

## A Devotion for the week to 12th of June 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 from Psalm 119, verses 105

Your word, O Lord is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

HYMN No. 1 - All people that on earth do dwell

*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.*

PRAYER

Today O Lord, we remember how good you have been to us over the course of our lives. We remember times when we have wondered at the beauty of creation. Maybe just looking out on the hills we can see from here, or at the beach, or in the bush, or on a holiday somewhere special. We thank you too for the people you have put into our lives, for our friends, for husbands or wives and for other family members. We remember those people who have encouraged and helped us, especially in the times when we needed someone the most. We thank you too for your presence with us, never failing, in the good times and the bad, ever loving and forgiving. Thank you, God for caring for us. Amen

HYMN No. 8 - How great thou art

BIBLE READING -

Romans 8 : 1 - 11 There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God sent Jesus to free us from the law of sin and death. Those who live by their sinful nature and are hostile to God and cannot please God. If you live by the Spirit, God will give you life.

REFLECTION

Again, as we read St.Paul's writings we find him so excited at the new truths of God that he just writes on and on, and he gets a bit hard to follow, but his excitement really does come across in his writing. In today's reading, Paul is looking at the big picture of sin and sinfulness. He says that a person who follows God, through the Spirit of Christ, is made righteous. That is, if we sincerely try to follow God, then God will consider that we are right, or acceptable to Him. If we have failed in the past, or if we fail from time to time in this stage of our lives, then that is still OK, as long as we can see our faults and still try to do what is right. It is not an occasional sin that condemns us. God knows that we are human, we are not perfect.

St.Paul also writes about sinful people. He does not mean good people who occasionally fail, but people who are consistently sinful by nature. God is not able to accept people who are consistently hostile to Him. As God tries to accept them, they continue to reject Him.

For St.Paul, this was all new. In his earlier Jewish life, Paul had measured every action against the Jewish Law. Only actions that met the standards of the many Jewish laws were acceptable to God, and if one of the laws was not kept, the person was condemned for that failure.

There were hundreds of laws covering all sorts of things, from washing, to eating and foods, to cleaning mould off walls, and so on. As well as all the things you must not do, was a long list of things you must do. It was a real burden to the average working person. Jesus came to change all that. Jesus said that His burden was easy. He made religious observance easy, not hard. Being a follower of God became faith from the heart, and desire for God, rather than a list of do's and don'ts.

And so, St.Paul writes: "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death." As it was for St.Paul, so it is for us today, we are not ruled over by a God of rules and punishments, but by a God of love and forgiveness. So remember - God loves you.

HYMN No. 27 - I am so glad that Jesus loves me.

#### PRAYER

God our Father, we confess those times when we have failed to live as you would have wanted us to. Lord God, help our hearts to be right. Through your Holy Spirit, help us to know what is right, and to always do the right thing when we possibly can. Forgive us we ask, for our failings, and strengthen our determination to be the best people we can be. Help us to realise that we are not condemned for a failure now and then, but that we can always be assured of your love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray for our friends and family, asking that you would be with them as you are with us. At this time of separation, may they know of our love and concern for them. Be with those in Government, and with medical and emergency workers, give them strength and wisdom in their tasks. We pray for those who are ill, as we pray for those who worry about them, and those who care for them. We pray lastly for the staff here, our friends here, and for ourselves, that we might live happily and well together. And we pray:

#### 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 13 - The king of love my shepherd is

#### The BLESSING

Accept, O Lord, our willing praise, your statutes are a joy to our hearts.

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

be upon you and remain with you always, Amen