

SUNDAY 26 July 2026 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

SOF 43 - Bind us together Lord

Chorus Bind us together Lord
 Bind us together with cords that cannot be broken
 Bind us together Lord, Bind us together Lord
 Bind us together with love

There is only one God, There is only one King
There is only one body, That is why we can sing [Chorus]

Made for the glory of God, Purchased by His precious Son
Born with the right to be clean, For Jesus the vict'ry has won [Chorus]

You are the fam'ly of God, You are the promise divine
You are God's chosen desire, You are the glorious new wine [Chorus]

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

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." Genesis 16:13

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

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy, that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Children's Talk - Thanking God

Genesis 16

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me." ⁶ "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." ¹⁰ The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." ¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. ¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." ¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." ¹⁴ That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ So

Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 139:1-18(NIV)

¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

² **You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ **Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.**

⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.**

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ **If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.**

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ **even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.**

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

¹² **even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ **I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ **Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.**

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ **Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand — when I awake, I am still with you.**

Galatians 4:21-31 (NIV)

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was

born as the result of a divine promise. ²⁴ These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: “Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.”

²⁸ Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” ³¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

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

Luke 12:4-7 (NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

⁴ “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. ⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. ⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ⁷ Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

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

Sermon - Sarai and Hagar

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: 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 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

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 644 - Safe in the shadow of the Lord

Safe in the shadow of the Lord, Beneath His hand and power
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, My fortress and my tower

My hope is set on God alone, Though Satan spreads his snare
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, To keep me in His care

From fears and phantoms of the night, From foes about my way
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, By darkness as by day

His holy angels keep my feet, Secure from every stone
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, And unafraid go on

Strong in the Everlasting Name, And in my Father's care
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, Who hears and answers prayer

Safe in the shadow of the Lord, Possessed by love divine
I trust in Him, I trust in Him, And meet His love with mine

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 594 - Lead us, heavenly Father

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

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 28 June 2026 Genesis 16: Seeing and Listening

Did you ever play the game where you whisper a secret message down a line, one person to the next, and see how much it has changed when it gets to the end? They say the message "Send reinforcements we are going to advance" was passed this way by soldiers at war. By the time the message got back to headquarters it was "Send 3 and four pence, we are going to a dance." How often do we really listen carefully?

Today we are looking at four listeners. Our first two don't listen well, at least in this reading. They are Sarai and Abram, whom we have been reading about for the last few weeks. Abram is 85 years old, and God has promised him a big family and a big land, but he seems to seesaw between listening to God and trying to do things his own way. Sarai is his wife, who is 75 years old, and worried she is too old to have children, despite what God has promised.

Sarai and Abram certainly hadn't heard (or perhaps listened) when God promised that they would have a son, because Sarai actually blames God for keeping her from having any children. How could she accuse the God who promised a son of preventing her from having one?

They didn't understand that God could enable an elderly woman who had been barren all her life to conceive and bear a child. God has that power - he created the entire universe, the world and everything in it, including humanity by his power. He brought about a flood to cover the entire earth, saving one family and at least a pair of all the animals, all by his mighty power.

They certainly hadn't listened when God explained to them that he works in his own time as I talked about last week. He promised they would possess the land in his time, not theirs, and he would give them a child in his time, waiting until it could only be seen as a miracle - something only possible by His almighty power.

Sarai and Abram thought they had to help God out, that God couldn't provide a child for them without another mother. But did they really think that Abram having the child with her slave girl was God's plan? God showed the marriage ideal back when Adam and Eve had a lifelong monogamous marriage, and later Genesis 4 implies criticism of Lamech for having two wives. The episode with Sarai and Pharaoh should also have taught him the danger of straying from the ideal which is emphasised throughout the Bible.

But no, Abram and Sarai did not listen, and Sarai arranged for her husband to have a baby with her servant Hagar. Much to his dishonor, Abram agrees. Abram listened to Sarai when he should have listened to God. They didn't listen to God, and they didn't trust God, and their plan was not God's plan. Nevertheless, in his graciousness to Hagar, and also in judgement of Abram and Sarai and their descendants, God allowed Hagar to conceive and give birth to a son, Ishmael.

As well as Abram and Sarai, there is another who was a poor listener in our passage this morning. She is the slave girl Hagar. Don't get me wrong, Hagar was definitely a victim. Even so, she despised Sarai. She gloated in her

pregnancy and kept deliberately reminding Sarai that she wasn't able to have children. It wasn't right for Sarai to mistreat her in response to this contempt, even if Abram did give her the go ahead, and it was not surprising that Hagar ran away.

I need to say that mistreating someone when there is a power imbalance like with Hagar, is never ok. And it wasn't right for Hagar to look on Sarai with contempt or regard her as insignificant because of her infertility, but this didn't justify Sarai mistreating her. They should have listened to each other more carefully.

Also, I definitely wouldn't tell someone in a similar situation to just put up with mistreatment, although God did. If we are helping someone being mistreated, I pray we would carefully listen and try our absolute hardest to find safer options if the person being mistreated agrees. You are not God, so you cannot see the danger of the situation or how it would eventually work out.

Hagar called God El Roi "the God who sees me" God saw everything that was happening and he knew exactly how it would work out. Verse 11 tells us that the Lord heard Hagar's misery and so he acted. He brought Hagar back to Abram, and Abram cared for Hagar and his son Ishmael. He called him Ishmael or 'God Hears' in recognition of the way God listened and provided a son, even though it wasn't the way God intended, and how God heard Hagar in her misery.

We will learn more of Hagar and Ishmael as we work our way through Genesis, but in a sense, Ishmael brought some judgement against Abram's lack of listening to God by being a wild donkey of a man whose hand was against everyone. There would always be strife between Ismael's line and Abram's other descendants. Psalm 83 says they joined the other nations, including Assyria who invaded Israel, besieged Jerusalem and were the progenitors of the Arabic desert peoples who were a continuous thorn in Israel's side, at least partially as a consequence of the poor way that Abram treated Hagar.

So what has God been telling us from the way the birth of Ishmael came about? Unlike Abram and Sarai, and to some degree Hagar, we need to listen carefully to God as he speaks to us through His word, the Bible. God has shown that he is the Almighty God who made this world, who loves his people, and not only makes promises, but is powerful enough to keep those promises, even when they seem impossible to us. He doesn't need our help!

We need to listen to the all powerful God, but also recognise that he is the "Ishmael" the God who hears, and the "El Roi", the God who sees. As as he did with Hagar and Ishmael, he is the God who sees us - who knows each of us and counts the very hairs on our heads, hears us in our misery and values us more than many sparrows. Most of all, he sent his Son to be with us and save us from eternal misery. Do you really listen to this God?

Amen