

Reflection

"The problem is I'm still a sinner," he confessed. "How can I stay in God's good books when I keep messing up?"

The earnest question was asked by a young new Christian, who has joined a church in the last year. I thanked him for coming to me with his concern, and I offered an answer.

I drew quite a lot from what St. Paul says to us today in Romans, using the example of Abraham's friendship with God. This shows that God's acceptance of Abraham wasn't based on Abraham being 'good enough', how much or how little he sinned. Rather their relationship was good in God's eyes because of Abraham's faith, his belief and trust in God.

I tried this as an encouragement to my young mentee, and he was so relieved to remember that this is always the Good News: we are made right with God simply by faith in him, not by weighing any goodness on our part against any badness, hoping the scales tip in our favour.

Rev Ash



NEXT SUNDAY 08.03.26 3rd Sunday of Lent

10.30am in the Hall



OT Exodus 17: 1-7
NT Romans 5: 1-11
GOSPEL John 4: 5-42

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St Thomas, Exeter

1st March 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

10.30am in the Hall

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

46 *At the name of Jesus*

194 *Hallelujah, my Father*

148 *From heaven, you came, helpless babe*

198 *Guide me, O thou great Redeemer*

2.30-4pm Crafternoon, see notices

Tuesday 3rd March

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house

Wednesday 4th March

10am Walsingham Mass

Thursday 5th March

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny
Tuckett's house.

Friday 6th March

9.30am Stations of the Cross

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Genesis 12: 1-4a

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.

Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

Abraham was the ancestor of all of us who are Jews. Think about what he discovered. God did not accept Abraham as right with him because Abraham had done good things. If God had done that, then Abraham would have been able to boast about himself. But he could not boast to God. Remember what the Bible tells us. It says: 'Abraham believed God. As a result, God accepted Abraham as right with him.' When a person works to get money, it is right for him to receive his money. That money is not a gift. It is what that person ought to receive as a result of his work. But someone may believe in God. He does not work to cause God to accept him. God accepts that person because of their faith. God says that people who have turned away from him are right with him, if they trust him. That is God's gift to them. God promised to Abraham, and to his descendants, that the world would belong to them one day. God did not promise that because Abraham obeyed any rules. God promised it because Abraham believed in him. That is why God accepted Abraham as right with him. People cannot get what God promised because they obey rules. If they could get it like that, then faith in

God would be worth nothing. And what God promised would be worth nothing. The rules in Moses' Law say that God will punish people who do not obey those rules. But without any rules, there is nothing for people to obey. So God gives us his promise as a gift, because he is very kind. We receive it when we trust him. If we believe in God like Abraham did, then God accepts us. That is God's promise to all of Abraham's family. If we believe in God, we can call Abraham our ancestor. We can all receive what God has promised. It is not only for those who have Moses' Law to obey. In the Bible, God said to Abraham, 'I have chosen you to become the ancestor of many different people.' That is what God himself promises, because Abraham believed in him. God is the one who causes dead people to become alive again. He speaks about things that are not yet there as if they were already there.

John 3: 1-17

There was a Pharisee called Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish leaders. He came to speak with Jesus at night. He said to Jesus, 'Teacher, we know that God has sent you to us. We have seen the miracles that you are doing. Nobody could do these things unless God was with him.' Jesus replied, 'I tell you this: Unless a person is born from above, they cannot understand the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus asked, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot return into his mother's body. He cannot be born a second time.' Jesus explained, 'I tell you this: Unless a person is born by water and by God's Spirit, he cannot come into the kingdom of God. People give birth to what is human. But God's Spirit gives birth to spirit. I said to you, "You must be born from above." What I said should not surprise you. When someone is born by God's Spirit, it is like the wind that blows. The wind blows wherever it chooses to blow. You can hear it. But you do not know where it came from or where it is going.' Nicodemus asked, 'How can this happen?' Jesus replied, 'You are an important teacher of people in Israel. You ought to understand these things! I tell you this: We speak about things that we know. We tell you about what we have seen. But even then, you people do not believe our message. I have told you about things that happen in this world. And you do not believe me. But now I am telling you about things that happen in heaven. So I do not think that you will ever believe me about those things. The Son of Man came

down from heaven. Nobody else has gone up to heaven except him. Long ago Moses lifted up the metal snake in the wilderness to save his people. In the same way, people must lift up the Son of Man on a cross. As a result, everyone who believes him will be able to live for ever with God. God loved the people in the world so much that he gave his one and only Son to save them. As a result, everyone who believes in the Son will not die. Instead, they will live for ever with God.' God did not send his Son into the world because he wanted to punish people. He sent his Son to save the people in the world from punishment.

Post Communion

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Notices

We welcome Rev Ash Leighton-Plom to lead our service this morning.

Wednesday 4 March 10am-1pm – a Quiet Morning for Lent in Lymptone Parish Church. Worship, meditative readings, time for prayer and creative prayer stations led by Demelza Henderson. Rev Sarah is going so do let me know if you'd like to join me.

The **House Group** will be meeting weekly through Lent

Our next Crafternoon is this afternoon at 2.30-4pm in the church where we will be Pebble Painting. Bring along a friend and your creativity!

Following our short PCC meeting after the service last Sunday, I am delighted to let you know that the PCC have approved our Parish Profile for the role of Rector of St Thomas. Grateful thanks to Jon Morgan and Carolyn Bryant who will be our Parish Representatives for the interviews which will take place in early May. Please continue to pray for this appointment, and for the right person to feel called to apply for this exciting role.