



The foundations of the kingdom

Heather Smith *reflects on*

Genesis 12:1-4a and Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

How would you define a good person? By how they behave, of course. But since outside fairy tales nobody is ever completely good or completely bad, what percentage of a person's actions must be good for them to be classified as a good person? And, what makes an action good or bad? Is it motivation or outcome?

Ever since Abram left his father's house in response to God's call, people have struggled with the idea that it is not our actions that make us righteous, but our belief and trust in God. Abraham, as Abram later became, "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness". Belief in God has two consequences – it brings us personal righteousness, and it also enables God to further the kingdom through us.

It is as well that Abraham did not have to rely on his own righteousness. His actions were, at times, far from what we might describe as good. He passed off his wife as his sister in Egypt because he thought his own life would be in danger if Pharaoh realised he was married to this attractive woman. In fact she was also his half-sister – all the best lies have some element of truth in them. Despite it all, though, he believed God and could summon up courage to follow God's lead and create the foundations of the great story of salvation. 🌱

God, the source of all our righteousness, help us to recognise what you are saying to us, to believe, and to act upon it, so that you, and others, may recognise our righteousness and know that we follow you. Amen.

Leap into Lent

Ricarda Witcombe continues her Lenten series.

Let us take a sideways look at the word "Lent" and think about things that are "lent" to us. It is often hard to lend something precious, for someone else may not take such good care of the thing that is ours. It is an amazing gift to be trusted with something of value. What if

we thought of this season of Lent as an incredibly precious gift of time that is lent to us by God our creator? How might we live differently if we heightened our awareness of who our time belongs to? An ancient Easter prayer to Christ affirms that "All time belongs to you, and all ages."

As we continue through this Lent, perhaps we might take some moments each day to remind ourselves who we belong to, and of the gift of life that is ours to tend, to share and, ultimately, to return. 🌱

“ Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought it would be like and learn to find joy in the story you are actually living.

Rachel Marie Martin, author

International Women's Day

by Lisa Tulfer

Today is International Women's Day. First marked in 1911, it was initially about campaigning for women's right to work without discrimination. It was soon also concerned with the campaign for women's suffrage. The 1917 protests in Russia, expected to be only minor demonstrations, triggered significant events in the Russian Revolution. Thereafter, Women's Day was predominantly celebrated by Communist countries for several

decades, until it was adopted by the feminist movement in 1967, and in 1970 was declared an international day by the United Nations.

During its history, it has variously emphasised protest against discrimination and celebrated womanhood, but continues to highlight development issues: equality, discrimination and participation, the impact of war, displacement, sexual violence, and access to education.

Writing for the diocesan website last International Women's Day, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, referred to "dignity" and "fulfilling potential" – these are surely what we should be ensuring for all God's people. 🌱

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Tuesday 10th March – 7pm – Fellowship. The Lent Study for Fellowship is Fasting.. Come along and join in the discussion or just come along and listen.

8pm – Choir

Thursday 12th March – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

Friday 13th March – 2pm – If you are able to come along and help, there will be a tidy and clean in the church.

Sunday 22nd March – 11.15am Communion will be celebrated in the kirk

Readings - Genesis 12: 1-4a; Romans 4:1-5; John 3:1-17

Hymns: 124, 483, 214, 530, 512

Blessed to be a Blessing

We believe that the needs of the world can be met in the spirit of love.

The love that exposes greed and exploitation.

The love that will not judge persons on the basis of racial origin...

We have seen that love in Jesus.

We will express that love as followers of the Christ.

We believe that the needs of the suffering can be met in the spirit of love.

The love that listens to those who have received bad news this week.

The love that stands with the sick as they face their symptoms...

We have seen that love in Jesus.

We will express that love as followers of the Christ.

We believe that the church can have an impact for good in the spirit of love.

The love that gets involved in sexual and environmental issues.

The love that questions creed and scripture.

The love that supports the downhearted...

We have seen that love in Jesus.

We will express that love as followers of the Christ.

We believe that each one of us can be renewed in the spirit of love.

The love that gives us courage to face the characteristics of our personality.

The love that enables us to work through our weaknesses...

We have seen that love in Jesus.

We will experience it as a follower of the Christ.

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L: God in Your abundant mercy and generous grace

All: Hear our prayer.