

SUNDAY 23 August 2026 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am

Introduction

Hymn TIS 201 - King of glory, King of peace

King of glory, King of peace, I will love thee;
and, that love may never cease, I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request, thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast, thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art, I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart, I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried, thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied, thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven, I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort to enrol thee:
ev'n eternity's too short to extol thee.

Greeting

We are one family as the Bible tells us "Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters". Hebrews 2:11

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

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:7

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

Creator God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you: teach us to offer ourselves to your service, that here we may have

your peace, and in the world to come may see you face to face, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Gospel Reading - Luke 19:1-10

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

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

Children’s Talk - Jesus Changes us

Leviticus 6:1-7

¹ The LORD said to Moses: ² “If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving a neighbor about something entrusted to them or left in their care or about something stolen, or if they cheat their neighbor, ³ or if they find lost property and lie about it, or if they swear falsely about any such sin that people may commit— ⁴ when they sin in any of these ways and realize their guilt, they must return what they have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to them, or the lost property they found, ⁵ or whatever it was they swore falsely about. They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering. ⁶ And as a penalty they must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, their guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. ⁷ In this way the priest will make atonement for them before the LORD, and they will be forgiven for any of the things they did that made them guilty.”

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

Psalms 119:81-88(NIV)

⁸¹ My soul faints with longing for your salvation, but I have put my hope in your word.

⁸² **My eyes fail, looking for your promise; I say, “When will you comfort me?”**

⁸³ Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke, I do not forget your decrees.

⁸⁴ **How long must your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors?**

⁸⁵ The arrogant dig pits to trap me, contrary to your law.

⁸⁶ **All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for I am being persecuted without cause.**

⁸⁷ They almost wiped me from the earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts.

⁸⁸ **In your unfailing love preserve my life, that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.**

Revelation 2:1-7 (NIV)

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ² I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

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

Sermon - Revelation 2: The Letter to the Church in Ephesus

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 597- Master speak, Thy servant heareth

Master speak, Thy servant heareth
Waiting for Thy gracious word
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth
Master let it now be heard
I am listening Lord for Thee
What hast Thou to say to me

Speak to me by name O Master

Let me know it is to me
Speak that I may follow faster
With a step more firm and free
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the rock

Master speak and make me ready
When Thy voice is truly heard
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word
I am listening Lord for Thee
Master speak O speak to me

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 495 - Father, we thank thee who hast planted

Father, we thank thee who hast planted

Thy holy Name within our hearts.

Knowledge and faith and life immortal

Jesus thy Son to us imparts.

Thou, Lord, didst make all for thy pleasure,

Didst give us food for all our days,

Giving in Christ the Bread eternal;

Thine is the power, be thine the praise.

Watch o'er thy Church, O Lord, in mercy,

Save it from evil, guard it still,

Perfect it in thy love, unite it,

Cleansed and conformed unto thy will.

As grain, once scattered on the hillsides,

Was in this broken bread made one,

So from all lands thy Church be gathered

Into thy kingdom by thy Son.

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.**

23 August 2026 Cooma Anglican Sermon - Rev 2:1-7 - Changed Lives

It has been great to have the kids here this morning, and my prayer is not only will they learn that Jesus loves them, but they will love Jesus and put their faith in him and gain eternal life. We have just heard from Gayle about how Zaccheus's life changed when he met Jesus, and I want to explore the idea of a changed life a little further based on the letter to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2, verses 1 to 7. I do encourage you to read the rest of chapter 2, and apply the lesson to the whole chapter.

Zacchaeus's life changed as a result of meeting, and more importantly, trusting Jesus. When Jesus called him down from the tree, all the do-gooders grumbled, but Zacchaeus just replied: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." He not only repented, he turned his life around, he committed to never cheating anyone again. He well and truly exceeded the Old Testament penalty in Leviticus requiring a cheat to give back what was stolen with an extra one fifth. Zacchaeus promised to return four times what he stole, and he pledged to give half of his wealth to the poor. He wanted half of what he had legitimately earned to help those who had nothing. It was a huge change in Zacchaeus's life, signifying the beginning of his life as a Christian; a follower of Jesus. I expect he also joined with other followers of Jesus in an early church, although the Bible doesn't say.

Looking at the letter to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2, it, like all letters in Rev 2 and 3, includes commendations and criticisms, commands and judgements. This letter is specifically written to the church in Ephesus, but was intended to be read in all the other churches, in all places and ages since then, including us in Cooma.

There is always a temptation to take Bible passages critical of churches or people, not as critical of ourselves but of others. There is a place for using the letters to assess churches, after all, Jesus is quite clearly commending and criticising these specific churches in Asia, and he is definitely critical of specific groups in or around those churches. However, I wonder how helpful it is for us to assess churches in the same way, particularly as we are not Jesus! If you are new to a location and you have a choice of different churches to be part of then you may well assess the different churches against the letters to help you decide which church to join. However, when you are already part of a church, assessing other churches in this way, or even other members of your church can be less than helpful, particularly if you haven't assessed yourself first. We must always take the log out of our own eyes before we go looking for the specks in others' eyes!

On that basis, how do you stand up against Jesus's standards? Not others in this church, not other churches - but you, personally? And you personally, now? None of us looked good against Jesus's standards in the past, and people will remember that sin. But Jesus knows when you have repented that sin, and he looks at the forgiven you, now.

You should ask your self:

Do others see your good deeds and glorify God? Or, James says, do you show your faith by your deeds? Are you doing the good deeds that God has prepared in advance for you to do?

Do you tolerate wicked people, people who defile what is good, who bring chaos, distress, cursing, or death? Do you bear with anyone who encourages others to depart from God's good intentions in creation, who breaks our relationships with God and our neighbors?

Do you test those who claim to be apostles but are not? Do you reject any teaching that claims to have apostolic authority (perhaps like the Nicolaitians), but is deceitful and doesn't bear witness to the truth of Jesus's resurrection? Do you ignore anyone who calls himself an apostle but has not been sent out by Jesus to proclaim his gospel faithfully?

Have you persevered and endured hardships for Jesus's name, and with the strength of the Holy Spirit, not grown weary?

Thinking back to the children here today, have you forsaken the love you had at first, the love of Jesus that we pray that the children will have? Are you like Zaccheus, loving Jesus even more than your own dignity, prepared to climb trees just to see him? Are you so convicted by your love for Jesus that you fully see how much you have rebelled against God in the past, fully repented and sought forgiveness and willingly committed to restitution over and above that required by the law? Have you considered how far you have fallen from when you first loved Jesus? Have you repented and done the things you did then - praying, reading your Bibles, loving your neighbour and especially Christian brothers and sisters?

Jesus says that if the church in Ephesus did not repent, he will come and remove its lampstand from its place. There is no church without love., and if we too do not repent of leaving our first love, He will also not recognise us as part of his body of believers, his worldwide church.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who repents and is victorious, He will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is eternal life in the paradise of God.

AMEN