

## Devotion for the week leading to the 16th 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 based on this week's Psalm, No. 133

How good and pleasant it is when families live together in harmony, it is like the welcome rains on the hills. The Lord gives His blessing, throughout this life and for ever.

HYMN No. 3 - Fill thou my life, O Lord my God, in every part with praise.

*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.*

FIRST BIBLE READING - In our reading from Romans chapter 11, verse 30, St. Paul writes that "We, who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy".

PRAYER

Thank you O God that you have mercy on us. Over the course of our lives there have been good times and bad. We have responded with courage and with care at times, but with negativity or anger at other times. Lord, relying on your mercy, we ask your forgiveness. Help us where we can, to put right those things that we have made wrong and to right those relationships that may have become stressed. In this, we ask for your strength, through Jesus name, Amen

HYMN No. 6 - Jesus lover of my soul

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Genesis 45 : 1 - 15

REFLECTION

This week, we continue with the stories of the Old Testament patriarchs. Joseph, the youngest son of Jacob, had dreamed of things that would happen in the future. He was a boy who had been well aware of his own importance and he had irritated his brothers no end. They had sold him as a slave to some traders who were going to Egypt, but had made his disappearance look as if he had been killed in an accident.

In Egypt, Joseph started out as a household slave, but because he was such a good forward planner, he worked his way up to being a senior administrator in the Egyptian government service. He foresaw a prolonged drought and helped the Egyptian nation prepare for it. After the first couple of drought years, Joseph's brothers came to the Egyptian capital to buy food because the drought was affecting them too. Joseph recognised his brothers even though they did not recognise him. Joseph was now the one in the position of power. He could sell food to his brothers very cheaply or he could make it unaffordably expensive. He could get his own back. He could be nasty. He could punish his brothers for what they had done to him.

Joseph chose reconciliation. He could see that the good things and the bad things that had happened in his life had all led him to being where he was. He could see that it was all part of God's guiding hand on his life. With this in mind, he asked his brothers to gather the whole family, including their elderly father Jacob, and move to Egypt where they would be secure.

I don't suppose that Joseph ever really forgot the bad things his brothers had done to him, but maybe he had come to realise what a total pest he had been as a child. Often, with age and maturity, we can look back and see that we haven't been perfect members of our families. Often, we can look back through the good times and the bad, and see God's guiding hand in our life's journey. Like Joseph, may we see our family relationships as more important than the ups and downs that our lives have from time to time.

HYMN No.28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

#### PRAYER

God our Father, today we pray especially for our families. Help us to be at peace with our families we pray, and help us to appreciate the different ways that families relate to each other these days. We pray for the good health of those we love and care for, both here in Australia and overseas. Please help those people who love and care for us, and for those who try to make our lives more enjoyable and hopeful. We bring all these concerns to you, along with the concerns of our own hearts.

#### 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 16 - To God be the glory, great things He has done

#### The BLESSING

May God who cares for all families, bring you love, peace and joy.

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