

Bible readings and a short reflection

Romans 7 vs15-25a

¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature^[b] a slave to the law of sin.

Matthew 11 16-19 and 25-30

¹⁶ "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

¹⁷ "'We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.'

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

The Father Revealed in the Son

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Reflection

Well, after reading these readings, I don't believe that any of us feel good about ourselves. Romans, verse 24 sums my feelings up. What a wretched person I am!

Within our daily lives we see and hear that people have done good and bad. As we read the newspapers or watch the news we hear and see some of the ways that people have treated each other. People that we speak to will tell us what has happened to the neighbour down the road, whether we want to hear it or not.

As we listen and watch what happens in our world, our mind starts thinking about how this makes us feel. We become engaged and often feel that we would like to do something about it. Maybe offer help, start a campaign, sign a petition or we may even pray about it.

All that we hear and see is not good. This is because humans are to blame for the news. We as a human race provide reporters with the news for the day. Our actions and what we say can provide hate, ill feelings or joy and love.

What a wretched person I am!

How many of us can be honest with ourselves and see where we have gone wrong or offended? We can be so engrossed in what we are doing and our own opinions, that we forget to consider those around us.

I believe that we all want to do good but our sinful nature prevents us from doing so all the time. We need to try harder to make our world a better place. To do this we need to start with ourselves. It is no good us doing right some of the time. Doing right needs to come from within our heart, mind and soul.

At the beginning of Isaiah chapter 11 it says this:

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

You may be thinking, yes Kerry but we are not righteous in the same way as our Lord. This is true, but there are ways that we can become more like him. We need to set ourselves free so we do what our minds and hearts want to do.

It is only when we give our lives completely to God that we are truly free. Being free in God does not mean we can do what we want, when we want. Freedom for a Christian means that we be the person God intends us to be.

When we have given ourselves completely to God the forces and desires that once hindered us can be replaced by blessings, forgiveness and love.

To help us do this we will need to:

Seek his presence, read our bibles and spend time talking to Him. He knows you already so be honest with Him.

Walk in the spirit, do good for those around us and ourselves, maybe read Galatians 5:22-23,

Invite wisdom, God wants us to ask Him for this, please read, *James 3:13*

Be generous, Jesus said "It is better to give than receive." Perhaps read 1 John 3:17.

This will help us to receive true freedom. A blessing and grace that can empower us to do what is good and right.

Our reading from Matthew concludes with familiar words inviting us to the Lord's presence. ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Through Christ, God graces us with forgiveness, freedom, love and life. With all these good gifts and feelings let us share them to make a better world, and more importantly make a better us. Let us focus on God and do what we know we should do, not what we ought not to. Let us fight a good fight in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kerry