

Devotion for the week leading to the 4th of October 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 - This week, our devotions are based on Psalm 19

We begin with the closing verse of Psalm 19 : “May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.”

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

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

We know, O Lord that we can never repay you for all the good you have done for us throughout our lives. All we can do is thank you for this beautiful world and for all the sights and wonders that please us. We thank you for our families, those who have cared for us and those we have cared for. Thank you Lord for the love we have been able to give and for the love we have received. Thank you too, for the friends we have met along the way and for those who have taught us and guided us. Help us, O Lord to always remember to thank you for your many blessings. Amen

HYMN No.22 - All things bright and beautiful

This week's readings, if you want to read them yourself, are Psalm 19 and the ten commandments found in Exodus 20: 1-20

Reading from Psalm 19 verses seven to thirteen; The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making the simple wise. They are more precious than gold, yes more than much fine gold. By keeping them your servant is warned, in keeping them there is much reward.

The whole of this psalm is written in a poetic 'call and response' form. The first part of each line is general longer, and would have been called out by the leader at the front of the congregation. The people of the congregation would have then responded with the second part of the line. In our Bible, most of the verses are actually two of these responsive lines.

This part of the psalm is remembering how good God's commandments are. Of the ten commandments, the first few are about God: worship God, have no other gods or idols and keep the Sabbath. The first commandment points us towards God, the God of love. The second pointed the people of Israel away from the other local gods and idols which were mostly gods of sacrifice, fear and oppression. The next says that you should take regular, special time off to keep yourself aligned to a godly life. Make a special day when you can reflect on the God of goodness, spend some time with your family, and get the week's frustrations into perspective. Keeping the Sabbath is about keeping a balanced life.

The next commandment, honour your father and mother is about maintaining good family ties, respecting and caring about each other, and keeping in touch.

Then comes a group of commandments that form the basis of most of the world's legal codes. Don't murder, respect marriage, don't steal and don't tell lies about other people. These commandments help any group of people to live together with a degree of security and mutual respect. They were expanded into the extensive Jewish legal code set out in the next books of the Old Testament. I only want to note one thing here, the old translation of "Thou shall not kill" is much better translated as "you shall not murder" which is what the newer Bibles have. The commandments conclude with words that sound like something Jesus would have said: do not covert another person's spouse or anything that belongs to them. These are matters of the heart. Be content with what you have. Be thankful for what you have. Don't be jealous of what another person has.

Returning to the psalm, the next two verses lead us into our prayers of confession: 'who can discern their own errors? Forgive us for the errors we can't discern. Keep us from wilful sins and then we will be blameless.'

And so, let us pray: Lord God, we pray that you would take our sins from us. Help us to put right those things that are wrong. Help us to be at peace with uncomfortable memories from years ago. And give us the strength to always do what is right we pray, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

HYMN NO. 2 - Blessed Assurance

O Lord our God, creator of the universe, thank you that you care for us no matter how small or insignificant we may seem. Thank you for our family and friends, and for the people who care for us, keep them safe in your care we ask. Be with all who are sick or lonely we pray, and watch over our hours and days and keep us close to you.

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 9 - Praise my soul the king of heaven

The BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you

May He cause his face to shine upon you

and give you His peace

Amen