

Sunday 19 July 2026 Cooma Anglican HC 3

Hymn: TIS 225 - My heart and voice I raise

**My heart and voice I raise, To spread Messiah's praise;
Messiah's praise let all repeat; The universal Lord,
By whose almighty word, Creation rose in form complete.**

**A servant's form he wore, And in his body bore
Our dreadful curse on Calvary: He like a victim stood,
And poured his sacred blood, To set the guilty captives free.**

**But soon the Victor rose Triumphant o'er his foes,
And led the vanquished host in chains: He threw their empire down,
His foes compelled to own, O'er all the great Messiah reigns.**

**With mercy's mildest grace, He governs all our race
In wisdom, righteousness, and love: Who to Messiah fly
Shall find redemption nigh, And all his great salvation prove.**

**Hail, Saviour, Prince of peace! Thy kingdom shall increase,
Till all the world your glory see; And righteousness abound,
As the great deep profound, And fill the earth with purity!**

Sentence of Scripture

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6

The Great Commandments

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.

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.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you alone can order our unruly wills and affections: teach us to love what you command, and desire what you promise, that among the changes and chances of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Genesis 15 (NIV)

¹ After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. ”

² But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? ” ³

And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir. ” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars —if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

⁷ He also said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

⁸ But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

⁹ So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon. ”

¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the

LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates — ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

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

Psalms 32 (NIV) Of David. A maskil.

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

² **Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.**

³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.**

⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.**

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ **Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.**

¹¹ **Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!**

Galatians 3:3-9 (NIV)

³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Luke 24:36-47 (NIV)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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

Sermon - Genesis 15 - God's promises

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.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

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

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

Scripture Sentence

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 1 Corinthians 11:26-28

The Confession

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

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us. By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **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 256 - the Servant King

From heav'n You came, helpless babe

Enter'd our world Your glory veil'd

Not to be served but to serve

And give Your life that we might live

Chorus This is our God the Servant King
 He calls us now to follow Him
 To bring our lives as a daily offering
 Of worship to the Servant King

There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load He chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
Yet not my will but Yours He said [Chorus]

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails, Surrendered [Chorus]

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving [Chorus]

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you **And also with you**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your son, our saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to 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, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and his blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

We who are many are one body in Christ, **for we all share in the one bread.**

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 which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.** We do this until he returns.

Come, Lord Jesus!

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and united in the body of your Son. Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise.

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever. Amen

The Holy Communion

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

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 685 - The Power of Your Love

Lord I come to You, Let my heart be changed renewed

Flowing from the grace that I found in You

And Lord I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me

Will be stripped away By the pow'r of Your love

Chorus Hold me close Let Your love surround me
 Bring me near Draw me to Your side
 And as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle
 And I will soar with You, Your Spirit leads me on
 In the pow'r of Your love

Lord unveil my eyes, Let me see You face to face

The knowledge of Your love As You live in me

Lord renew my mind, As Your will unfolds in my life

In living ev'ry day, By the pow'r of Your love [Chorus]

Blessing

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

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Sermon - Genesis 15 - God's Promises

I remember as a kid that promises were sacrosanct. The highest authority you could invoke was "but you promised!" Apparently some politicians didn't go to the same school I did. Many of you will remember John Howard who justified breaking 1996 election promises by declaring that the ones he broke were non core promises and obviously less important and more breakable than the core promises he at least tried to keep.

You may or may not subscribe to the concept of non core promises, but what about God? God certainly makes lots of promises throughout his word, the Bible, but can we be certain he will keep them all? In our reading today, Abram certainly questions whether God would keep his promises to him. You will remember from a few weeks ago in Genesis 12 that God promises Abram Genesis 12:2-3 (NIV) 2 *"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

In our reading today, Abram was about 85 years old and his wife Sarai was 75, and not surprisingly they felt that the hourglass for having any children, let alone becoming a great nation was running out, if it hadn't completely passed them by. In modern times, the oldest woman to give birth was Erramatti Mangayamma who gave birth to twins via Cesarean Section at age 74 following IVF. The oldest woman without IVF was 57. It was not surprising that Abram and Sarai had their doubts about God's promise keeping. Without children, Abram's heir was not related to him at all by blood, his chief steward Eliezer, so it looked unlikely that Abram would have any descendants inherit his fortune, or to become the promised great nation. This would have been particularly galling for Abram, whose name means "exalted father."

