

9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – (OT-19)
ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA
Sunday 10th August 2025

Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur

Readings: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20 / Ps 50:1-8, 23-24 / Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 / Luke 12:32-40¹

Theme: *Dressed for Readiness*

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! ¹¹ What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats. ¹² When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more! ¹³ Bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation— I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. ¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove your evil deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil; ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. ¹⁸ Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: If your sins are like scarlet, will they become like snow? If they are red like crimson, will they become like wool? ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land, ²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Ps 50:1-8, 23

A Psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ The mighty one, God the Lord,
 speaks and summons the earth
 from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- ² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
 God shines forth.
- ³ Our God comes and does not keep silent;
 before him is a devouring fire
 and a mighty tempest all around him.
- ⁴ He calls to the heavens above
 and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
- ⁵ "Gather to me my faithful ones,
 who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

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⁶ The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge. *Selah*

⁷ "Hear, O my people, and I will speak,
O Israel, I will testify against you.
I am God, your God.

⁸ Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;
your burnt offerings are continually before me.

²³ Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me;
to those who go the right way,
I will show the salvation of God."

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

¹¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith, with Sarah's involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

¹³ All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴ for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Luke 12:32-40

³² "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night or near dawn and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ "But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

SERMON

Many decades ago, one of my brothers and I carried on in such a way as to make our parents miss an important event. Not for lack of warning and time to be ready, we simply ignored the directions and thus were not ready at the appointed time and as a result we suffered the humiliation of being sat in our family car in nothing but our underwear, in view as we believed by all passers-by. We had been misbehaving and deleted any remnant of patience in either parent. Dad parked the car in the main street, where my brother and I then sat, so embarrassed. That day marked a milestone in our lives; we learned the importance of being ready.

While I am not perfect and at times could still be better prepared, I stand before you today with a heart stirred by the call to be ready—not merely prepared for action, but ready in spirit, in faith, and in obedience. Our scriptures today remind us that there is a cost in not being prepared, but a benefit if we are. The Gospel is not a gentle suggestion. It is a summons. A summons to live as those who expect the Master's return, who walk not by sight but by faith, and who offer not empty rituals but lives of righteousness.

Isaiah opens with a vision—a heavy one. “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”². It's not a flattering comparison, after all, even today, Sodom and Gomorrah are not descriptive of places you want to visit. God's people had grown comfortable, going through the motions of worship while their hearts wandered. Distracted when they were called to focus. Sacrifices were abundant, but justice was absent. Offerings were made, but the poor were ignored. What do we see when we reflect on ourselves? Do we hear the same echo as Isaiah? Have we grown complacent, thinking that our comfort is deserved while others stay cold and go hungry? Have we mistaken religious routine for spiritual readiness?

Psalm 50 continues the theme. God, the Mighty One, speaks and summons the earth. He does not rebuke for lack of sacrifice, but for a lack of heart. “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,” He says, “and pay your vows to the Most High”³. – Readiness here is not about performance—it's about posture. A posture of gratitude, of trust, of obedience.

And then Hebrews lifts our eyes. “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”⁴. Abraham went out, not knowing where he was going. Sarah, old and barren, conceived, not knowing how. They lived as strangers, seeking a better country—a heavenly one. Their readiness was rooted in faith. They didn't wait for clarity before stepping forward. They trusted God who called them.

About yourselves, ask, Am I living like that? Am I ready to go where God sends, even when the map is blank? Am I seeking a better country, or settling for comfort here? Responding to God takes guts, it requires faith because we are not at the helm, and possibly we are unfamiliar with the path.

Then comes Jesus' voice in Luke: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom”⁵. What a promise! But note, it's followed by a challenge:

² Isaiah 1:10

³ Psalm 50:14

⁴ Hebrews 11:1

⁵ Luke 12:32

Sell your possessions. Give alms. Make purses that do not wear out. Be dressed for action. Keep your lamps burning.

Like the active commitment of St Stephen last week,⁶ responding to this challenge is not passive waiting. This is active readiness. The kind that rearranges priorities, loosens our grip on possessions, and tightens our grip on hope. Jesus paints a picture of servants waiting for their master, alert even in the second or third watch of the night. -- I wonder: Am I personally, are we communally that watchful? Or has the lateness of the hour lulled us into sleep? Do we only participate in what gives us pleasure, do we complain when effort is required with not immediate or obvious profit to us now?

Readiness, then, is not just about being prepared for the end—it's about being faithful in the now. It's about living each day as if the kingdom is near because it is. It's about trusting God's promises, even when they're unseen. It's about offering lives that reflect justice, mercy, and humility—not just songs and ceremonies. It is about surrendering comfort so that another, the stranger, the refugee, the homeless, the hungry, and the lonely can have the basics we all need.

So I ask you, as I ask myself: What needs to change for us to be ready? What distractions must be laid down? What acts of mercy must be picked up? What step of faith must be taken, even if the destination is unclear?

Our reflection needs to consider both our being as individuals and as a community of Christian faith. Let us not be found asleep when the Master comes. Let us be found faithful. Let us be found ready.

Let us pray,
 Lord, awaken our hearts to Your call.
 Strip away our complacency.
 Fill us with faith, mercy, and watchfulness.
 That we may live each moment ready for Your kingdom and Your return. Amen.

⁶ Sermon 03rd Aug 2025 St Peter's Anglican Church Bundoora: Feast day of St Stephen, *Deacon and First Martyr*