

## Homilies for Sunday November 20 - Pastor David Kuss

### The First Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6



'Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!' declares the Lord. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people:

'Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,' declares the Lord. 'I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,' declares the Lord.

'The days are coming,' declares the Lord,

'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,  
a King who will reign wisely  
and do what is just and right in the land.

In his days Judah will be saved  
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:

*This is the Word of the Lord* **Thanks be to God**

In 2019 We were driving through in central NSW - one of the worst droughts on record – right about where now they are having their worst flood on record.

We came across the tell-tale signs of a mob of sheep being driven/mustered along the road – you know all the little wet spots and the little currants on the road.

We came across a poor old ewe – she was left behind with her little lamb. She looked tired and worn out - no other sheep in sight.

The person I was with demanded that we chase after the farmer and tear strips off him for leaving his sheep behind.

The person I was with could well have quoted the text today: '*Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!*'

*'Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not cared for them, I will punish you for the evil you have done,' declares the Lord.*

The person I was with was furious – that the farmer left the sheep behind to fend for itself. I knew the sheep, and the lamb, and the farmer were OK.

It's normal, I've done it many times myself, when you are droving sheep - especially ewes with lambs there will be weak ones who hang back – rather than push them along you leave them. Then you go back later with the ute and pick them up.

Sure enough, it wasn't long and we saw the farmer come back with the ute and dog and he picked up the old ewe and her lamb and threw them on the back of the ute – and delivered them into the paddock where the other sheep were.

He seemed like a bad shepherd at first – but actually he was a good shepherd.

Our text is set in a time when there were bad “shepherds” – (bad Pastors) – who were scattering the “flock” – not caring for them, leaving the people on the side of the road “afraid and terrified”

Remember when Jesus was going around Galilee (Matthew 9:36) When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were hassled and helpless, “like sheep without a shepherd”.

Today we hear the promises of God for all people of all time.

Promise number :

*‘I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,’ declares the Lord.*

Promise number 2:

*‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.*

*In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.*

*This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.*

God promises a Good Shepherd to oversee his appointed Shepherds and in this way he will protect his sheep. At the end of the Church year, we are reminded of God's promise and absolute commitment to me his shepherd to you his sheep. Amen.

**Lord bless Pastor Dave and Pastor Paul with a love for your words and for your people.  
Amen.**

### **The Second Reading: Colossians 1:11-20**

May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

*This is the Word of the Lord* **Thanks be to God**



Here we have Jaenschky – a Callington boy.

Pastor Darren Jaensch the highest ranking Chaplain in the Australian Army –  
 Rank: Principal Chaplain (Brigadier),  
 Awarded an AM by the Queen just before she died.  
 His job was to minister to people who are about to put their lives on the line for our country – for us. You could say he ministers to those who are willing to shed their blood for us.

He also sadly ministers to the families of those who's sons or daughters have given their **life's- blood** for our country – for us.

They do this to bring us peace – their blood brings us peace.  
 In this reading we have the promise of one who will bring us eternal peace through the shedding of his of his life's-blood. It's not the peace of nation against nation – He brings the peace we need to be right with God.

Our sinful nature puts us at war with God. Jesus fights the war and gives his blood.  
 It's the strangest war – as the scriptures say his death is the victory

Death in a human war seems so hopeless – it seems like the enemy has won.

Darren's Job is to let people, who hold on to Jesus in the smallest conceivable way, that death is a victory – in death there is reuection through Jesus and with Jesus.

As the angesl said at the first Easter: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" ([Luke 24:5](#)). "He is not here: he is risen" ([Matt. 28:6](#)).

Imagine a family who have lost a son or daughter in a bloody war?  
 The message seems silly: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"  
 Matthew 10:28. Silly, offensive, to the world but to us who believe it is comfort - it is the power of salvation. Amen.

***Lord we give you thanks that you have given you life for ours. Your incoent blood instead of our corrupted blood. Stand with us on our last day and open the gates to eternbal ilife. Father watch over our defence men and women – lead them to trust in your sacrifice first and foremost. Amen.***

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### **The Gospel: Luke 19:11-27**

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

"But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

*This is the Gospel of the Lord* **Praise be to you, O Christ**



You know we all have exactly the same gifts and opportunities from God. There is so much work to be done in God’s Kingdom – in our church.

People say I don’t have enough Time.

**We all have exactly the same amount of time – we all have 24 hours in a day.**

You have to ask if we can’t pray, or read, or worship regularly – what are we doing with our time. How busy should we be?

If we can’t do the most basic things - pray, read, worship – then we have to ask are we busier than God wants us to be?

God gives us all exactly the same word – the same message of Jesus.

He intends for us to listen – to hear – to share.

No secrets, no special knowledge required to hear – it is the same, simple, loving word.

Jesus loves you. Jesus died for you. Believe in him and you will have everlasting life.

We all have exactly the same word.

