

Cooma Anglican 9 August 2026 2nd Order 1st Thanksgiving APBA

Welcome

Hymn - SOF 597/TIS 121 - When morning gilds the skies

When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Alike at work and prayer, I know my Lord is there:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

To God, the Word on high, the hosts of angels cry:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Let mortals, too, upraise their voice in hymns of praise:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Let earth's wide circle round in joyful notes resound:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Let air and sea and sky, from depth to height, reply:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, when day is past, of all my thoughts the last,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

The night becomes as day when from the heart we say:

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this while life is mine my song of praise divine,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this the eternal song through all the ages long,

May Jesus Christ be praised!

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

Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." Genesis 18:17-19

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

Grant to us Lord, we beseech you, the spirit to think and do always such things that are right, that we, who cannot do anything that is good without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Ministry of the Word

Genesis 18:20-33 (NIV)

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake. "

²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

³⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?”

He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”

³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?”

He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.”

³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

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

Psalm 37:1-13 (NIV)

¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong;

² **for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.**

³ Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ **Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

⁶ **He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.**

⁷ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ **Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret —it leads only to evil.**

⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

¹⁰ **A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.**

¹¹ But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.

¹² **The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them;**

¹³ **but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming.**

2 Peter 2:4-10 (NIV)

⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was

tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings.

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

Matthew 10:5-15 (NIV)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

⁹ “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts — ¹⁰ no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. ¹² As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

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

Sermon - Genesis 18-19 - The God of Justice and Mercy

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 SOF27/TIS121 - As the deer pants for the water

As the deer pants for the water

So my soul longs after You

You alone are my heart's desire

And I long to worship You

**Chorus You alone are my strength my shield
 To You alone may my spirit yield
 You alone are my heart's desire
 And I long to worship Thee**

I want You more than gold or silver

Only You can satisfy

You alone are the real joy giver

And the apple of my eye [Chorus]

You're my friend and You are my brother

Even though You are a King

I love You more than any other

So much more than anything [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 675 - Lord, the light of your love is shining

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

Chorus Shine, Jesus, shine, Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me [Chorus]

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me [Chorus]

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 Cooma Anglican 9 August 2026 - Genesis 18-19

Today we are looking at Genesis chapters 18 and 19. We only read some of chapter 18 in order to spare the parents here being asked to explain why God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. But, it would be good for all adults to read both chapters in full, because every word in the Bible is important. I am also happy to try to answer any questions you have on the chapters - so just ask.

Our Bible readings today are sobering, and rightly so. We do not like to think about God destroying entire peoples, no matter how evil they are. It doesn't sit well with our idea that God is the God of love and mercy. Some people try to understand this by distinguishing between the God of the Old and the New Testaments, wanting either an Old Testament God of judgement and a separate New Testament God of love, or perhaps a God whose character changes from judgement to love at the time of Jesus. Today I want to look at what the Bible says about this, and how we should understand the nature of our one almighty, everlasting God who never changes.

Without going into details, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose cities happen to be next to the land where Abraham's nephew Lot settled, were exceedingly evil. You would get an idea of how evil they were by reading chapter 19, but as I said, I won't go into details. It is sufficient to say that their behaviour would never be countenanced anywhere or at any time by anyone, and deserved the harshest judgement.

God investigates

Genesis says that God heard that the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah was so great that he decided to investigate. He didn't rely on hearsay. We know that God actually knows everything, and he knew that what he had heard was true. However, it was important to show that he was acting justly, and so he, and two angels, all in the form of ordinary people, go to check out the facts, and drop in on Abraham on the way.

We didn't read about the visit to Abraham, but it is intended to show the contrast between Abraham and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. In many ways, the way Abraham welcomed the angels was similar to the way Lot welcomed them. Lot invited them to wash their feet, to spend the night in the safety of his home, and prepared them a feast. Similarly Abraham hurried to meet them, he bowed low to the ground. He invites them to let a little water be brought for them to all wash their feet, to rest under a tree, to let him get them something to eat so they can be refreshed and then go on their way. When they agreed, Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread. He ran to his herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it.⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. You particularly notice the sense of urgency that Abraham, it says four

times that Abraham or his servant hurried or ran to serve the visitors, and after they had been served, Abraham stood by to quickly meet any further need they had. Perhaps it isn't the major point of the passage, but it certainly sets an example for our hospitality, that we should have a similar attitude as Abraham, as Hebrews 13:2 encourages us while alluding to this passage: Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

In comparison, when the angels are in Lot's home in Sodom, the men from every part of the city of Sodom —both young and old—surrounded the house and demanded Lot bring out the men so that they could assault them. When Lot went outside to protect the visitors, they told him "Get out of our way, and they threatened to treat Lot worse than the visitors." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. It is important to note that men from every part of the city, both young and old, threatened the visitors and Lot. Other translations make it very clear that everyone in Sodom was involved when they say Genesis 19:4 (ESV Strong's) "all the people to the last man". The evil was not restricted to a few, everyone in the cities were involved.

Anyway, while God did go to investigate, Genesis makes it clear that he had already decided what he would do if he found out that the outcry was true. You should have no doubt that God knew exactly what was happening and exactly what he needed to do, but he needed to personally witness the evil, which he did.

