

**SUNDAY 26 May 2024 - St Paul's Cooma 9.30am**

## **Introduction**

### **Hymn TIS 132 - Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Holy holy holy, Lord God Almighty, Early in the morning to you our praise shall be;  
Holy holy holy, Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, Blessed Trinity**

**Holy holy holy, All the saints adore you, Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea  
Cherubim and seraphim Falling down before you, God everlasting through eternity**

**Holy holy holy, Though the darkness hide you, Though the sinful human eye your glory may not see  
You alone are holy, There is none beside you, Perfect in power, In love and purity**

**Holy holy holy, Lord God Almighty, All your works shall praise your name, In earth and sky and sea  
Holy holy holy, Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, Blessed Trinity**

## **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**

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. John 17:11

## **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**

Blessed Trinity, in whom we know the maker of all things, seen and unseen, the Saviour of all, both near and far, by your Spirit enable us so to worship your divine majesty, so with all the company of heaven, we may magnify your glorious name, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Glory to you, O Lord most high. **Amen.**

## **The Ministry of the Word**

### **Isaiah 65:17-25**

<sup>17</sup> "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my

people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. <sup>20</sup> “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. <sup>21</sup> They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. <sup>23</sup> They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

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

### Psalm 96

<sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> **Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.**

<sup>3</sup> Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples.

<sup>4</sup> **For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods**

<sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup> **Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.**

<sup>7</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>8</sup> **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.**

<sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

<sup>10</sup> **Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.” The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.**

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

<sup>12</sup> **Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.**

<sup>13</sup> **Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.**

### Revelation 22:1-5

<sup>22.1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

### John 17:6-18

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>6</sup> “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. <sup>8</sup> For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All I have is yours, and

all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. <sup>11</sup> I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

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

### **Sermon - Restoration and the Gospel**

#### **Prayers**

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response: Gracious God, 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.**

#### **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 447 - Lord, your almighty word**

**Lord, your almighty word, chaos and darkness heard, and took their flight:  
hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day sheds not its glorious ray,  
let there be light.**

**Saviour, who came to give those who in darkness live healing and sight,  
health to the sick in mind, sight to the inly blind, now to all humankind  
let there be light.**

**Spirit of truth and love, life-giving holy dove, speed forth your flight;  
move on the waters' face, bearing the lamp of grace, and in earth's darkest place  
let there be light.**

**Holy and blessed Three, glorious Trinity, Wisdom, Love, Might,  
boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride, through the earth far and wide,  
let there be light.**

### **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.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord.

### **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 446 - Glorious things of you are spoken**

**Glorious things of you are spoken, Zion, city of our God!**

**He whose word cannot be broken, Formed you for his own abode:**

**On the Rock of Ages founded, What can shake your sure repose?**

**With salvation's walls surrounded, You may smile at all your foes.**

**See, the streams of living waters, Springing from eternal love,  
Well supply your sons and daughters, and all fear of want remove:  
Who can faint, while such a river ever flows their thirst to assuage --  
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver, Never fails from age to age.**

**Blest inhabitants of Zion, Washed in their Redeemer's blood!  
Jesus, whom their souls rely on, Makes them kings and priests to God.  
For his love his people raises over self to reign as kings:  
And as priests, his solemn praises each for a thank-offering brings.**

**Saviour, since of Zion's city, I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in your name.  
Fading are the worldlings' pleasures, All their boasted pomp and show;  
Solid joys and lasting treasures, none but Zion's children know.**

### **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 - Restoration and the Gospel

Today is Trinity Sunday in the church calendar. It's the day that we particularly focus on the one God as three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each fully divine, but together One God. If you are like me, your finite mind cannot grasp how the Trinity works. How one God can be three and three one. Unfortunately, this sermon won't explain it either, but today we will look forward to the time in history when we will be able to understand, when all Christians are in paradise living the eternal life that God has promised. Unfortunately, I'm pretty sure no one will fully understand the Trinity until then, and, as I said, you won't find an articulate explanation in this sermon either - sorry!

This sermon will look at how all three persons of the Trinity have their role to play in God's salvation plan. It is the last sermon in this series on the Gospel, and I have called it "Restoration and the gospel."

So far, we have heard about how God created a good and perfect world through God the son, as John 1:3 tells us, and although I didn't mention it, God the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters. The good creation was spoiled by sin in Genesis 3, and last week, we heard about God's 2 part plan to restore his creation. The first phase, the Old Testament, points to Jesus, born of the Mary and the Holy Spirit, who was the second phase. We heard how Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment we deserve for our sin, and thus freed all who trust in him from sin and death.

I mentioned last week that like God's 2 part plan of restoration, so also the restored world for Christians comes in two phases, two phases commonly called the now and the not yet. Or 'this world' and 'the world to come'. This week we will see how all three persons of the trinity participate in both phases.

