

Uniting Church in Australia  
Wesley Uniting Church, Forrest  
Sunday 1 August 2021  
**Pentecost 10**



Today we continue the liturgical journey, celebrating the eucharist and reflecting upon today's readings. These last weeks, we have had the opportunity to reflect upon the Gospel of Mark's world view through the lens of what in Biblical language are termed the "demons": those constructs and structures in nature and society that oppress human beings. Today, we pick up on this idea again as we concentrate upon the Hebrew readings from 2 Samuel and Psalm 51, which together, focus upon even the dark side of King David: the best of an ordinary bunch. At its most basic, this is a story about the unbridled abuse of power, but at a more theological level, the character of human brokenness, and the tragedy that sin cannot be undone. It is no surprise then that Psalm 51 is referred to as the *Miserere*, well known through Gregorio Allegri's (*Miserere mei, Deus - Have mercy on me God*).

The Gospel reading from John (6: 24-35) stands in joyful contrast to the painful reality of our Hebrew readings about the human condition and the abuse of power. In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Jesus' importance rests in the fact that he mediates the kingdom of God through what he says and does. In John, the kingdom is never mentioned as such. Rather, *Jesus is the kingdom, Jesus is the bread, Jesus is life*. In the story before us, John sees the preoccupation that the crowd have for bread...as something to eat, or as an opportunity to look back nostalgically upon Moses and manna in the desert... as missing the point altogether. John calls for discernment of Jesus as *God's seal* (εσφράγισεν-v.27), implying that Jesus carries the authentic brand of God, is the direct presence of God among us, now, today.

# Gathering God's People

**Prelude** Elyse Were: Rondeau/Purcell, Louise's Dance/Ronnberg  
Elyse Were and Kofi Okai: Cuckoo, *trad*; Chant Arabe, anon;  
Little Playmates by Chwatal; and Allegretto by Czerny

## **Introit**

He that is down, needs fear no fall,  
he that is low, no pride:  
he that is humble, ever shall  
have God to be his Guide.

I am content with what I have;  
little be it, or much:  
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
because thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is  
that go on pilgrimage:  
Here little, and hereafter bliss,  
is best from age to age.

Shepherd Boy's Song  
J H Alden (1900-1976), text by John Bunyan (1628-1688)

## **Call to Faith**

In every place and every time,  
in every relationship and every interaction,

### **You are God**

to the poor and to the wealthy,  
to the weak and to the powerful;  
to the believer and to the doubter,  
to the religious and to the atheist;

### **You are God to all**

and Your grace and love extend to all.

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people,  
the first inhabitants of this place.

We honour them for their custodianship of the land,  
on which we gather today.

## **Welcome and News**

## **Invoking the Trinity**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit  
The Lord be with you **And also with you**

## Lighting the community candle

Hymn TiS 216 (Tune Darwall, 371)

Rejoice the Lord is King;  
your Lord and King adore;  
let all give thanks, and sing,  
and triumph evermore;

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus the Saviour reigns,  
the God of truth and love;  
when he had purged our stains,  
he took his seat above:

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,  
he rules o'er earth and heaven;  
the keys of death and hell  
are to our Jesus given:

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

He sits at God's right hand,  
till all his foes submit,  
and bow to his command,  
and fall beneath his feet:

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice.  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

Rejoice in glorious hope;  
Jesus the judge shall come,  
and take his servants up  
to their eternal home:

*We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;  
the trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!*

(Charles Wesley 1707-88 alt. AHB Co.  
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## Opening Prayers

In this prayer, stimulated from today's Gospel reading (John 6:24-35), the insight is that our attempts to seek and locate God are often doomed from the very beginning, simply because our desire is shaped if not determined by our own agendas and interests. In looking for God, we almost assuredly find a mirror image of ourselves. John's Gospel tells us that we can only find God where God *is*: in Jesus Christ. And this only if we let go of our "attachments".

We looked for him on the east side,  
looked for him after eating  
the loaves and fishes, after  
they collected the leftovers, 12 baskets-full –  
looked for him among the dreams of the past  
looked for him among the memories  
of manna long ago –

**dream-memories of a *then*,  
of a *when-God-was-with-us***

(the way we look for life in possessions,  
among belongings, career obsessions)

**and did not find him there;**

so crossed the lake to find him  
where he had left behind  
the leftovers,  
**the *once-upon-a-past* –**  
to share the life not found in heaping baskets,  
not found in advantageous tangibles,  
yet satisfying the longing of the  
searching, hungry heart –

the love, the grace, that  
***can best be known in now* –**  
being the bread from heaven  
***that is God with us today*,**  
no matter the side of the lake  
where we are found.

**Amen.**

**The Peace**

# Entering the Story

## Some thoughts with the children

### 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a

<sup>26</sup>When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. <sup>27</sup>When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD,

12 and the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds; <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup>Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." <sup>5</sup>Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; <sup>6</sup>he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." <sup>7</sup>Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; <sup>8</sup>I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. <sup>9</sup>Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. <sup>11</sup>Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. <sup>12</sup>For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." <sup>13</sup>David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

In this is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## **Psalm 51:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup>**You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

<sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

In this is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you Lord Christ**

## **Reflection**

**Offering Interlude** Elyse Were: Short Story, H. Lichner

## Prayers of the People

This week, we pray according to the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for the peoples of the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe. The liturgist after a series the petitions says, "Lead us Lord," and the people respond, "**To find you and live your grace**".

