



PORTSOY CHURCH

FAMILY NEWS 15/5/22

Welcome to our weekly news bulletin, keeping you up to date with the latest information on what's happening in Church life in Portsoy, Fordyce and Sandend and also giving you a digested version of John's sermon for the week. It is also available on the CFN page of the Church website.

If you know of someone in the community who isn't online and would like a copy delivered please contact John on 07941 511192.

Weekly Prayer Topic

"They will never be hungry or thirsty. Sun and desert heat will not hurt them, for they will be led by one who loves them. He will lead them to springs of water." Isaiah 49:10

Global poverty is rising. The effects of covid and drought have robbed communities of the power to provide for their children. Pray that our donations to Christian Aid help these people grow crops and source water supplies. Our help can turn hunger into hope.

Focus Deadline: The deadline for the next edition of Focus which covers June to July 2022 is next Sunday 22nd May. Please let Johanna Sturrock have articles and any photographs for inclusion by that date unicornathome@gmail.com.

Christian Aid Week: Christian Aid week is this week and runs from 15th – 21st May. Donation envelopes are available this Sunday and next Sunday and at Coffee and Company and Well Cafe if you wish to give to support its work.

Coffee 'n Company: Coffee 'n Company as usual every Tuesday morning from 10.00am until 12 noon. Please come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, scone and pancakes and a time to catch up with friends old and new.

Monday Prayers: Our morning prayer gathering will now take place every Monday at 8.00am and the evening gathering at 6.30pm in the Church Centre. Everyone is welcome!

Well Café: The Well Café is for aged nearly 20 to 40-ish every Friday during school term times 9.15 – 11.15am. Relax over complimentary hot chocolate, milky coffee, tea, and snacks etc. Play area for children. Tell your friends and family, and if you'd like to volunteer to help out, let John know.

Coffee and Tea after the service: Coffee and Teas are being served after the service. Please stay and join us if you can. Visitors especially welcome.

Weekly Message from John Gow

Genesis 2: 18-23

We're looking at a familiar passage from the Bible in church this week, the creation of 'man' and woman. It's just possible it may not be all it seems, though.

God makes the first man, who and He decided shouldn't be on his own. And he makes a 'helper' for the man, but only after he's made all the animals, all the birds and decided none of them are fit to be this 'helper' for the man. So he makes a woman from the rib of the man.

And from this simple reading of the story of woman being created from man, well, there comes thousands of years of inequality, of the belief that a woman is somehow less than a man, there to be his 'helper' but never quite his equal. Whole religions have been based on this notion, women have been overlooked, put down, not allowed to take their place alongside men, always lesser, not allowed to be all they want to be. changed for the better now – although it's still not perfect.

This is just one of the by-products of reading scripture too literally, I think. In church last week I spoke about the possible issues we're face in taking everything in the Bible too literally, and the suppression of women is one of the best examples. As you're reading this, I need to say though, please, don't get me wrong - I'm not saying don't believe what's written in scripture, this is the Word of God after all, what I'm saying is we need to dig a bit deeper, think a bit harder sometimes to get to the true meaning.

The Hebrew word for 'man' is '*ish*'. The thing is though, that's not the word that's used in the first part of the creation stories. The word that's used here, in the original Hebrew, is '*A-dam*', meaning 'one from the earth' or, if you like, 'earthling.' Which does, admittedly, sound like something from science fiction! We can look at this 'earthling', well, but rather as both.

It's this word that's used all the way through the passage, until the point that the 'earthling' was divided into man and woman. The Hebrew word for 'woman' is '*ishah*' and that's the word that's used when we're told, '*the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman*).' This come as a surprise, but the first actual person that's referred to in the Bible, it's a woman, '*ishah*.' And then later she's given the name, Eve.

She's described as Adam's 'helper.' To us, a helper is someone who does things for us when we might not want to do it ourselves. The 'help' or the 'helper' in a stately home is a butler, a maid, cook. And I think this notion of the first woman being created to be man's helper is, maybe the source of the idea that a woman isn't worth as much as a man, as lesser in some way.

But I think to get a bit closer to what the authors of Genesis mean by 'helper' we've got to look elsewhere in scripture for its true meaning. Exodus 18:4: '*My Father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.*' Psalm 70:5: '*O God, you are my helper and my deliverer.*' We ask God all the time in our prayers for help, to be our helper, and those who wrote down the words of scripture, they were no different. The idea that God would be subservient to us just doesn't make sense. So when we read '*I will make him a helper fit for him,*' we're not reading about women being made to serve, to be subordinate, to be subservient, but to support, to be beside, to share.

And it works both ways. And we all need helpers. 'It is not good that man should be alone.' It's not good that anyone should be alone. We need help, we need to be beside people, we need to share. The story of Adam and Eve is a story for all of us, it's not just a creation story.

Contributions for the week's Church Family News should be sent to Ian Whewell
ian.whewell@btinternet.com by Friday evening each week.