

Devotion for the week leading to the 23rd 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.

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.

INTRODUCTION

Today's story is about the mother of Moses who more-or-less obeyed an unjust law. She was in a complicated situation and she obeyed the law in such a way that she defeated the injustice of that law.

PRAYER

Help us O Lord, when things seem complicated. Help us when it is hard for us to work out what is the right thing to do. Lord God, take from us any shame or guilt we may carry because something went wrong when we were trying to do what was right. Forgive us, we ask, and take away those bad feelings we might still have from so many years ago. These days, when a situation is complicated, help us to understand. And when we can't understand all that is going on, help us to take the advice of those who care about us. All this we ask through the loving name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

HYMN No. 24 - Lead kindly light

BIBLE READING - Exodus Chapter 1, verse 8 to chapter 2 verse 10

This is the story of the baby Moses in the bull-rushes. The story is re-told in the reflection.

REFLECTION

This week, we continue the story of the founding family of Israel, the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There were about seventy people in Jacob's household when they moved to Egypt during the seven year drought. Jacob's son, Joseph, had invited them there to stay. Over many years, the people of Israel grew in number to be a large but distinct ethnic group in Egypt. It is not unusual for a nation to become wary of another cultural group living in its land. People tend to fear those who seem different, for no other reason than that they seem different.

The Pharaoh, the king of Egypt at that time, tried to put down the Israelites. They were used as slave labour on government building projects. The Pharaoh made life very hard for the Israelites. But still the Israelites grew in population. Then the Pharaoh made a law that all baby boys born to Israelite mothers had to be thrown into the river. Of course the mothers tried not to do that, and the mid-wives attending the births made all sorts of excuses, and they did not do it either.

A baby boy, Moses was born to an Israelite mother. She knew she had to obey Pharaoh's law, but she obeyed very carefully and very cleverly. She did not throw her baby into the river to drown. Yes, she put him in the river, but in a waterproof basket where she knew he would be found by the Egyptian women who went there to swim. It was one of Pharaoh's daughters who found the baby Moses.

Moses older sister had been hiding nearby, watching to see what would happen, and when Moses was found she came up and offered to find a nurse-maid for the baby. Pharaoh's daughter accepted the offer and said she would pay for the nurse-maid until the child was weaned. And so, Moses own mother became his paid nurse-maid until he was weaned, when he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter into the Egyptian ruling household.

This is one of the examples we see of the people of Israel surviving by being clever. Moses mother had technically obeyed Pharaoh's law about boy babies having to go in the river. She had obeyed with the opposite result in mind. Pharaoh had intended that the babies would die. The mother had intended that her baby would live, and would be as safe as possible. In Pharaoh's household, Moses grew up to be a well educated young man. He had his birth mother's high intelligence and his adoptive mother's compassion for others in need. He grew up to be one of the great leaders of Israel.

HYMN No. 18 - Trust and obey

PRAYER

We thank you, O Lord, for your presence among us. Thank you that you are close, even when our loved ones may seem far away. We thank you Lord, for the safety we have in this part of Gippsland. We pray for those all who are afraid, for all those who are not safe, and for all those who are sick. We pray for our families, our friends, and for all those who help us in our daily lives. Keep them all safe, happy and well. We pray for those without jobs and for all those in need, here in Australia and across the world. Today we remember especially those who are persecuted as part of an ethnic minority. All these things, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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 32 - Jesus wants me for a sunbeam

The BLESSING

May God guide your feet on the path of life when the way is uncertain,

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