So God reminds him of his promise. He tells Abram: *"This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir."* To emphasise this being all reasonable doubt, *God took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars —if indeed you can count them."* Then he said to him, *"So shall your offspring be."* God, the all powerful God who Abram had obeyed to leave his homeland to go to Canaan, and was

verbally speaking to Abram, was assuring Abram that he would keep his promise and do even more. That his offspring would be as uncountable as the stars in the sky was not a non core promise of God, God fully promised to keep it.

Even so, Abram still seems to have some doubts about whether he or his descendants would actually possess the land of Canaan that God had promised. He had already left Canaan once due to a famine, and now, despite the fortune he brought back from Egypt, and living in Canaan, he couldn't really be said to possess the land. Numerous other people groups lived there as well. But back in chapter 13, God told him: *Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.*" Back then he had been promised, but his lack of family at his age was cooling his confidence.

Now, I don't know what would give you confidence in a situation like that, but God had a rather strange response. He tells Abram to cut a bunch of animals in two down the middle and lay them on the ground with a couple of whole birds in a specific pattern. It sounds strange to us, but it seems to be the way covenants were ratified in the day. In the same way a Covenant joined two parties with obligations and implications on each, including protections against interference by other parties, so the rituals joined the two halves of the animals with implications for both halves and protection from interference by outside parties when Abram scared wild birds away. If this ritual was good enough for kings who made covenants with each other, it was certainly good enough for the covenant between God and Abram.

Over and above the covenantal ritual, an important part of God's reassurance of Abram were some more details of how the promise would be fulfilled. God said: *"Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions."*

I don't know how quickly Abram expected God to fulfil his promise, but God was saying it wouldn't happen quickly. The full fulfilment of the promise wouldn't happen until a 400 year slavery and mistreatment in a foreign land. With the advantage of hindsight we know that Abram's descendants couldn't be really said to have possessed the land until they returned from spending 400 years in Egypt plus another four generations.

A key takeaway of this for us is that God works to his own timeline, not ours. 2 Peter 3:8,9 tells us ⁸ *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.* ⁹ *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* 2 Peter 3:8-9

Abram may have wanted to take possession of the land much sooner, but that was not God's plan. He did say Abram will live to a good old age and go to his ancestors in peace before all this happens, and then four generations after his ancestors leave Egypt they would return to Canaan to take possession of it, but not before the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure. The Amorites were one of the tribes that lived in Canaan, and they wouldn't be thrown out until they were so evil they justified God's judgement, their ejection from Canaan by their sin reaching its full measure. God knew advance that this would happen and when, and this total knowledge and sovereignty of God gave Abram the confidence.

God then completed the ritual by a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appearing and passing between the pieces of animals. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, *"To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates — 19 the land, not only of the Amorites, but also of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."*

However, even before the covenantal ritual and the additional reassurances God gave him, and the increased understanding of the timeframes, Genesis tells us that *Abram believed the LORD, and he*

credited it to him as righteousness. He believed God's promises, and this was credited, or imputed to him as righteousness.

The apostle Paul quoted this passage in his letter to the Romans as well as in his letter to Galatians, which we read from this morning. In Galatians we read that *God gives us his Spirit and works miracles among us, not by the works of the law, but by your believing what we hear.* Abram did not receive God's promises because of anything he did, or even because he obeyed God. He actually had quite a mixed record of obeying God. He left his homeland to go to Canaan, but he didn't stay there. He tried to deceive Egypt's Pharaoh, and so on, but fundamentally, it couldn't have been because he obeyed God's law - God hadn't even given the law yet, and wouldn't give it until he gave the commandments to Moses. What Abram did have was faith, faith in God and his promises.

Paul goes on to say that *those who have faith are children of Abraham, that Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham when he promised that "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

This morning I need to ask you if you have this faith. Are you one of the gentiles who are justified by this faith, who are blessed along with Abraham the man of faith, who are as Romans tells us, quoting Psalm 32: 7 *"Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them."*

Do you have this faith in God's promises, the promise of eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection, that, like Abram, is credited to you as righteousness? That is my prayer for you today.

Amen