

A Devotion for the week to Sunday 5th of July 2020

This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for use in other retirement villages and nursing homes and for those who are interested, for their private use.

INTRODUCTION This week we look the subject of confusion, how our own motives can be confused, and how we may become confused if different people want us to do different things.

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.

Let us look at Romans, chapter 7, verses 15 to 25. Saint Paul writes that he does not understand himself; he does the things he does not want to do, but does the things he hates. He means that he knows how he should act, but fails to do so. He concludes "what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?...Jesus Christ our Lord!"

PRAYER

Lord God, we are all people who have limits to our strength and determination. Generally, we know what we should do, but we don't always do it. Like St.Paul, we ask you to strengthen our resolve, to make us stronger people, more determined to do what is right and helpful and caring. Help us also, to refrain from those actions that are selfish or hurtful to others. Like St.Paul, we pray that you would give us the assurance of your forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

HYMN No. 3 - Fill thou my life, O Lord, my God

GOSPEL READING - Matthew, chapter 11, verses 16 to 19 and 25 to 30

Jesus said that the people were like children who complain when you won't play their games. They complained that John the Baptist did not eat or drink, but then complained when Jesus did. Jesus prayed in thanks that the truth was not revealed to those who thought themselves wise. Then He said to those who listened "come to me all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

REFLECTION

In Jesus time, everybody had their own opinion about what the Messiah should be like and what he should do. The strict Jews thought he should obey all of the Jewish law - as they understood it. The Zealots were like the Zionists, they wanted the Messiah to lead a political or military revolt and throw the Romans out of Israel. The Herodians, King Herod's followers, wanted to keep the wealth for the powerful, and most of the ordinary Jews just wanted to live their lives in peace. When Jesus looked like He might be the Messiah they were waiting for, all of these groups wanted Him to be on their side. Jesus wasn't having any of it.

Jesus did not come to lead or follow any particular group. He came to follow God and to lead other people to God. He came without the long list of rules the Pharisees and Scribes had, He tried to make things easy and simple, not hard and complicated. By avoiding the complicated Jewish rules that the strict Jews followed, He made following the true creator God open to people of all cultures and places. No longer did people have to make sure all their food was kosher, or live within easy walking

distance of the temple or synagogue. Followers of God were freed from all that. Reverence of God was a matter of heart, not a matter of performing actions.

In context, Jesus said that His yoke was easy - that is it was a good fit, and His burden was light. For the Jews of the time it meant that Jesus had not come to impose yet more rules that people would find hard to observe. It meant that faith in God would be something an ordinary person could live with and enjoy. Yes, there was work to be done, the yoke was there for a purpose, but it was a yoke of worshipping and following God in your daily life, not making your daily life fit around religious rules that shut down life, rather than making life better, fuller and more abundant.

HYMN No. 18 - Trust and obey

PRAYER

God our Father, come to us, and to all people in times of confusion. Help us to see your will and purpose in our daily lives. Help us to see how to help others in ways that work for them. We pray for wisdom for those people who have to decide between the better of several options. There are so many different challenges these days, calling us to change, or to stay the same, so help us to know what we should be doing and who we should be helping. Give us the wisdom to know what You would have us do and the determination to do it.

We pray for our friends and families, especially those in areas or countries where the virus is bad. Be with those who don't have jobs at present and help them to be able to use their time in ways that are useful and fulfilling. We pray that our families may be able to support each other in these challenging times and we pray for all who are unwell. 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 2 - Blessed assurance

The BLESSING

Jesus said : Come to me, all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

May the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen