

Devotion for the week leading to the 15th of November 2020

(Wednesday the 11 / 11 / 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, we begin with the theme of last week's reading about the ten bridesmaids. In First Thessalonians, St. Paul tells us that the Lord will come suddenly like a thief in the night. He then goes on to write; let us be self-controlled, putting on faith to protect us like armour and salvation like a helmet. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

HYMN No. 21 - Stand up, stand up for Jesus

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, on Remembrance Day, we pray for all of those places in the world where there is war or unrest. We pray for all Australian service personnel, wherever they are. We pray especially for the Middle East, where there always seems to be war, for Gaza, Palestine and for Afghanistan. We pray that you would help world leaders to be self-controlled, and work towards agreement with others rather than domination over them. Help us to be self-controlled too, so that we can encourage others in faith, hope and all those other positive things that make life better for us all. Forgive us, we pray, for those times when we have failed others and failed you. Grant us the assurance of your pardon we pray, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and our salvation, Amen

HYMN No. 11 - The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.

REFLECTION

Today's reading comes from Matthew chapter 25, verses 14 to 30. It is generally called the parable of the talents. Different Gospel writers tell this parable a little differently but the meaning and the message are consistent. It goes like this. A wealthy man who had a number of employees had to go away on a business trip for some time. He left some of his affairs in the hands of three of his employees. He gave them each an amount of money to use in business while he was away. He returned suddenly and called those three employees in, so they could tell him how they had fared while he was gone. The first one, to whom he had given the most money, had doubled his investment. The second employee, who had been given a moderate amount of money, had also doubled his funds. The businessman congratulated them and promoted them both because they had lived up to his hopes for them. Then the third employee was called in to account for his work. He had been entrusted with the least amount of money. He returned the money he had been given, he had kept it safe. He explained himself to the businessman saying, "I know how you always like to make a profit, but I was so afraid of what might happen if I made a loss that I hid your money to keep it safe, so here it is, all safe, all back again." The businessman was angry that the employee had not even earned bank interest by investing the money. He gave that employee the sack and took the money away from him and gave it to the first employee who had doubled his investment.

This is another one of those parables where you don't want to try and make too much out of the details. The message for us seems to be that we should make the most out of all the skills, abilities and opportunities that we have. So don't sell yourself short. Do the best you can and don't even be afraid to take the occasional risk. I don't think this parable justifies bad business ethics or a lack of understanding towards others, because that is not consistent with the rest of Jesus' teaching. This parable is just about not wasting who you are or what you can do. If you can thank others for their efforts, then thank them. If you can smile at others and brighten their day, then smile. If you can visit others or help them in any way, then do what you can. If you can but pray, then pray. God does not expect you to do what you cannot do, He expects you to do the best that you can actually do. When we do that, we can be assured of these words "well done good and faithful servant."

HYMN No. 9 - Praise my soul, the King of Heaven

PRAYER

God our Father, today we remember those members of our families who went to serve our country in the times when it needed to be defended. We remember them still, even though most have passed on. We ask your special care on those who still live with the scars and memories of conflict. Thank you Lord that we can live in a self-governing country that values justice and freedom of religious faith, and cares for those who are not so well off. Grant wisdom to our leaders, O Lord, so that they can work towards making our good country a better place for all. Be with us and be with those we care for, we pray. Help us to live the kind of lives that you would have us live, making us fulfilled and content. We also bring to you the concerns our own hearts: those things that bring us joy.....those things that worry us.....those things that make us glad to be alive..... .

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 19 - Onward, Christian soldiers

The BLESSING

May God the creator, who created us to love, make us aware of His love for us.

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