

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

12 MARCH 2017

These readings are provided, first, so you can re-read and reflect on them during the week, and second, if you wish, to follow the readings during the service.

Genesis 12.1-4a

¹ Now 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. ² 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. ³ 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.' ⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Psalms 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills:
but where shall I find help?
² My help comes from the Lord:
who has made heaven and earth.
³ He will not suffer your foot to stumble:
and he who watches over you will not sleep.
⁴ Be sure he who has charge of Israel:
will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The Lord himself is your keeper:
the Lord is your defence upon your right hand;
⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day:
nor shall the moon by night.
⁷ The Lord will defend you from all evil:
it is he who will guard your life.
⁸ The Lord will defend your going out and your coming in:
from this time forward for evermore.

Romans 4.1-17

¹ What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?
² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
³ For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham

believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'

⁴ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due.

⁵ But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

⁶ So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness irrespective of works:

⁷ 'Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

⁸ blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin.'

⁹ Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.'

¹⁰ How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, ¹² and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

¹⁵ For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶ 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,

¹⁷ 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.

John 3.1-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² 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.' ³ Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' ⁴ 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?' ⁵ Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." ⁸ 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.' ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ '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. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ '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. ¹⁷ '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.