

A Service for the week to the 19th of July

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 use in other retirement villages and nursing homes. It may be also distributed to any who are interested for their private use.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we reflect on Jesus parables about sowing seeds

HYMN No. 10 - Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation

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.

SOME VERSES FROM PSALM 139

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up. You know my thoughts, You are familiar with all my ways. Even if I went to the far side of the world, Your hand would still hold me fast. Search me O God and know my heart, be aware of my anxieties and lead me towards the everlasting way.

PRAYER

Lord God, you know us through and through, yet you still love us. We thank you for your care towards us over the course of our lives. You know, as we know, our short-comings, our failings, our doubts, and our fears and anxieties. Help us, through your grace, to be confident in your love for us and your acceptance of us. Strengthen our faith, we ask. Even though you are divine, you sent Jesus so that you could know what it is like to be human. We thank you for Jesus and the forgiveness he bought for us through his life and death here on earth. Amen

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

BIBLE READING

The Gospel reading is from Matthew chapter 13. We are thinking about the parables of the sower, verses 1 to 9 and 18 to 23, and the parable of the weeds, verses 24 to 30 and 36 to 43.

REFLECTION

In chapter 13 of his gospel, Matthew recalls some of Jesus memorable parables. They are stories. They are told to entertain and to be easy to remember, but their purpose is to put across some special meaning or spiritual truth. Today we look at two of the well-known parables from Matthew chapter 13, the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

In the story of the wheat and the weeds, a farmer sows his paddock with wheat, but weeds come up as well. Because the farmer can't get rid of the weeds without killing the wheat, he decides to let them both grow together. At harvest time, he can reap the whole paddock, separate out the wheat to keep,

and then burn the weeds. The meaning of this parable is that you will find good things and bad things in the world we live in. God will not remove all the bad things in the world until the end of time.

Matthew tells this second story before the story of the wheat and the weeds, it is the story of the sower. This is how it goes: A man was sowing grain seed on his farm. Some of the seed went onto the hard track where the birds ate it. Some seed went on shallow rocky soil where it sprouted, but quickly dried out and died. Some seed went in a weedy place where it was choked out by the weeds, but other seed went into good soil where it produced a good crop. Jesus explained this story, saying that there were all sorts of problems in the world that stop people from being fruitful. I think that Jesus meant that we should not be discouraged if we do not see great fruitfulness from our efforts. There are a variety of reasons why our efforts might not bear fruit, but that is not our fault. Our job is to be the best person we can be and do the best we can do. God does not blame us for the shortcomings or hardness of heart of others. We remember from the Psalm, that God knows us inside and out, so if our heart is right, that is what matters to God.

HYMN No. 20 - What a friend we have in Jesus

PRAYER

God our Father, at this time we think of all those who are sick. We pray for who care for them, for the testing staff, the doctors and nurses, and for all the workers at residential care facilities. We ask for wisdom and foresight for those in charge of health systems, for government and for public servants. We pray especially for those we know and care about, our family and our friends, here locally and further away. We think of parents with children home from school, and for those who no longer have jobs. Help all those in need, we pray, and help us to do the best we can, where we are, as we are able.

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 28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

THE BLESSING

Lead us, O God in the way everlasting

And may the blessing of God almighty,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always,

Amen