



9 JULY 2023

Welcome

Welcome to church this morning, we hope you enjoy being with us.

Lectionary Readings

This week 9 July, 2023

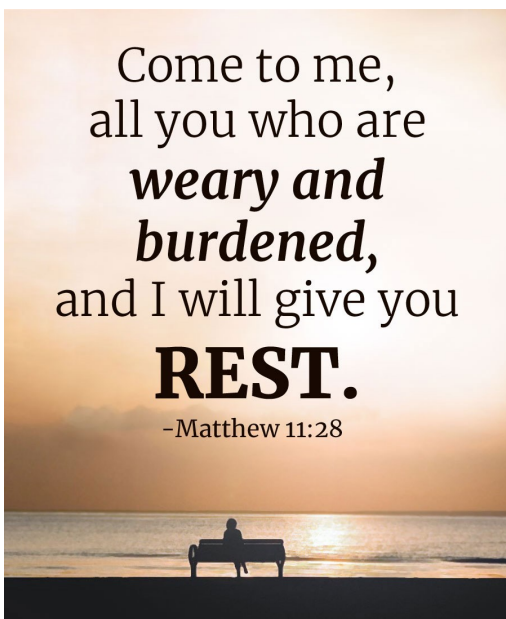
Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67
Psalm 45:10-17
Romans 7:15-25a
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Next week 16 July, 2023

Genesis 25:19-34
Psalm 119:105-112
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Come to me,
all you who are
**weary and
burdened,**
and I will give you
REST.

-Matthew 11:28



Gail's Message

I can think of nothing worse than being thrown into prison on trumped up charges. Imagine how it must feel to suffer the deprivations of prison as an innocent person. In our Old Testament story this week we will think about Joseph, Abraham's great grandson, a man wrongly accused of a crime he did not commit.

Thrown into an Egyptian prison he faced the threat of being executed according to the whims of the Pharaoh. I wonder how he managed to survive. Did he become bitter and plot revenge, or did he sink into a pit of despair and simply give up?

As I have pondered Joseph's story I have been reminded of two other men of more recent times, Viktor Frankl and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, men who managed to remain true to themselves and their faith in God despite being victims of Adolf Hitler's oppressive regime during WWII.

Viktor E. Frankl, in *Man's Search For Meaning*, writes about the handful of inmates within the concentration camps who would go about "through the huts, comforting others (and) giving away their last piece of bread". "There were always choices to make", writes Frankl, "there were always decisions to be made, "a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom".

The good news about Jesus Christ proclaims that as believers we are in Christ, that is, Christ comes to be with us in our inner being, at the core of our consciousness. This is our inner freedom.

We may not face the horrors of concentration camps or prison but all of us on a daily basis have a choice to make about how we react to the situations life throws at us.

May we be true to who we are in Christ and resist the powers that threaten to rob us of our Christian identity. May we submit to the gentle yoke of Christ whose is gentle and humble of heart, for there we find rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28-30).