

Connecting faith and daily life

# Holier than thou

Gillian Cooper *reflects on* Luke 18:9-14

**T**here's nothing wrong with being good. There's nothing wrong with doing one's best – being kind, giving to charity, being faithful to God. The Pharisee in Jesus' story is no doubt a good man. He is a member of a group known for its obedience to God's Law. He is generous in his giving. He is serious about his religious observance. He comes to the Temple regularly and he gives thanks to God. There is nothing wrong with any of that. Even his opening words can be read positively; he attributes his virtue to God, rather than claiming it for himself.

Nevertheless, there is something wrong, and it is the besetting sin of religious people down the ages. There is an air of smugness, of a superiority that judges others and finds them wanting. He is pleased with himself. He knows he is better than his neighbour, and he assumes that God agrees with him.

Before God, there is no place for either smugness or grovelling. Prayer is a place of complete honesty, where we admit to ourselves, and to God, who we really are, with our strengths and weaknesses. Only

then can we accept from God the salvation that is freely offered to all who know their need of it. 🙏

**Give us, O Lord, a humble heart. Help us to know our weaknesses as well as our strengths, that we may come before you as our true selves, and receive from you the gift of your salvation. Amen.**

## Faith and disability

*Learning difficulties*  
by Heather Smith

People with learning disabilities have gifts and ministries that the church family needs to encourage, for the benefit of everybody in the community. Many will love to take part in the offertory, for example, or may really enjoy singing. A long hymn could be too challenging, but a short song with lots of repetition is ideal. Some people

with learning difficulties use the sign language Makaton, so using it during a service is a great way to include everybody.

When it comes to scripture, we could all probably benefit from going at a slower pace, repeating verses and reflecting more deeply. So if there's someone in your congregation who needs to take more time with their reading, it can be a gift for everybody.

With passion, patience and prayer, all church communities can learn how to enable everyone to become fully integrated members of the church family in a way that is inclusive of all ministries. 🙏

**“Were there no God, we would be in this glorious world with grateful hearts, and no one to thank.**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), English poet

## “Better city, better life”

*The United Nations World Cities Day is marked on Thursday. Caroline Hodgson reflects on it.*

The United Nations has designated 31 October World Cities Day, to promote the international community's interest in global urbanisation, promote cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities, addressing the challenges of urbanisation and contributing to

sustainable urban development around the world. In 2018 the main event was held in Liverpool.

Cities are our economic powerhouses. They are where the decisions that govern all our lives are made. They are also where our social problems are often at their most apparent. Whether you're a city dweller or live in the most remote, rural area, the health of our cities and the well-being of people who live and work in them affects you in one way or another. So on Thursday, why not spend some time in prayer and reflection about cities and city life?

You can find more at: <https://unhabitat.org> 🙏

## 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 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 7pm - 8pm** - Please come along and join the discussion or just come along and listen. All welcome.

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Oct - 8pm** – Choir in the kirk hall

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> Oct – 10am – 12noon** Community Café in the kirk hall

**Pastoral Care** - The pastoral care team would like to expand the work they are doing and invite anyone with an interest and bit of spare time to contact Carol or Olivia.

**Thank you.** The donations to the Foodbank from last week's Harvest Thanksgiving amounted to 36kg of various foods and £20 cash. These gifts are much appreciated and will help support the valuable service the Foodbank provides.

### **Readings:**

2 Timothy 4: 6-8 and 16-18

Luke 18: 9-14 (Pharisee and Tax-collector)

### **Hymns:**

Hymn 52 (Ps. 84) How lovely is thy dwelling place

Hymn 200 Christ is made the sure foundation.

Hymn 553, Just as I am.

Hymn 724 Christ's is the world in which we move

Hymn 517 Fight the good fight.

### **Prayer Response**

**L:** Lord, in Your mercy

**All:** Hear our prayer

### **Doxology** Hymn 786

May the God of peace go with us, as we travel from this place

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.