

Worship at Home 6th March 2022

Welcome to Worship at Home for 6 March, the First Sunday in Lent.

Invitation to worship

It is good to praise the Lord, to praise his love in the morning, and his faithfulness at night.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to worship you, to bring our cares to you, to cast our burdens on you, and to remember the many blessings that are ours. We praise and worship you in Jesus' name.

Amen

Our reading this time is Luke 4, verses 1 to 13: the Temptations of Christ.

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"

And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Reflection

It has to be said first of all that that sort of temptation is not the sort that might come to us. Our temptations come to us in the form of inner thoughts of possibilities that we might reject or accept. We could think of Jesus' temptations as coming to him in that sort of way – maybe like this, in a meditation I wrote many years ago...

'One day Jesus went off alone to a quiet place where he could decide what God wanted him to do. He knew that God wanted him to do something important, but was not sure what. So he thought, and thought, and thought for forty days, and hardly ate anything.

So he was hungry. A thought crossed his mind. He could turn some stones into something nice to eat. He thought again... No, that would be wrong. There's more to life than enjoying good food. Like doing God's will.

Another thought crossed his mind. He could put on a grand show. He could go to Jerusalem, climb up to the top of the temple, and jump off. God would not let me fall all that way, he thought: some angels would catch me. It says so in the Scriptures. That would really impress people and they would want to follow me. He thought again: No that's not fair on God. I shouldn't put God on the spot like that.

And another thought crossed his mind. I could set myself up as the ruler of the world and force people to do what God wanted. He thought again. That would be making myself like God, and God does not do things in that way. It's wrong to worship power: God is the only one we should worship.

So Jesus rejected all those thoughts about doing God's will. Instead he chose the right way, which is: to love people, not bully them into doing what he thought God wanted, and gently encourage them to discover for themselves what God wanted them to make of their lives.'

I hope that helps. Quick-fix solutions to what we should do may look attractive at first sight, like the solutions the devil proposed to Jesus. But, if we think further, we may see that, despite their attractiveness, they are not God's will and do not really solve problems.

So **let us pray**. Dear Lord, save us from rushing into the first thing that comes into our minds. Give us your Holy Spirit to guide us, so that our actions may reflect what is your will, in Jesus' name.

Amen

Today, 6 March, marks the **end of Fairtrade Fortnight**, and so the rest of the service is adapted from an Ecumenical Service for the occasion.

Our hymn is to the tune 'What a friend' in Singing the Faith no. 531:

God the Maker of the Heavens
And the planet that we share
Show us how to live like Jesus
Live in gratitude and care
Make us mindful of the footprints
Form the lives that we pursue
Make us partners in your mission
You are making all things new.

God the Gardener of Eden
Teach us how to tend this earth
Learning from the changing seasons
Times of fallow and new birth

Lord have mercy when we're careless
Rich resources we misuse
Use our hands to heal creation
You are making all things new

God of labour and vocation
Lord of science trade and art
Take our efforts and our passions
Make them mirrors of our heart
Every habitat and creature
Love and valued God by you
May our lives reveal your kingdom
You are making all things new

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Let us pray - Prayers for Fairtrade Fortnight

We pray for farmers and producers across the world who are living with the ravages and fear of climate change threatening their livelihoods and income. We pray for families and children who see their crops fail because of storms, floods and drought and who live from day to day not knowing where their next meal will come from. **Lord, in your wisdom, bring change where needed**

We pray for world leaders and scientists. Having seen how politicians are able to respond to emergencies like Covid-19 with substantial funding and support, we pray that they will also respond to the climate emergency with the same level of speed, commitment and investment to enable countries to recover from the pandemic sustainably cleanly and fairly. **Lord, in your wisdom, bring change where needed.**

We pray for organisations working in poor communities to find and promote new ways of farming to protect the environment and to enable the sustainable development of community life. We pray for ourselves, that our commitment to justice may bear fruit in our lives, in the choices we make, and in the priorities we set ourselves. **Lord, in your wisdom, bring change where needed**

We pray for the Fairtrade movement, for all who campaign and spread the message. May their love for other people and to your creation cause their voices to be heard more loudly and the impact of their campaigning to increase. **Lord, in your wisdom, bring change where needed.**

Finally, Lord, we bring our regular prayers to you, for our world, for our church, for our families and friends. We remember them now ... [pause]... Bless and comfort them, Lord, according to their needs. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus our Lord, **.Amen.**

A closing blessing

May the road rise to meet us
May the wind be always at our back
And the rains fall gentle upon the earth
And until we meet again
May God hold us in the palm of God's hand. Amen.

Revd Tony Coates