### The Restored World - but not yet

In our readings from Isaiah and Revelation this morning you get some idea of what the perfectly restored world will be like. Isaiah tells us *God will create (a new) Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 He will rejoice over that Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. 20 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. 21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat.* This is obviously an image, a prophecy, of what the world of eternal life will be: no more tears, no sickness, no oppression or persecution.

Our reading from Revelation says that in the restored world there will be: *the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

It is no coincidence that the world reminds us a lot of Eden: river of the water of life, the tree of life, crops yielding fruit, people seeing God's face. In fact, it is even better than Eden, in that the curse has been destroyed, and there is no longer any night, and they will reign for ever and ever. Unfortunately, we won't see this world just yet - we have to wait until Jesus returns, or until we are resurrected as God promises after we die in this world.

### **This Intermediate World**

So, this is not the world Christians live in now. When you became a Christian, I am sure it did not take very long before you noticed that no matter how much you might have changed, the world didn't change much. Even for Christians, this world is still full of pain and suffering, darkness and sin. Even Christian lives are full of sin, and we are supposed to have been saved from it by Jesus's death and resurrection! How can the Bible have got it so wrong?

The answer is that the Bible has not got it wrong - the new, perfectly restored world will come about, but we will not see it fully just yet. We will need to wait until Jesus returns for that. I described it earlier as the now and he not yet, and we are still in the now.

Yet, despite appearances, the world does change for Christians. Jesus has died in your place and your sins have been forgiven - it is just that this hasn't taken you out of this fallen world. Sin and death have been defeated, but they don't know it yet, and they keep on fighting, and trying to mess up your life.

This is the 'now, but not yet' aspect of the restored world. It's a bit like taking a holiday to the coast. When my family goes to the coast for a holiday, we always drive, and it is about a two hour drive. It is absolutely true that the holiday starts when we get in the car - The calendar says we are on holiday, we've finished our work and school, we are starting to relax, but there is no beach, no fish and chips, no sleeping in or walks along the beach - that has to wait until we get to the beach, unpack the car, and then what we might call the real holiday starts. Similarly, the perfectly restored world started when Jesus died, rose and ascended into heaven, we just can't see it yet. The question is, In what sense has it started?

### **Living in the intermediate world**

Most importantly, sin has been defeated. Jesus has died in our place, he has borne the punishment we deserve for our sin. Consequently, even in this world we don't need to worry about death, and we can confidently look forward to eternal life to come in the perfectly restored world that God is promising.

However, as we are still in this fallen world, while we are here we will constantly be fighting against sin, and occasionally sin may seem to get the upper hand in our lives. Even so, we are not fighting it on our own, and despite what it thinks, we know that it has been defeated, and we know that it cannot successfully get between us and God.

As Jesus promised in John 15:26, he has sent his Holy Spirit to help us fight sin and live for him while we are still in this fallen world. The Holy Spirit gives us freedom to avoid indulging in sins, the things that prevent from inheriting the kingdom of God: *sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;* <sup>20</sup> *idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions* <sup>21</sup> *and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like,* as we are told in Galatians 5. Instead, the fruit the Holy Spirit has

given us are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22 and 23).

So, the Holy Spirit will guide to lead lives that are characterised by life in the Spirit. There are many, many aspects of Christian lives in which the Spirit helps and guides, and help up to persevere until Jesus returns. I won't go into detail of these things here, but some of what the Holy Spirit empowers us to do now are:

We **worship** God, worshipping in the Spirit and in truth (John 4:24),

We **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. (Eph 6:18)

We have **fellowship**, with the Holy Spirit joining us with other Christians in churches: not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Heb 10:25)

We read and study **God's word**, with the Holy Spirit giving us understanding and power to apply the scriptures to our lives. This includes *public reading and teaching of scripture* like we are doing now (1Tim 4:13), because <sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* <sup>17</sup> *so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Tim 3:16)

We do the **good works** God has planned for us, with the power of the Holy Spirit: *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*(Eph 2:10)

Because we are not perfectly sinless yet, the Holy Spirit guides us to **repent** of the sins that find their way back into our lives. In 2 Cor 12:21, Paul was grieved over many Corinthians who have sinned earlier and have not repented, and we also **confess** our sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed (James 5:16)

With great joy, we also **live and share the gospel**, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who gives us the words to say. Just as Paul, Silas and Timothy were delighted to share with the Thessalonians not only the gospel of God but their lives as well. (1Thes 2:8)

There are many other things we Christians do in this still fallen, this not yet world as we wait for the perfect world to come. We do all these things and more in response to the salvation Jesus has won for us on the cross. We do not do them in order to be saved, or in order to get into the perfect world God has promised. We do them because we have been saved, we already have eternal life and have started living it, even though we don't see it fully yet. These things help us to persevere, as Hebrews 10 tells us, all the more as we see the Day approaching, and they also encourage other Christians as they wait for Jesus's return.

Provided we persevere, sooner or later, despite the trials, we will experience the perfectly restored heaven and earth in eternal life. We have confidence in this, because, as James 1:12 tells us: <sup>2</sup> *Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

*"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."  
Blessed be the Lord!*