

Devotion for the week leading to the 9th. of August 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 - From Psalm 105, verses 1 to 4

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon His name. Sing praise to the Lord and tell of all His wonderful acts. Give glory to His name and let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord, rely on His strength and seek His face always

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.

BIBLE READING - Commentary on Romans 10 : 5 - 15 Moses said that if you always obey the law it will become habit, a part of your life and your heart. But now if you say that Jesus is your Lord, and believe that He is God's chosen one, then you are justified and will not be put to shame.

PRAYER

Under the old Jewish law, God's acceptance came through obedience to the Law. Under Jesus, it is faith that makes us acceptable to God. True faith leads us to follow God and obey Him.

Lord God, we pray for a fuller and deeper faith. Help us to follow you in our daily lives. We know that we do not have to fear your disapproval, but as we strive for your approval of all that we do, please guide and strengthen us to always do what is good, right and helpful. Guide us to follow you in all that we do so that we can have the pleasure of knowing that we are doing what you would want us to do. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

HYMN No. 9 - Praise my soul the king of heaven

READING - Genesis 37 : 1 - 4 & 12 - 28 and Psalm 105, verses 4, 5 & 6 and verses 16 to 24
This is the story of Joseph, his father Jacob, and his brothers.

REFLECTION

You may remember a stage-play called "Joseph and his amazing technicolor dreamcoat". It was from the 1970s and was written by the same people who later wrote "Jesus Christ, Superstar". One of its better known songs was "Any dream will do" and it told the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers as accurately as could be expected of a stage musical.

At the start of today's reading, we hear that Joseph had been telling his father Jacob those things that his brothers had been doing that they should not have been doing. The brothers were staying with the family's herds of sheep and goats some distance away from the main camp where their father Jacob lived. The brothers all thought that Joseph should be taught a lesson. Nobody likes people telling on them. Some of the brothers thought they should kill Joseph, but Ruben and Judah did not want to do him any real harm. Some traders came past who were travelling to another country, so the brothers sold Joseph to them as a slave.

They kept Joseph's special coat and put animal blood on it and took it back to their father. The trick worked and father Jacob assumed that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal.

From the story of Joseph up to this stage, you could say that he was a skite and a snitch. While nobody deserves to be sold into slavery, you can see why his brothers were sick of him. But, as you may remember, the story goes on. Joseph was a very intelligent person. He became an astute manager and he had a foresight of what the future might hold. Our Psalm reading tells the same story that Genesis does, but from a different viewpoint. The Genesis reading tells the facts of the story, but the Psalm tells of how God was with Joseph and how Joseph played a notable part in the history of the nation of Israel.

The story has some messages for us. The first is to try to live at peace with your family so they won't feel the need to defend themselves from your words or actions. Try to put things right with you family before they get too wrong. The second message for us is that even when things have gone wrong, God is still there. God can still help things to work out for the best, just as He eventually did for Jacob's family when Joseph helped them in Egypt.

HYMN No. 26 - I need thee every hour, O gracious Lord.

PRAYER

Thank you O Lord, that no matter where we find ourselves in life, you are there. No matter if there is a worldwide problem like the corona-virus, or a small problem of our own making, you are with us, caring for us and helping us. We bring these problems to you, both large and small, so we know that you are there with us in these problems. For all those who work in health care, in every capacity, we ask for your help. For our families, especially where there is discord, we ask for your calming presence. And for any problems we may have helped to cause, intentionally or unaware, we ask that you may bring peace. We ask too, in all those situations that worry us, that you would help to bring resolution.

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 31 - Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

The BLESSING

Give glory to God and let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice,

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