Our prayer

Barriers, walls, and barbed wire mark the frontiers, O Lord.  
Help us to transform them into places where we can meet,  
with sincerity,  
as countries and as persons,  
so that the world will know that we are Christians  
by the love with which our actions are marked.

(Louise Bakala Koumouno, People's Republic of Congo.)

## Hymn (Tune, Kremser )

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;  
He chastens and hastens His will to make known.  
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing.  
Sing praises to His Name; He forgets not His own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,  
Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;  
So from the beginning the fight we were winning:  
Thou, Lord, were at our side, all glory be Thine!

We all do extol Thee, Thou Leader triumphant,  
And pray that Thou still our Defender will be.  
Let Thy congregation escape tribulation;  
Thy Name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

We Gather Together  
Eduard Kremser (1877), text by Anon.

## Eucharist

### Anthem

O love of whom is truth and light,  
The word and spirit, life and power,  
Whose heart was bared to smite,  
To shield us in our trial hour:  
O love, I give myself to thee,  
thine ever, only thine to be.

Anthem: O Love of Whom is Truth and Light  
Temple Bevan, based on a 1539 melody, text by Johann Scheffler (1624-1677)

## **Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Let us lift up our 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 to give you our thanks and praise, O God,  
for your love is forever  
and you have raised the crucified Christ from the dead.

You created all things and placed Christ as the cornerstone.  
You made your grace known to Israel in the wilderness,  
and through your prophets you pledged  
your everlasting love and constant faithfulness.

You anointed your child, Jesus,  
with the Holy Spirit and power,  
and he went about doing good  
and healing all who were oppressed by evil.  
He was put to death, hung on a tree,  
but you raised him on the third day,  
and allowed him to appear, first to Mary Magdalene  
and then to your other chosen witnesses.

So now we praise you  
and raise our glad songs of victory  
for you have become our saviour  
and hidden our lives in Christ in glory.

Therefore we join with all the company of heaven in their song

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest**

Through him, in him and because of him,  
We affirm the Church's faith  
**Christ has died.  
Christ has risen.  
Christ will come again.**

## **Institution**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

**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 forever. Amen.**

### **Breaking of the Bread**

Christ is the bread of joy  
who shares food with us in our brokenness.

Christ is the cup of life,  
who revives the faint-hearted

Let us receive what we are;  
let us become what we receive.

### **Agnus Dei**

Jesus, Lamb of God,  
**have mercy on us**

Jesus, Word made flesh,  
**have mercy on us**

Jesus, Liberator of creation  
**grant us peace.**

### **Communion**

### **Distribution**

## **Prayer after Communion**

God of heaven and earth,  
you make us one in Christ.  
Inspire us with new vision  
becoming a community marked by the freedom to accept each other.  
Give us strength to walk together  
In Christ's name

**Amen**

## **Communion Reflection**

Holy, holy, holy, God almighty Lord!  
Holy, holy, holy, ev'rywhere adored!  
He without beginning, He th'eternal One  
Reigns and rules for ever, all things 'neath the sun.  
Power and love and wonder circling round His throne,  
Praise him, Holy, Holy, Lord of life alone.

Communion reflection:  
Holy, Holy, Holy  
Franz Schubert (1826), trans. Christina Cairns

## **Hymn TiS 225**

My heart and voice I raise  
to spread Messiah's praise,  
Messiah's praise let all repeat:  
the universal Lord  
by whose almighty word  
creation rose in form complete.

A servant's form he wore,  
and in his body bore  
our dreadful curse on Calvary:  
he like a victim stood  
and poured his sacred blood  
to set the guilty captives free.

But soon the Victor rose  
triumphant o'er his foes  
and led the vanquished host in chains:  
he threw their empire down,  
his foes compelled to own  
o'er all the great Messiah reigns.

With mercy's mildest grace  
he governs all our race  
in wisdom, righteousness and love:  
who to Messiah fly  
shall find redemption nigh,  
and all his great salvation prove.

Hail, Saviour, Prince of Peace!  
Your kingdom shall increase  
till all the world your glory see,  
and righteousness abound as the great deep profound,  
and fill the earth with purity.

Benjamin Rhodes 1743-1815  
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## **Blessing and Sending Out**

Here today in this place  
we commit ourselves.  
to carry our worship  
from the sanctuary to the streets

The service has ended  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the name of Christ**

**Postlude** Elyse Were: Two Preludes in C by Krebs and Hartung

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Liturgist, Celebrant: Rev Dr Geoff Dornan /  
Preacher, Celebrant Rev. Dr. Sarah Agnew  
Children's Ministry: Jules Wright  
Choir Director: Jade McFaul  
Organist: Bronwyn Brown  
Scholars: Elyse Were & Kofi Okai

*With thanks to our flower, A/V and steward teams*  
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