

## Devotion for the week leading to the 13th of September 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 also being available for private use.*

HYMN No. 8 - How great thou art

*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.*

From Exodus chapter 15, Miriam's song:

I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exulted. The Lord is my strength and my song, he has become my salvation. Who could be as great as you, O Lord? You are majestic in holiness and awesome in glory. In your unfailing love you will lead your people who you have redeemed. The Lord will reign for ever and ever, amen.

### PRAYER

Thank you Lord that you sent Jesus to show us the way to you, to show us the way to care for each other, and to show us your sacrificial forgiveness. May we accept your forgiveness and show it to others as freely as we have received it ourselves. In this time of coming spring, we thank you for the wonderful world you have created for us to be a part of. May we always do what we can to be helpful, and may we encourage others in their lives. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

HYMN No. 3 - Fill thou my life O Lord my God.

BIBLE READING - Matthew Chapter 18, verses 21 to 35. The reading is re-told in the reflection.

### REFLECTION

This reading is the parable of the unforgiving servant. It is a story that Jesus told to show how we should forgive each other.

The story goes: Once there was a man who had got himself into debt. Somehow he owed the boss 10 million dollars, and he was bankrupt, he could not pay. He went to the boss and told him all about his situation. The boss said he would cancel the debt, he was free, he no longer owed anything! The man was thrilled and he was very grateful. Later, the man saw a lowly employee who owed him 10 thousand dollars and the man demanded immediate payment from him. The lowly employee said he did not have the money right then, but he could get hold of it if the man gave him a bit more time. The man would not listen and had the bailiffs arrest the lowly employee and put him in jail until the debt was paid in full. The boss heard about this and called the man to come and see him. The boss said to the man: I cancelled your debt because you asked me to, why wouldn't you do the same for that employee who owed you so much less? The boss had the man arrested and put in jail the same as the man had treated the employee.

Jesus explained the parable. Each of you is like the man who had his huge unpayable debt cancelled. God has forgiven all your sins and bad behaviour. How can you possibly withhold forgiveness from someone else who has done a small wrong against you?

I have not re-told the story exactly. I have made the “ten thousand talents” and the “one hundred denarius” into amounts that make sense to us, and I have given them the right sort of scale of value. The man’s debt to the boss was huge, absolutely, totally unpayable, just as our debt of all the wrongs we have ever done might be huge, and might seem absolutely unforgivable. The good news is that God has forgiven us our sins, just as the boss cancelled the man’s debt. This gives us an obligation though. We are obliged to forgive other people for things they may have done against us, as the man should not have demanded repayment of the small debt the employee owed him. The debt did not have forgotten or cancelled, but that employee should have been given consideration, he should have been given the time and the opportunity to make good. Some wrongs that people do against us should be put right, but we must give them time and consideration. When things are put right, then there can be true reconciliation.

HYMN No. 40 - God forgave my sin (freely, freely)

#### PRAYER

We thank you, O Lord for the friends and family that we have, and who care about us. Help us Lord, to care for the people who care for us, and to extend forgiveness to them where that might be needed. As the world keeps changing, help us to understand that younger people see things differently these days, to how people our age saw things when we were growing up.

We pray for all those who help to care for us. We pray for our families who worry about us, and we pray for all those that are on our hearts at this time. Strengthen those who are sick, calm those who are stressed and energise those who have to work too hard at this time, we pray. Be with medical staff, researchers and government administrators, and help them to do their jobs wisely and well. We bring to you our personal concerns for those people and situations that worry us.....

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 27 - I am so glad that Jesus loves me.

#### The BLESSING

May God uplift your hearts with the release that comes from true forgiveness.

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