

Psalm 46:10 tells us “*Let be and be still, and know (recognise and understand) that I am God.*”

Today’s reading for your perusal are: Matthew 15: 10-20 & 21-28 and Romans 11: 1-2a, 6-8 & 29-32.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Many people today in the church like the Apostle Paul look to the church and the world and ask the question: *Did God reject his own people?* [Paul’s answer] *Certainly not! [He said]: I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people, whom he chose from the beginning.* Paul is reminding us here that God has not changed and will not change, the world will change and things will pass away but God’s word and His grace and mercy will never change, and that is a comforting thought. The Christians of this world need to be reminded that God’s grace and mercy is there for everyone all the time, all we must do is ask, knock and seek.

⁶ *His [God’s] choice is based on his grace, not on what they have done. For if God’s choice were based on what people do, then his grace would not be real grace.* Again, Paul teaches us in his letter to the Romans that grace and works (what people have done) are completely opposed to one another. To put it another way, grace and works of the flesh are mutually exclusive. Where one exists, the other cannot exist. If you and I are into our own works, then we are out of grace. If we are in grace, then we are out of works. Anytime we get into works, the grace of God ceases to operate on our behalf. This leaves God no choice but to back off and wait until we have finished trying to handle things ourselves, and how often in our lives has things gone wrong because we didn’t rely on God, but thought we could do better ourselves? So, I say to you today, take your hands off the situations, circumstances and or relationships that concern you and let God’s grace go to work for you! As a famous preacher once stated - Let go and let God! If you do that then you will have peace.

⁷ What then? The people of Israel did not find what they were looking for. It was only the small group that God chose who found it; the rest grew deaf to God’s call. ⁸ As the scripture says, “God made their minds and hearts dull; to this very day they cannot see or hear.” My friends, the Bible teaches us and reminds us time after time that God is all knowing and He knew that the people of this world through their free will, will make the choice to ignore and turn away from His teachings and instead

will listen to the false teachings of this fallen world and this especially was true for the people of Israel.

²⁹ For God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses. God does not change His mind with reference to His call. Even though Israel is presently in a state of unbelief, God's purpose will be fulfilled in her during the period of the Tribulation [the period of suffering/testing at the end of days]. ³⁰ As for you Gentiles, you disobeyed God in the past; but now you have received God's mercy because the Jews were disobedient. ³¹ In the same way, because of the mercy that you have received, the Jews now disobey God, in order that they also may now receive God's mercy. ³² For God has made all people prisoners of disobedience [failure or refusal to obey rules or someone in authority = the problem of this modern world.], so that he might show mercy to them all. Psalm 46:10 tells us *"Let be and be still, and know (recognise and understand) that I am God."* We are taught in the Bible that disobedience leads to ruin and an unhappy life, whereas the Lord is the complete opposite, instead He encourages us to be still and to know that He is God. For us living in this hedonistic modern world where man is only out for self, it is difficult in our modern world to be still or quiet because we are being bombarded by the world's ways to commit wilful sin. In other words our body wants to be up to no good by following the bodies desires all the time and not focusing on the peace of God found through His Word. This means as men and women of faith we need to be still in the presence of God to renew ourselves in and through Him. Do not go to God and talk to Him only when you want or need something, we are all guilty of this as it is part of the selfish nature of the bodily desires. Instead let us spend quiet time with Him just listening for His voice. He will give you great revelation and direction if you will be still before Him and simply listen and gain His peace.

Jesus addressed this when he said: "Listen and understand!" ¹¹ It is not what goes into your mouth that makes you ritually unclean; rather, what comes out of it makes you unclean." ¹² Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that the Pharisees had their feelings hurt by what you said?" Too many people in our modern world persecute the church and Christians because their feelings are hurt, because God's word cuts deep to the truth of the matter. People in today's society do not like to be reminded of their immoral living so they persecute the Christian. But Jesus tells us quite clearly: ¹³ "Every plant which my Father in heaven did not plant will be pulled up," answered Jesus. ¹⁴ "Don't worry about them! They are blind leaders of the blind; and when one blind man leads another, both fall into a ditch." Jesus is telling us that we are not to worry

about the false teachings of this modern world, instead let us live our lives by God's word, let us be faithful to God and focus on Christ, remember He told us not to worry about who or what can damage the body but instead fear [respect/revere] Him who can destroy both body and soul – what is more important to you to have man's respect or God's blessing?

¹⁵ Peter spoke up, "Explain this saying to us." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "You are still no more intelligent than the others. ¹⁷ Don't you understand? Anything that goes into your mouth goes into your stomach and then on out of your body. ¹⁸ But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these are the things that make you ritually unclean. ¹⁹ For from your heart come the evil ideas which lead you to kill, commit adultery, and do other immoral things; to rob, lie, and slander others. ²⁰ These are the things that make you unclean. But to eat without washing your hands as they say you should—this doesn't make you unclean." Jesus is teaching us to be careful how we think, speak and act. For words, as we know all too well, can bring both healing or hurt, so be at peace with God and ask Him to guide you so that you can be a blessing always, and let your words be loving encouraging words, conveying God's love and blessings on all whom you meet.

We have a good example in the Canaanite woman when she cried out to Jesus: "Have mercy on me, sir! My daughter has a demon and is in a terrible condition."

²³ But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, "Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!" Once again Jesus was testing his disciples and the woman herself, what does their works show, who do they trust?

²⁴ Then Jesus replied, "I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel."

²⁵ At this the woman came and fell at his feet. "Help me, sir!" she said.

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

²⁷ "That's true, sir," she answered, "but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their masters' table."

²⁸ So Jesus answered her, "You are a woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you." And at that very moment her daughter was healed. Too many of us try to do what we think is right only to have it backfire and cause problems. It is when we Let go and Let God that we

find His peace and when we trust in Him and allow Him to lead us it is then we pass His grace on to others and bless them in Jesus name. How do you want to live your lives in peace and be a blessing to others or struggle as too many do in today's world?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father too many people around us today are in pain and are not happy with themselves or their lives. We pray today Lord that you will guide these people through your Holy Spirit to bring them to your peace, just as we ask you today Lord to bless us your children and grant us your peace also. Each day we wake up and pray to you for strength and for patience to get through the day so that we can do and carry out your work in whatever way you call us. All we ask Father is for you to give us the strength to do it.

Today we pray for all those who have been affected with the train crash outside Stonehaven this week, we pray for the emergency services workers who all responded to this, for the engineers and the families of all those killed and injured, be with them we pray and grant them your peace and bring comfort to their heavy hearts. Help also those who have been and still are being affected by the Coronavirus pandemic in our country and the world, again Lord we pray for strength and peace in this troubled time, for we know that you are always there for and with us, you never leave us alone. When we are alone it is because we have turned our backs on you and so we pray earnestly today that no one will do that. Help us Lord and guide our prayers so that we can intercede for those who need prayer today, guide us with the Holy Spirit so that we can petition people in your name for healing of body, mind and spirit today.

We pray Lord for our church and for all the Christians who are working hard to try to get the buildings open once more so that people can meet together in fellowship and worship you. But at the same time we take comfort in knowing that we worship you each day of our lives in our homes, when we are out for a walk or going for a drive, let us always worship and praise your Holy name for God is good, and God is good all the time. Amen.