

Cooma Anglican 2 June 2024 - 1st Order APBA

Welcome

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

Greeting

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

Sentence of the Day

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3

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.'

Lord, have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everliving God,

Increase in us your gift of faith, so that forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before us, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

Deuteronomy 7:6-9

⁶ For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. ⁷ The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

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

Psalms 47

¹ Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

² **For the LORD Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth.**

³ He will subdue the peoples under us, And the nations under our feet.

⁴ **He will choose our inheritance for us, The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.**

⁵ God has gone up with a shout, The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶ **Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!**

⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding.

⁸ **God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.**

⁹ **The princes of the people have gathered together, The people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.**

Ephesians 1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. ¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

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

Matthew 25:31–40

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ ³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ ⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

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

Sermon Ephesians 1 - The Chosen Ones

Question Time

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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 forever.

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.

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we who would come to the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ must consider how St Paul exhorts us to examine ourselves before presuming to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For the benefit is great, if with a penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament. We then spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood; we dwell in Christ and he in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

Yet also the danger is great if we receive the bread and cup unworthily. Judge yourselves therefore, that you be not judged of the Lord. Repent truly of your sins, having a steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour. Amend your lives and love your neighbour.

Above all, give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, truly God and truly human, who humbled himself to death on the cross for us sinners, that he might make us children of God, and raise us to eternal life.

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to strengthen and comfort you. But first, let us make a humble confession of our sins to almighty God.

Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all people, we acknowledge with shame the sins we have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us.

We earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for all our misdoings. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn to him: have mercy on you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear the words of assurance for those who truly turn to Christ:

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the perfect offering for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2

Hymn TIS 534 Love is His word, Love is His way

**Love is His word, love is His way
Feasting with men, fasting alone
Living and dying, rising again
Love, only love, is His way.**

Chorus

**Richer than gold is the love of my Lord
Better than splendour and wealth**

**Love is His way, love is His mark
Sharing His last Passover feast
Christ at His table, host to the Twelve
Love only love is His mark. *Chorus***

**Love is His mark, love is His sign
Bread for our strength wine for our joy
This is my body, this is my blood
Love, only love, is His sign *Chorus***

Love is His sign, love is His news
Do this, He said, lest you forget
All my deep sorrow, all my dear blood
Love, only love, is His news. *Chorus*

Love is His news, love is His name
We are His own chosen and called
Family, brethren, cousins and kin
Love, only love, is His name. *Chorus*

Love is His name, love is His law
Hear His command, all who are His
Love one another I have loved you
Love, only love, is His law. *Chorus*

Love is His law, love is His word
Love of the Lord, Father and Word
Love of the Spirit, God ever one
Love, only love, is His word. *Chorus*

The Thanksgiving

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.**

It is indeed right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, Mighty Creator and Eternal God.

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 hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Glory to you, O Lord most high.**

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.

All glory to you, our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death on the cross for our redemption: who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray, and grant that we who receive these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who on the night he was betrayed 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 which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New

Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Amen.

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

Almighty and everliving God, we heartily thank you that you graciously feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thus assure us of your favour and goodness towards us and that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of your eternal kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of your dear Son. And we humbly beseech you, heavenly Father, so to assist us with your grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as you have prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

Hymn TIS 179 Praise With Joy The World's Creator

**Praise With Joy The World's Creator,
God Of Justice, Love, And Peace,
Source And End of Human Knowledge,
Force Of Greatness without Cease.
Celebrate The Maker's Glory,
Power To Rescue And Release.**

**Praise To Christ Who Feeds The Hungry,
Frees The Captive, Finds The Lost,
Heals The Sick, Up-Sets Religion,
Fearless Both Of Fate And Cost.
Celebrate Christ's Constant Presence:
Friend And Stranger, Guest And Host.**

**Praise The Spirit Sent Among Us,
Liberating Truth From Pride,
Forging Bonds Where Race Or Gender,
Age Or Nation Dare Divide.
Celebrate The Spirit's Treasure:
Foolishness None Dare Deride.**

**Praise The Maker, Christ, And Spirit,
One God In Community,
Calling Christians To Embody
Oneness And Diversity.
Thus The World Shall Yet Believe, When
Shown Christ's Vibrant Unity.**

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 - Ephesians 1

Today we are starting a new sermon series, working through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The Ephesians were those who lived in the city of Ephesus, and Paul first visited them in Acts chapters 18 through 20. As was his normal practice, he first went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. They obviously took a bit of a shine to him and asked him to stay longer, but he had to leave, promising that he would return.

When he did, he found some disciples who were there and *baptised them in the name of the Lord Jesus*. *6 He placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.* Paul then entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, but some refused to believe and publicly maligned Christianity, which Acts calls 'the Way'. So Paul left the Synagogue, taking the disciples with him to daily discussions in a lecture hall for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. Many of those who believed openly confessed what they had done. 19 A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly, so the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Before Paul left Ephesus, there arose a great disturbance about the Way, led by a silversmith named who lost a lot of business making silver shrines of Artemis because people turned to Christ instead. The people seized Paul's travelling companions, and Paul wanted to try to stop them, but the disciples would not let him. The riot was calmed down by a local official and Paul's stay ended with him encouraging the disciples, saying goodbye and setting out for Macedonia. That is the background to his letter, which scholars think he wrote to them from prison in Rome in about 60 AD.

