

# Reflections for 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

### God's Promises

We all make promises of many kinds – some big and some small. Some of the promises we make are simple and practical, while others – perhaps the most important – are broad and deep and open-ended.

I always find it moving to witness the promises that people make on significant occasions in church, such as the parents and godparents at the baptism of a young child, or someone older declaring their faith and making promises to follow Jesus at their baptism or confirmation. And there are the vows that a couple make at their wedding:  
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,  
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish ...

I always wonder where this promise will lead them, and what unexpected challenges, and blessings, may lie ahead in their journey of living out this promise.

One way of understanding the Bible is to see it as the story of our growing understanding of God's promises, and the gradual outworking of those promises in the life of our world. Our story this week is a summary of key moments in the life of Abraham (from the early chapters of Genesis) as he gradually comes to understand more of God's promise to him, and responds with faith and trust.

The Bible often uses the word 'covenant' for significant promises, both when they are made by people, and when they are made by God. In the gospel accounts of the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of the cup he shared with his disciples as a sign of 'the new covenant in my blood' (Luke 22. 20) – God's new promise for all people.

And in this week's reading from the prophet Jeremiah, we are reminded of the good news of God's promise to each one of us, today and every day:

I will make a new covenant (with my people) ...  
I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.  
I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Revd John Waller

Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases  
and whose mercies never come to an end:  
grant us the grace to trust your promises  
and to receive the gifts of your love,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: Jeremiah 31. 31-34; Hebrews 5. 5-10; John 12. 20-33

Story: 'God's Friend' – Abraham learns to trust in God's promises