

## A Devotion for the week to 27th of Sept. 2020

*This service is written by Rob Barnes from Maffra/Heyfield Congregations for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for those who are interested, for their private use.*

INTRODUCTION from Philippians 2 : 6 - 11

Jesus took on the nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. He humbled himself and became obedient. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name above every other name, Jesus Christ the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

HYMN No. 16 - To God be the glory, great things He has done.

*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

Today O Lord, we remember how good you have been to us over the course of our lives. As the warmth returns to our land, we remember times when we have marvelled at the beauty of creation. Maybe just looking out on the hills we can see from here, or seeing the birds, or remembering a time at the beach, or in the bush, or on a holiday. We thank you too for the people you have put into our lives, for our friends, and for family members. We remember with thanks those people who have encouraged and helped us, especially in the times when we needed someone the most. We thank you too for your presence with us, never failing, in the good times and the bad, ever loving and forgiving. Thank you, God for caring for us. Amen

HYMN No. 8 - How great thou art

BIBLE READING - Matthew 21 : 23 - 32

*The reading is re-told in the reflection*

REFLECTION

In this reading, Jesus tells the parable of the two sons. Their father had asked them both to go and get a job done for him. The first son said he would not do the work, but later went and did it. The second son said he would go and get the job done, but he just never got around to it, and so he did not do what he said he would. Jesus had been telling this parable to the Jewish leaders and asked them which son had done what the father had asked. They gave the only answer they could - it was the son who had refused at first but later did the job - it was the first son.

The point Jesus had been making was this : don't exclude people, don't write people off. If someone does not seem to be living a godly life, there is still time for them to turn themselves around and do what is right. They are like the first son who initially refused to do what the father asked him to. The Jewish leaders had been keeping away from people like that, but Jesus had associated with them. Jesus was trying to explain to the Jewish leaders why he had a different attitude to the so called 'sinners' that they rejected. Jesus said that they were the people he had come to help so that they could find their way to God. Then they would be like the first son who had refused at first, but had done what was asked in the end.

In Jesus' parable, the character of the second son was a hint to the Jewish leaders and to us that we must be careful about how we behave. We must not say that we will do what the father wants but then not do it. We have to make sure we are not just paying lip-service to God. If we truly follow God then our actions must be in keeping with our words. We must live out the life that God calls us to.

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

#### PRAYER

God our Father, we confess those times when we have failed to live as you would have wanted us to. Lord God, through your Holy Spirit, help us to know what is right, and to always do what you would have us do. Forgive us for our failings we ask, and strengthen our determination to be the best people we can be. Help us to realise that we are not condemned for our failures, but remind us that we can always be assured of your love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray for our friends and family who we don't often see, asking that you would be with them as you are with us. At this time, may they know of our love and concern. We pray for those who are ill, and we pray for those who worry about them, and those who care for them. Be with those in Government, and with medical and emergency workers, give them strength and wisdom in their tasks. We pray lastly for the staff here, our friends here, and for ourselves, that we might live happily and well together. And we pray:

#### 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 13 - The king of love my shepherd is

#### The BLESSING

Guide us, O Lord, in all that we do, 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