

Devotion for the week leading to the 30th. 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, the first few verses say : Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name and make known what he has done. Sing praise to God and tell of his wonderful acts. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and seek his face always.

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

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: Father-like you tend and spare us, well our feeble frame you know. In your hands you gently bear us and rescue us from all our foes. We thank you, Heavenly Father, for your care for us. Through the life of Jesus you know the frailty of our humanity and so you are gentle with us in our failings. We know, through Jesus, that you are not a severe, aloof God of judgement. You are our loving God who cares for us and loves us. If we love you too, you look past our failings and accept us in our humanity. Help us, Father God, to accept your love and forgiveness and live our lives as the people you want us to be. This we ask through the loving name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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

BIBLE READING - Romans Chapter 12, verses 9 to 21

REFLECTION

St Paul writes : “love must be sincere. Hate what is evil, cling to what is good. Honour one another above yourselves. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” St. Paul was not writing about romantic love, but about the care and concern, the mutual respect and comfortable acquaintance that good friends share. This letter was written to the Christian friends at Rome. St. Paul wanted them to be sincere in their care for each other. He wanted them to each have the welfare of the others at heart. If they truly did this, then they would be clinging onto that which was good. They would also be working against any ill-feeling and disputes that might otherwise arise for whatever reason.

In verse 12 we read : “Be joyful in hope, faithful in prayer and patient in affliction”. I think, concerning hope, St. Paul was writing of the Christian hope of acceptance by God, and a life with God. Hope is a good, joyful thing. Hope is about something that we expect will happen in the future and that we are looking forward to. What do you hope for? Are you waiting for the birth of a great-grandchild? Are you looking forward to receiving an answer to a letter you have written? Is there something else you are hoping for? Enjoy your hope.

It is this positive forward-looking hope that helps us to endure life's trials. St. Paul writes that we should be patient in affliction. When those afflictions come, hope helps us to see through to the other side. Sometimes that affliction passes and sometimes we must patiently learn to live with it. Then, as we become used to our different life, perhaps a more difficult life in some way, we can still appreciate some of life's pleasures.

Next, St. Paul writes about the practical aspects of living well with other people. Being with others has its ups and downs. He writes that there is no place for revenge, for repaying bad things that may have happened to you by accident or by the intention of someone else. Revenge can be like a feud, with no ending. He writes that, as far as it is possible, live at peace with others. In any group, there will always be some who won't get on. Generally, the best you can do is to remain polite to each other and leave it at that. For most people, most of the time, St. Paul suggests we should make an effort to be a good friend. We should give and accept forgiveness and we should enjoy the company of others where we can. To this end, may God bless you all.

HYMN No. 8 - How great thou art.

PRAYER

Today, we pray for those around us, our family, friends and neighbours. We would ask, O Lord that you give us the love and the determination to be able to get along with all the people we come into contact with. Help us to care for, and assist our friends in any way that we can. Help us too, to be patient and forgiving towards those we find difficult. Help us, too, to come to terms with our own afflictions and problems. May we live through them in hope, or learn to live with them in patience. Be with our families we pray, and with our friends. We pray for those who are sick, those who are lonely and those who are fearful. 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 2 - Blessed Assurance

The BLESSING

May the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be upon you and remain with you always, Amen