

Devotion for the week leading to the 10th of January 2021

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.

INTRODUCTION from Isaiah 60:1-3 : Arise, shine, for your light has come. The glory of the Lord rises upon you. Even though darkness may cover the Earth and its people, the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you.

HYMN No. 24 - Lead kindly light

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 thank you O Lord that you sent Jesus into the world to be our light and show us the way. Help us Lord, to follow you more closely through this year. Help us to see the better way rather than just the easiest way. Help us to be able to see the good things that we can do each day, and give us the strength to be able to do them. Help us to leave the troubles of last year behind us, for surely, this year may have enough troubles of its own. Help us to accept that sometimes things will not go as we might wish, and give us the grace and patience to bear the inconveniences that may arise. This we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM No 29, From Verses 1& 2, 10&11 : Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name. Worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness. The Lord sits enthroned above the flood. The Lord is enthroned as king for ever. The Lord gives strength to His people. The Lord blesses His people with peace.

HYMN No. 9 - Praise, my soul, the king of heaven.

BIBLE READING - Mark, chapter 1, verse 4 to verse 11

REFLECTION

Today's reading starts by telling us about John the Baptist and then goes on to tell us about John baptising Jesus in the Jordan river. John the Baptist was that rough prophet who had been living out in the bush wilderness area near the Jordan River. He called on people to repent of their sins. He wanted people to set themselves higher standards as Jewish followers of God. He asked people to come and be baptised as a sign that they had changed their ways. Baptism in water was a sign of being washed clean of sin and evil.

John did not get on very well with the officials in the Temple in Jerusalem. He told them they should change their ways and be baptised as well. He did not tell the people to go to the Temple more often as the temple officials would have liked, but he told people to live better daily lives, to be honest and helpful.

Jesus had come to the place where John was baptising and he had asked John to baptise him too. John said he did not want to baptise Jesus, because Jesus did not have any sin that needed to be forgiven, but Jesus wanted John to baptise him as a sign that he had left his old life behind and his new life of ministry and mission was beginning. They could both see that they had different interpretations of what it meant to be baptised in this situation, and John agreed to Jesus request, and baptised him. Jesus then began his new life as Messiah.

None of us have had that sort of change, but there would be particular times in all of our lives when there have been changes to the way we would live our lives. Leaving home, finishing school, starting our first job and getting married are all big changes we make in our lives. Later on, if we had children, the last child leaving home also marks a major change in our lives. The changes don't seem to stop coming. Some changes are very good, other times we change because we must. Sometimes it is just us who changes, and sometimes we have to adapt to a change that has come to the whole world. When the Corona-Virus came, it was a change that meant I could not come to Care Facilities to conduct Church Services. I had to change and send these services out by email. I had to adapt to the changes in the world.

For Jesus it was the opposite. He chose baptism to show a change, but he was not changing to follow the world. He was marking a change in Him that would change the rest of the world.

HYMN No. 23 - Nearer my God to thee

PRAYER

Thank you, O Lord that you care for us in these times of change and challenge. Help us to meet the changes and challenges of this new year. Help us to adapt to change even if we really want things to keep going on the way they were. We pray for all those people close to us and across the world who have had bad changes in their lives. We pray for those who suffer change through no fault of their own; due to bush-fire or flood, earthquake or famine. We pray too for those who have lost loved-ones over the past year. And we pray for our families and friends, that they might be safe, happy and well, wherever they are. And we pray together:

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 28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

The BLESSING

May the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be upon you and remain with you always, Amen