



## Second Sunday in Lent

12 March 2017

### Sentence

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

*John 3.16*

### Collect

Holy God, whose wild Spirit's breath defies our frozen idols: take the night time of our fear and make of it a welcoming womb for us and all the world; through Jesus Christ in whom we are born anew. **Amen.**

### A reading from the book of the Genesis

*The stories of God's dealings with humanity in the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not history but truth filled stories about our relationship with God, told in poetic form. God's relationship with Abraham is the first story told in human history. God makes a promise to Abram of Ur (as he is called before his names changes to signify the new relationship with God) that if he will leave his familiar house and city and travel with God, God will be his ally and prosper him. Despite the human failings told in the symbolic stories of chapters 1-11, God never gives up on humanity. Whether we seek God or not, God is seeking us, and wants to be known by us.*

The LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

*Genesis 12.1-4*

Reader Hear the word of the Lord  
ALL Thanks be to God

## **Psalm 121 at 8am APBA page 360 @10am TiS76**

*The psalmist asks where does help come from – the hills, or the Lord?*

*The answer is clear. It is God alone who keeps and protects Israel.*

## **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans**

*Paul is stressing that Abraham was justified by his faith in God and not by either circumcision or the keeping of the law since both of these institutions came after him. The true descendants of Abraham are those who have faith in the God of Jesus Christ, whether Jews or gentiles.*

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

*Romans 4.1-5; 13-17*

Reader May your word live in us  
**ALL and bear much fruit to your glory.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!**

No one can enter the kingdom of God  
without being born of water and Spirit.

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!**

Reader The Lord be with you

**ALL And also with you**

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to John

**ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Pharisees were the most devout Jews and Nicodemus is a leader among them. Nevertheless, Jesus tells him that the kingdom or realm of God is not entered by moral achievement but by God's free transformation of our lives. This is so radical that it feels like being born a second time! Martin Luther said of verse 16 that it was 'the gospel in miniature.' Notice that Nicodemus comes by night (representing the darkness of no faith) into the light of Christ's presence. He reappears in John's story at the time of Jesus' burial where he is clearly a compassionate friend and disciple.*

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it

comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

*John 9.7-17*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord  
**ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Prayer for the week.** Remember, O Lord, what you have wrought in us and not what we deserve, and, as you have called us to your service, make us worthy of our calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Bible Readings Third Sunday in Lent Yr A 19 March**

Exodus 17.1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5.1-11 John 4.5-42

**Pray for the faithful departed:** We remember before God: Willard May, Gladys Harris, Nellie King, Wilma Cuming and Effie MacMeikan, *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

**Commemorations of the week:**

**March 17. Patrick** (c. 390-461). Missionary to Ireland. Born in England, as a youth taken into slavery for six years by Irish pirates, returned to England, entered the ministry, returned to Ireland as its second Bishop (after Palladius). Patron Saint of Ireland.

**March 18. Cyril of Jerusalem** (c.315-386). Bishop of Jerusalem and teacher.

