

A Devotion for the week before the 10th of May 2020

This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale, but with the intention of being available for any who are interested for their private use.

INTRODUCTION

This week we have a Psalm in which the writer thinks of God as his fortress. The Gospel reading mentions a place of many rooms and the other New Testament reading says we are living stones built into a spiritual house. This week's message is for everyone though, not just the real estate people.

HYMN No. 11 - The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord

You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.

THE PSALM - Psalm 31 verses 1 to 5 and 15 to 16

A summary : In you O Lord I take my refuge. You are my rock and my fortress. Lead me and guide me, be merciful to me in my distress. I in trust you, O God. My times are in your hands. Let your face shine on your servant, save me in your never-failing love

PRAYER

We come to you O God, we are in your hands. We are always in your hands, even when we forget you. Great and wonderful God, help us and protect us we pray. These are difficult times: difficult for us and difficult for the whole world, so keep us safe we pray, and deliver us from fearing the worst. Guide us towards always doing what is right and helpful, and cause us to think again when we are tempted towards selfish or destructive actions, words or attitudes. This we pray in Jesus name, Amen

HYMN No. 28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear

BIBLE READINGS -

I Peter 2 : 2 - 10 This likens us to living stones that are being built into a spiritual house, with Jesus as the cornerstone

John 14 : 1 - 14 Jesus says don't worry, trust in God. I go to prepare a place for you, a place of many rooms, the place where I am going. I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know the Father; it is the Father in me who is doing his work.

REFLECTION

These reading both mention buildings. That reading from first Peter jumps around a bit in quoting Old Testament verses. It compares the people of God to a building, each believer being a stone in the building, and the corner-stone being Jesus himself. Let's change that image slightly, let's not think about building a stone building like a temple, let's think about building the kingdom of God.

The question becomes: what have we done in our lives to be a part of the kingdom of God, and what have we done in our lives to build up the kingdom of God?

Generally, in Church services, we have a time of confession, where we address the wrongs in our lives. This time, for a change, I would like us to look at the right things we have done in our lives. It is not really the done thing, in our country, to acknowledge your own positive influence, but today I would like to encourage you in your faith and good works by helping you to see your good deeds.

I would like you to think back to a time when a young person said thank-you to you, or smiled, or ran off happily because you had helped them, or explained something to them, or comforted them. It may have been your child or grand-child, an apprentice or trainee or student, or a neighbourhood child. Or can you think of a time when you helped another person to do a worthwhile job, or encouraged them, or consoled them in their troubles? Or have you helped to care for someone who was sick? Have you worked in, or volunteered with, or donated to a charity? Have you, or have you been a member of a group, which helped to spread the good news of Jesus? Have you been a member of a Church? In short, have you have you worked at trying to make the world a better place in some way? If so, then you have helped to build the kingdom of God. The Bible says that God sees your good works and remembers them. The Bible also says that sins truly repented are forgiven and taken from us as far as the East is from the West. Therefore, we can read with confidence the words of John 14 where Jesus said “don’t worry, trust in God. I go to prepare a place for you, a place of many rooms, the place where I am going.”

HYMN No.2 - Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

PRAYER

God our Father, we pray for peace in the world, we pray for an end to leaders blaming each other for things that happen outside anyone’s direct control. We pray for an end to war, and we pray for those who are the victims of war, especially for the civilians and children. We pray for health workers who keep working, even at risk to their own health. We pray for the safety of all those others who keep working in this time of risk, those in food supply, in post and transport, and for those who care for the young, the old, and the disadvantaged. Lastly, we pray for ourselves, that we may have peace and confidence in our faith in you, and we pray together:

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No 16 - To God be the glory, great thing He has done.

The BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus comfort you, guide you and strengthen you.

And may the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen