

## **Traditional Home service Sunday 6th March**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.  
Amen

### **PRAYER OF PENITENCE**

Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **PRAISE**

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.  
Open our lips, Lord:  
and we shall praise your name.

*HYMN 1 (Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God)*

**READINGS** - Deuteronomy 26.1-11  
Romans 10.8b-13  
Luke 4.1-13

### **TALK**

### **CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.*

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

*HYMN 2 (O God, Our Help in Ages Past)*

### **CONCLUSION**

God, who from the death of sin raised you to new life in Christ, keep you from falling and set you in the presence of his glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.  
Amen.

## HYMNS TO USE

1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God  
And his righteousness;  
And all these things shall be added unto  
you,  
Allelu, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia.

2 Ask, and it shall be given unto you,  
Seek, and ye shall find.  
Knock, and the door shall be opened  
unto you,  
Allelu, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia.

3 Man shall not live by bread alone,  
But by every word  
That proceeds from the mouth of the  
Lord,  
Allelu, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia

1 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,  
and our defense is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting you are God,  
to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in your sight  
are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
soon bears us all away;  
we fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home!

Sermon - Adrian Morton

Romans 10.8b-13 & Luke 4.1-13

Temptation is normal, but does need resisting!

We've begun the season of Lent this week. Its a season in the Christian calendar that encourages us to re-examine our lives.

Its a time of preparation to go through before we celebrate the events of Easter.

Lent always starts 46 days before Easter Sunday, the idea being we have 40 fasting days plus 6 Sundays before Easter Sunday.

In past years we've run a Lent course... This year we are encouraging people to tap into the Bishop's teaching on the four Gospels

Details are in the newsletter.. there is also an online day where you can quiz the Bishop.

A key Scripture for the season though is our Luke 4 reading. Which tells of Jesus being led into the wilderness for 40 days, where He is tempted by the devil.

I tend not to mention the devil too much. Really don't want to give him any sort of publicity to be honest.

But of course, we do need to know that when we become a Christian.

Not only do we gain so much privilege and blessing.

We also gain an enemy. There is a spiritual force of evil that wants to 'steal, kill and destroy' as it says in John 10, the lives of those associated with Jesus.

So whilst we don't want to give Him any publicity. It's worth knowing of course that is the reality, the world view we live in as Christians.

And if Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was tempted. And I don't know anyone who is as full of the Holy Spirit as Jesus was..

Then we have to believe that His followers, you and I, will also go through times of temptation.

*An overweight businessman decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favourite bakery. One morning, however, he showed up at work with a gigantic coffee cake. Everyone in the office scolded him, but his smile remained nonetheless. "This is a special coffee cake," he explained. "I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning and there in the window was a host of goodies. I felt it was no accident, so I prayed, 'Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let there be a parking spot open right in front.' And sure enough, the eighth time around the block, there it was!*

As followers of Jesus we will be tempted.

Interestingly it says that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. In other words, this was the Father's plan for Jesus.

This was part of the purposes of the Father for Him.

Why was that?

Jesus had not yet really embarked on the Father's salvation plan for humanity.

This episode in the wilderness was before he started his public ministry

If we are going to succeed in any form of public ministry. If we are going to fulfil the plans the Lord has for us.

Then we will have to be victorious in the private place. Private victories are the foundation for public ministry.

For Jesus, if he couldn't win the victory here, then there would have been little point carrying on.

The biggest victories we have in life are in the private place.

Those we win at a personal, intimate level.

We may have a great public ministry.  
We may be pursuing the right aims in life.

But if we are not being victorious in the private place.  
Then actually, we are not being victorious from a kingdom perspective.

So Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days.  
He didn't eat anything .  
It was at the end of those 40 days.  
When he would have been at his weakest.

That the devil tempted him.

And I don't think we should picture Jesus talking to a visible demonic figure... having a conversation.

These temptations, I'm sure, come as like natural thoughts in Jesus' mind...

"If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Often temptation will sound plausible, certainly attractive, and it kinds of makes sense.

Jesus would have been hungry.  
Why not just do that...?

Jesus' identity as the Son of God has just been affirmed by His Father at His baptism.

The Father had said, "You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased."

Now the devil was calling that into question..  
Prove you really are the Son of God...

If we ever feel tempted to prove our identity as a Son or daughter of God then we need to recognise that as the enemy's voice.

if we ever think good works, more prayer time, more bible study, harder work ethic, whatever, if its trying to prove to yourself, or to God that you are worthy to be called a Son or Daughter then its the wrong voice you are listening to.

The devil then led Jesus up to a high place, and showed him the kingdoms of the world,

and said to him, "*I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will be yours.*"

Which is all very interesting!

We know that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Ps 24

We also know, according to Ephesians 2:2, that the devil is referred to as the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

I heard Emma Stark talking about this during the NW leaders conference.

She said the word in Eph 2:2 refers to the cosmos.

Which means human structures?  
I'm not quite sure how all that fits to be honest...

The devil is also referred to as 'the father of lies', so maybe he was just lying.

And he couldn't offer Jesus those things?

The temptation though was to worship him not God.  
Which Jesus rejects...

There will always be a temptation for us to worship something other than God.

In other words, we will be tempted to put our seat of affection somewhere else.

It maybe sport, your football team, your job or career, cars, shopping, money, fame.

Whatever will compete for your ultimate affection.

That which takes your time, your energy, your focus in life.

And none of those things are wrong in themselves.. of course there not ...

But whenever something replaces our ultimate source of affection, that which we give our life to, then it becomes what we worship.

It becomes something we worship other than God...

And that will be a temptation for people.

Because we know, some of those things bring instant gratification.

Jesus said, "Worship the Lord Your God and serve him only."

Everything is to flow from that position, that truth.

That anchor in our lives.

Finally, the devil led him Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here."

And the devil quotes scripture to back himself up.

Jesus answers with Scripture, "It says, do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Jesus' ministry was to be worked out in humble service and finally death.

His power was to bring healing and life to others.

It wasn't about status or showing himself to be this amazing charismatic and popular figure.

Which, if Jesus, had pulled this off would have made him.

Even during Jesus' ministry, after he had healed people, he would withdraw to spend time with His Father.

He never pursued popularity.

The temptation to be popular, to look powerful, to be impressive is a real one.

I don't know whether you've heard of the Mars Hill church in America? It was one of these multi-site mega evangelical churches.

It saw quick, tremendous growth, had thousands of members, weekly attendance of over 12,000.

Yet it imploded in 2014... after scandals, financial irregularity, and the senior pastor accused of bullying church members...

And the church closed down...

The temptation to be powerful, impressive and popular has tripped up many a church leader.

Has tripped up many a person...

Christian history is littered with people who haven't ended well.

Those who haven't won the victories in the private place.

Those who have let the seat of their affections be drawn elsewhere.

Those who have been tripped up by the desire to be powerful, impressive or popular.

Following Jesus was never intended to make you popular.

You may know that already!

This book was never going to be politically correct.

I think there is a real danger that the church is trying to succumb to popular opinion.

That we are trying to make ourselves more palatable, more popular within wider society.

And I don't mean we should try and go out of our way to disagree or upset people.

Or we go out of our way to be irrelevant...

But, equally, following Jesus, is a hard, narrow road.

It's a road of humble service, of reliance on God, of intimacy with Him, of quiet subversive kingdom growth, of strength in weakness, of persecution even...

And certainly it's a road that will involve resisting temptation.

Amen!