- Why do some read God’s word at any opportunity?
- Why is it that some, even some who call themselves Lutheran or Christian, have not opened a bible in years – in decades – in a life time – when we all have the same amount of time.

We all have the same privilege to pray.

Jesus asks us to pray – is that too hard.

Prayers don’t have to be fancy - He says even our thoughts can be prayers.

Praying is not a gift that some have and others don’t.

If you have a heartbeat you have the ability, the privilege , and the urgent request of Jesus to pray.

He even gives us a model – when you pray pray like this: our father....you know the rest.

Prayer It’s not rocket science – mostly it’s just talking.

We all have the gift of prayer.

We have 3 people who turn up to our official Murray Valley Lutheran Community prayer time.

You know where this is going – a king gave 10 people 10 minas – let's say he gave ten people a \$1000 dollars each – all received exactly the same amount.

He said to them – I am going away put this money to work until I come back.

10 ordinary people – a \$1000 each.

When the King came back he wanted to see what had happened to his money.

He asked the first person what they did with the \$1000 dollars.

"I invested it" – here you go king I made \$10,000 with it.

The king was very impressed.

The next person came along and said "here you go king I made \$5000 bucks with it".

The King was very impressed.

The next person came along and gave the King a dirty old wallet with the original \$1000 in it. He said that he knew the King was a hard man and so he was afraid to lose the \$1000 dollars so he hid it in the ground.

The king was very angry and said he could have at least put it in the bank – in the LLL - and gained 1.95 percent.

This servant was more than just Lazy – he also blamed the King for his laziness – "you're a harsh king"

He blamed the king for his laziness – not a good move.

Thankfully this is a parable – and we wish it ended better – but it says the lazy servant was brought in front of the king and killed.

It is a parable – it is a teaching. It is a teaching that we all belong to the Kingdom equally.

We are all chosen – nothing to do with our goodness – but chosen by God's goodness.

We are all given exactly the same giftings, and opportunities in the kingdom.

The lonely widow we heard about last week belongs to us all – exactly.

When we use his gifts to bless others we are saying the King is King and we praise him.

When we do nothing with what has been given to us we are saying: The King is not King – and we do not praise him, we curse him.

We are all in this together, we have all been given the mina – the \$1000 dollars.

I've been wondering – we are always looking for people to offer their gifts and talents – we get new members to fill out a talent form – we want to know what they're good at – we want to know where would they would like to serve?

Is that a good model??

It kind of says if you're not gifted in a particular area then you don't have to do it.

Jesus says today we all have exactly the same gifts – we all have the \$1000 dollars given to us.

I know, you know – there're some who can play the organ and some who can't – some who do IT and some who can't – some who can sing and some who can't.

But the gifts of God - the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all of us.

We can all hear (some with aids) – all of us.

We can all talk.

We all can pray – "I can't pray aloud" – doesn't really cut it.

We all have the same message.

We all have a heartbeat.

We are in the one same family.

Are there any excuses?

The servant who offered the dirty old wallet back to God had plenty of excuses.

Clearly God doesn't want success he wants faithfulness.

It's not a question of how much we have, but what we do with

The nine people all used the \$1000 dollars in various ways for the kingdom – some making 10 fold, some making 5 fold.

Clearly the king says, as little as 1.95 percent would have pleased him.

One said get lost king and made nothing.

The King asks for faithfulness – do something – do your best - nothing more – nothing less.

In Hebrews (6) *"For God is not unjust; He will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for His sake in serving the saints, as you still do (Hebrews 6:10)."*

Today – the last Sunday of the Church year.

We have had the first reading a promise of a Good Shepherd – to foster his appointed shepherds so that they bless you and look after you.

Into very harsh times he says: *I will place shepherds over you who will tend you, and you will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any of you be missing,'* declares the Lord.

We have the second reading promising a King who will lay down his life for us – his will offer his very own innocent blood to cover our corrupted blood.

And we have the Gospel – the good news – that we are all equally privileged to serve in His kingdom.

We are now on the edge of a new Church year – what could be our new year's resolution?

- Put subtitles on the TV so we read more?
- We have three who pray together for the Murray Valley Lutheran Community?
- We have one who works with our youth?
- We have 30 men who come for a breakfast and 60 who come for a BBQ.
- We all give a fraction of our income.
- We all give a fraction of that fraction to special needs around the community and around the world.

Wouldn't it be comforting to be hungry, In a desperate war situation, in fear, knowing full well the rich will be giving a fraction, of the fraction they call "giving" to an agency, who will give you a fraction of that to relieve you?

What is a New Year's resolution?

Something that goes in one year and out the other.

Let's go out with the Gospel – we all are given exactly the same fullness of God's blessing – Jesus Christ – and through him we have life on earth and eternal life forever.

Paul says try this: [Ephesians 5:2](#) *..walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Walk in love .. we **all** can do **this!**

**Father, help to see the blessings you give to each and everyone of us. Help us to be a blessing to your kingdom. Amen.**