

## **Devotion for the week leading to the 31st. 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.*

As you read or hear these words, remember that God is with you, and God will always be with you no matter where you are. You are not forgotten, you will never be forgotten by God. Jesus said that wherever two or three were gathered in His name He would be there with them, but even if you are by yourself, God still hears your prayers.

HYMN No. 3 - Fill though my life, O Lord my God, in every part with praise

*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 Psalm No. 111

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the gathering of the believers. Great are the works of the Lord, we think on them and delight in them. His righteousness endures for ever. The Lord is gracious and compassionate. His works are faithful and just. He has provided redemption for His people. Eternal praise belongs to Him.

### **PRAYER**

Lord God, we confess that sometimes we do not remember to thank you for the good times we have had in our lives. We remember those experiences we had, the things we learned and the people we loved, but we don't think to thank you for the way they came to be in our lives. We confess too that sometimes we forget to thank others for the help they give to us, and the things they do for us. Forgive us, O Lord we pray, for not being the best people we could be. Forgive us too, we pray, for those times we have failed in the past. For those things we did or did not do. Take from us the regrets of sins of long ago, and bring peace to our souls we pray. Reconcile us to You and to our past. Thank you O God, for your never-failing love towards us and all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN No. 20 - What a friend we have in Jesus

BIBLE READING - The Gospel of Mark, chapter 1, verse 21 to 28

### **REFLECTION**

This passage from the book of Mark tells of a time at the start of Jesus' ministry when he was teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum. We are not told if Jesus was their regular Rabbi, or if he was an invited guest preacher. The Gospel writer tells us that Jesus' style was different to that of the others. Mostly, the Rabbis would read the set Bible passage for the day and discuss some alternatives of what the passage might mean, and how it might apply to the people who were listening. It has been said as a joke that in a group of any five Rabbis you will get at least six opinions.

Today's reading tells us that Jesus taught with authority. He was able to say with certainty what the passage of scripture meant and how it applied to the people he was talking to. This is what impressed those who were listening.

Another thing that happened at this synagogue service is that there was a man there who had some kind of convulsive fit. People these days think he may have been an epileptic. The people of that time thought he had an evil spirit. He said to Jesus: "I know who you are, you are the holy one of God." The people thought that this was the devil recognising Jesus, so they believed those words with some certainty.

The writer, Mark, uses this synagogue service as the event to announce the start of Jesus mission and show us what style it would take. Jesus would teach people the truth about God and he would care for those in need. Jesus goal was not to make himself famous, but to bring God's message and God's care to all people.

HYMN No. 13 - The king of love my shepherd is.

#### PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are always ready to help us and all people. Help us to follow you, doing the best that we can in your service. We pray for all of the people around us, that they may be able to live as happily as they can. May all people know that they are never really alone and that there is always comfort available from you. Bless all who live and work here we pray, and all who help us in our lives. Where there is illness, help us to appreciate the health we do have. Where there is loneliness, help us to be a friend. Where there is pain, help us to find courage and distraction. Help us O Lord to look outside ourselves, with our limitations and troubles and may we be as cheerful as we can be, and as caring as we can be. 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 28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear

#### The BLESSING

May you be able to feel God's presence at all times and in all places,

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