defeating four other regional tribes before engaging the five rebellious kings in the Valley of Siddim. This valley was filled with tar pits, and many of the Sodom and Gomorrah forces fell into them. The invaders plundered the cities and took all the possessions, including peoples, including Abram's nephew Lot.

A major point of this history is that Kedorlaomer and his allied kings made up an impressive force. Not only had the four kings defeated the five kings and subjugated them for a dozen years, before quelling their rebellion, they nonchalantly defeated a four other regional tribes on the way, and they defeated the Jordan valley kings - again. Despite the foolishness of the kings of the Jordan valley losing men falling into tar pits, Kedorlaomer and co were a big deal. His men were highly trained and there would have been plenty of them.

So it wasn't surprising that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled the battle and were roundly plundered, losing all their possessions and many of their people to capture.

What is surprising is that Lot and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were rescued by Abram with a mere 318 servants - not experienced warriors but household servants. It would have been completely unreasonable to expect Abram to defeat the mighty army of Kedorlaomer with his puny band, but he did. In fact Abram would have been crazy to try - it would have been a suicide mission. The only reason that Abram would have even attempted this mission, apart from loyalty to his nephew, was his faith in God most high. That faith was certainly well placed. Abram, with God's help (our more realistically, God with a little help from Abram) not only defeated the kings, he routed them, and pursued them to the north of Damascus, some 700km as the crow flies.

Following this spectacular victory, the king of Sodom (who has just been rescued) fronts Abram and invites him to give him all the people and keep the plundered goods for himself. Sodom is trying to butter up Abram - put him in his debt by offering him all the plunder that had been captured by Kedorlaomer. This might sound magnanimous of the king of Sodom, but the people that he was asking Abram to let him take were slaves and workers, not family members, so at the time, they would have been considered the spoils of war. Certainly, given the risks that Abram took in the rescue, he should have kept the people and the goods. The King of Sodom may have thought that by offering the goods to Abram he would get Abram in his debt, but Abram saw right through this. He told the king of Sodom "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' He wasn't about to let himself get into any kind of debt to anyone short of God, and wasn't about to make anyone think that anyone apart from God made him rich. So Abram refuses, not wanting to be in the debt of any human.

Even though Abram refuses the king of Sodom, you may have noticed I've skipped over someone that Abram did willingly put himself into debt to. This fellow, Melchizedek, has to be one of the more mysterious people in the Bible. He is mentioned in three places: here, in Psalm 110, which we read this morning, and, surprisingly for someone who gets 3 verses in the entire rest of the Bible, he is featured in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the letter to the Hebrews, which we also read part of this morning.

So what do we know about this Melchizedek?

In our Genesis reading this morning, Melchizedek is called "Priest of the High God". He brings bread and wine to Abram, and Abram gives him one tenth of the plunder he got back from Kedorlaomer.

While Melchizedek is a name, it can also be translated as 'king of righteousness'. Genesis calls him the king of Salem which could mean the king of the city of Salem (which became Jerusalem), or since Salem is the same Hebrew word as "Shalom" or peace, he could be the king of peace. Genesis calls him a priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had won back Kederlaomer when he rescued Lot. Abram also describes his God as the God most high, and God, whom we come to know as Yahweh when he reveals that name to Moses, is also described as God Most High throughout the Bible, right into the New Testament.

Because Abram gives an offering of a tenth of what he has gained, we can be confident that Abram knew that Melchizedek was a priest of his God, and since, as I mentioned earlier, God obviously was responsible for Abram defeating Kederlaomer and rescuing his nephew, the tenth, or tithe was a thank offering to his God through his priest. This was a debt that Abram was prepared to take on, and to fulfill through the offering of the tithe.

Furthermore, unlike the king of Sodom, Melchizedek is not feathering his own nest. He didn't demand the tithe. Instead, he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." This further emphasised his relationship with Abrams's God.

I mentored that this wasn't Melchizedek's only mention in the Bible. The other references also emphasise Melchizedek's relationship with God. Psalm 110, a Psalm of David, says The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!" And The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. "

Jesus quoted this psalm to the Pharisees, saying that it is about God telling the messiah 'Sit at my right hand.' Since we know that Jesus is the messiah, God is telling Jesus that he is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, a different priestly system to the Levitical priests he established at the time of Moses.

Hebrews mentions Melchizedek and quotes Psalm 110 to explain how Jesus could be a priest even though he wasn't a Levite. All Hebrews priests had to be descended from Levi, except for Melchizedek. Hebrews says that Jesus was a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was not a Levite, but was accepted by Abram and Genesis as a priest of Yahweh. As a priest of Yahweh, Melchizedek was, at least, a mediator, or intermediary between God and man, appointed to accept offerings for God and make sacrifices to God.

Some theologians believe that Melchizedek's relationship with God was even closer than that, a Christophany or appearance of Christ before he was born of Mary. There are strong arguments both for and against this view, and I don't want to discuss them now, but for the purpose of this sermon, it seems to me that whether Abram was indebted to God through his high priest Melchizedek or through Jesus, he recognised what God had done in rescuing Lot against such overwhelming opposition, and he expressed his thanks and gratitude to God. He offered his tithe to God, which he wasn't prepared to do for any mere human, even the king of Sodom.

So what do we learn from Abram in this?

Well, God had won an incredible victory for Abram, and Abram wasn't about to let any mere human take credit or get the honour from that victory. Similarly, God has won for us an incredible victory against sin and the devil. We cannot be in debt to any mere human for that victory, only to God: to God the Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and rose again, defeating sin in our lives. Our debt of praise must only go to him, just as Abram would only allow his offering to go to God through his priest Melchizedek, and not to the king of Sodom. We certainly can't give ourselves, mere humans that we are, credit, as the defeat of sin was a far greater victory than we could ever hope to win in our own strength, much greater than the incredible victory that Abram's puny force made against the combined might of Kederlaomer and his allies, the greatest force of the known world at the time.

Who do you give credit for the victory over your sin? Whose debt are you in?

Amen