God listens

Before he sends the angels to investigate, God listens when Abraham advocates on behalf of Sodom, which we did read this morning. We need to understand that Abraham was not trying to get God to repent from destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, but he was keen to understand God's justice. He knows that God is just, and he knew how much Sodom deserved judgement, but, to put it in modern terms, he wanted to understand how much collateral damage God would accept. I don't know what the population of Sodom and Gomorrah was in Abraham's time, but some estimates put it at about 1200. If, as Abraham first asked, there were 50 righteous men there, then the cities would be around 96% evil. In modern times, the law of armed combat does not prescribe an acceptable level of civilian casualties from a military strike, but strikes that involve collateral damage are only legal if they are considered consistent with the principle of proportionality - that is that the expected number of non combatant casualties needs to be justified by the military objective, and this is a completely different question to whether any civilian casualties are morally justified. Nonetheless, while some aggressors are much worse than others, some estimates indicate that 50 to 70 percent of deaths in modern conflicts are of non combatants.

There is really no comparison between what modern states accept and God's standard, but Abraham keeps asking God if he would only act if there are lower and lower numbers of righteous casualties, down to 10, or less than one per cent. In the end,

this is rather a moot argument as 100 per cent of the population of Sodom and Gomorrah were evil: all of them, apart from Lot and his family.

God decides

God then sends the two angels to investigate, and this is exactly what they find out. Every single man, young and old, in Sodom and Gomorrah gather to a physically assault the two angels, and they only escaped with Lot, his wife and daughters after they had temporarily blinded the men and fled the city. The LORD rained down burning sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens.²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.

God judges with mercy

So God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, and wiped their evil from the face of the earth. Even Lot's wife was destroyed, because she looked back. Instead of fleeing the great evil with the support of the angels and Lot, she looked back longingly to the evil she was supposed to be escaping. Instead of obeying the command to flee and to not look back, she failed to trust and follow God's divine instructions, and she was turned into a pillar of salt, a symbol of Judgment. In ancient Middle Eastern traditions, salt symbolized total ruin and barrenness as enemies' fields were made barren with salt, and the pillar that was Lot's wife became a permanent memorial of divine judgment.

The only people saved from this destruction were Lot and his daughters. He tried to save his sins law that they didn't take him seriously, and paid the consequences. The angels led Lot, his wife and daughters out of the city when they hesitated, but, as I said, his wife looked back. Even so, Lot didn't want to completely leave the valley that was being destroyed, and the angels agreed they could rest in a small town in the valley called Zoar, and God avoided destroying it, even though it was close by. Lot was saved, though he didn't really seem to deserve it. He had been greedy and picked the choice land, leaving his uncle in the cold. He didn't just move near to the evil that was Sodom, he moved into the city. Then, not only does he hesitate when the angels tell him to leave, he baulks at completely leaving the valley and stays in a place God had planned to destroy. He really has done nothing to deserve being saved, or br being called what our epistle reading from 2 Peter called him, when Peter called him a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard).

What does this mean in Abraham's day and today?

The passage makes it very clear how seriously God takes sin. Sodom and Gomorrah's sin was about as vile as you can get, and the punishment was indeed severe. Their cities, and everyone in them with the exception of Lot and his daughters, died that day in a hail of burning sulphur and fire. It is important to know that this sort of judgement is not restricted to the Old Testament. Ananias and Saphira died in Acts because they lied to God, Revelation 20 talks about anyone whose name is not found in

the book of life being thrown into the lake of fire. It's also not all about sexual immorality - our gospel reading said that villages ignoring the apostles should expect worse judgement than Sodom. Again and again, the New Testament tells us that God is the God of judgement, and that his judgement, the wages for sin, is death. God is the same in the Old and New Testament, and he always takes sin very seriously.

There are a couple of other points that we should note about this passage. Did you notice that God forewarns Abraham about the judgement that he was about to bring on Sodom? More importantly, did you notice why God warned Abraham? He didn't warn him because of any danger to him, and it doesn't seem that he warned him because of the danger to Lot, even though Abraham cared greatly about his nephew as demonstrated by the way he rescued Lot previously and he pleaded that no one righteous in Sodom be destroyed. No, God warned Abraham because he said Abraham would surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth would be blessed through him.¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him. Abraham needed to know of God's justice so that he would teach this to his children and his household, teach them to live right and just lives in obedience to God's commands so that God would keep his promise to them. This is just as important for Christians today, the spiritual descendants of Abraham. We need to teach our children and our household, both our genetic and our spiritual households, the way of God's righteousness and justice, that God's promise be fulfilled through them.

The final point that we should note is that God did indeed save Lot despite Lot doing nothing to deserve it. The clue to why Lot was saved is when 2 Peter calls him a righteous man, which points us back to Genesis 15:6, where despite Abraham having done nothing to deserve it, he believed in God and God credited to him as righteousness. In order to be called righteous, Lot must also have believed God and had it credited to him like Abraham did.

God is the God of justice, and to be true to his very nature he must judge sin. He has done this ever since the time of Adam and Eve, through the time of Abraham to the New Testament until the final day, the day of judgement. God certainly is the God of justice, but he is also the God of mercy. He saved Abraham because of his belief credited to him as righteousness, and he saved Lot for the same reason. He credits righteousness to all today who have faith in Jesus' death and resurrection for their eternal life, and shows his complete and perfect justice by taking the punishment for the entire world's sin through God the Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross.

God was the good of justice and mercy for Abraham, Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah, and he is the same good of justice and mercy for us today.

Amen