What struck me was that the Ephesians could be neatly divided into two groups - those who supported Paul and the fledgling church, and those who violently opposed them. At the start of his letter, Paul praises God for choosing the members of the church in Ephesus - those who supported Paul.

In the church today, we tend to put a lot more emphasis on you choosing God, rather than God choosing you. As you think about how you became a Christian, I wonder whether it felt like you were choosing God, or He was choosing you? It may have felt that God chose you by blessing you with being brought up in Christian families who passed their faith on to you. It may have felt the most natural thing to put your faith in Christ coming from that environment. For others, it may have felt that God had chosen you and was relentlessly pursuing you until you did eventually believe.

Others again may have pursued God - you might have long felt that something was missing from your life, and searched different religions, philosophies and lifestyles until you found Christ, chose him and put your faith in him. Whatever your situation, it would be good to share your experience with others and understand the variety of ways people come to Christ.

In his letter, Paul emphasises that God chose the Ephesian Christians. In the first chapter, which we read earlier, It says *God chose them (and by extension us) in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ.*

Even if you feel that you chose God rather than the other way around, God chose you before the creation of the world. This is another of those aspects of Christianity that appears self contradictory, because the Bible is also clear that we can choose - or reject - God. How can we and God both be fully responsible for this choice? It is hard to understand, but the best I can say is that God wouldn't choose you if you were going to reject Him, and we wouldn't choose Him if he had not chosen us first.

Paul describes our choosing in a couple of ways.

Forgiven

Paul describes the fact we are chosen in a couple of ways. He says that God has chosen us to forgive our sins, so that we are blameless in his sight. As I have been saying in my last series of sermons, we are all sinners, and so we shouldn't be able to approach the perfectly holy God, or if we do, we should expect to immediately die. However, God has forgiven us. He took away our sin when Jesus took the punishment we deserve upon himself on the cross.

Adopted

Because of this, God is able to, and does choose, to adopt us to sonship - to be part of His family. In Paul's day Roman aristocrats would often adopt adult sons to carry on the family name and to receive the inheritance. The adopting father would be very careful about whom they adopted because the succession of their line, and the future of their family fortune depended on it. Nevertheless, the adoptee was made a full member of the family, with the rights, responsibilities and benefits that entailed. Paul is saying that that is what God has done for us - he has adopted us as his sons. Now, before the ladies amongst us get upset that they haven't been adopted as daughters, recognise that Paul is writing in unenlightened first century times, when only sons (natural or adopted) benefitted from inheritances. In Christ, males and females inherit all the rights, responsibilities and all benefits.

Given Holy Spirit

We are not only adopted, but our adoption is guaranteed because we also get the Holy Spirit, here and now. Paul says the Holy Spirit is the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until we

are fully redeemed - that is, we get to enjoy eternal life fully in the new earth that God promises. We don't see the perfectly restored world without sin, pain and tears in this world, but God sends us his Holy Spirit to help us deal with the suffering we expect, and to give us absolute confidence that the perfect world is coming for us.

Knowing God's mystery

God also chooses us in order to let us in on the biggest secret out there, the mystery of his will. Christians have been chosen to know the mystery of the universe, and to be certain of it. Scientists are continually trying to work out what will come of the universe, but Christians know. We know God's plan, which he purposed in Christ and will happen at the end of time, which is when they will reach their fulfilment. Christians know that eventually God will bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. Christians know that the world will not be destroyed in any nuclear or environmental mishap. We know it won't be burnt up in as the sun burns out into a red giant in 5 billion years as the scientists predict. We know God will restore it to the perfection it was when Adam and Eve were in Eden, when God, mankind and the environment will be in perfect harmony, together under Christ, for the rest of eternity.

Paul also calls these privileges: forgiveness, adoption, the Holy Spirit, and the knowledge of God's mystery; he calls these privileges 'every spiritual blessing in Christ.' For God, choosing us wasn't just a financial or administrative transaction: God adopted us in love, in accordance with his pleasure and will. God eagerly chooses us for adoption into his family, and he adopts us freely, and he does it for his praise and glory. He does it to show his mighty power, wisdom and love, that all creation might praise him, which is the right, the harmonious relationship for which he created everything.

Now, Paul realises that we don't see this perfection yet, and so he not only reminds us of what God has done in choosing us, he prays for the Ephesians, and for us as we wait for the times to come to their fulfilment. He prays that God will give each of us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know God better while we are waiting. He also prays that we may know the fullness of the promise that God has chosen us too more and more - or as Paul puts it, that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That is also my prayer for each of you and myself, that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Is that your prayer? If it is, join me in saying Amen.