

Downton Baptist Church

21st February 2021 Morning Worship

WELCOME

Good Morning.

Our Service is being filmed and broadcast live from the Church. We have produced this so you can read the transcripts of the Service. The prayers and the talk. We hope you find this helpful.

God Bless, Philip and Katy

This is website address if you can access it.

www.downtonbaptist.org/Groups/337711/Pastors_Message.aspx

PRAYERS

By Katy

Prayer of Approach

Thank You ,Lord God
Hallowed is Your name
For Your great love and compassion
For Your word that brings life and our breath

How wonderful and marvellous
Is Your great power and strength
Your throne is one of pure grace.

Your limits are endless
And Your love is eternal and everlasting
You are higher, wider, longer deeper than my biggest thoughts

In You we are everything
Without You we are nothing
Your divinity shines like golden beams

We come to worship
We bring our fragility, we bring our fears
We bring all that we are to bow before you
Thank you that You accept our failings
And love us anyway.

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory
Forever and ever **Amen.**

READING

Genesis 3: 1-9

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

Matthew 4: 1-11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

TALK

By Philip

Read Matthew 4:1-11

I believe one of the great comforts of our faith is that Jesus came as one of us

Fully, completely human...He doesn't only know what it is to be like you and me...

...He knows what it is to be you and me

In fact, John Colwell says that Jesus came to teach us how to be fully human

To be Human in the way God always intended from the very beginning

Hebrews 4:15 says

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way, just as we are...yet was without sin

If we truly understand and grasp this...I think that helps us to walk with Jesus into the wilderness

Whatever that wilderness might look like...or feel like for you

And friends as we all know...there are many wildernesses

Matthew tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil

We need to be about clear that...

...This was something that Jesus had to do...and he was ready to do it

Following that great moment of his baptism...

...When God's calling was dramatically demonstrated and confirmed by the voice from heaven

Jesus is led to a place where he must face the voices of darkness

The voices of the opposition...The enemy...The liar

The force of darkness that stand in opposition to God's will and purposes

Jesus is led to a place without resources...without the basic necessities of life

He is stripped of everything we might cling to

He is led to a place where he must recognise the voices of temptation for what they are

And we must pay attention...Because these voices are still all around us

You may have noticed that the voices are all about defacing or distorting Jesus' calling...his vocation

They are trying to draw him away from God's will for him

They try to distract him from his vocation to be a fully and truly human being...as God intended

They try to prevent him from living...the vocation to be God's and God's alone

They question his calling to be a servant to the world and to other people

Again...Jesus is led by the Spirit...This is a necessity

Jesus must face his enemy...He must face our enemy

He must face these temptations now and win a victory over them for this moment

If he doesn't win that victory then those voices will be with him...

They will meet him in the middle of his work...and they will seek to overwhelm him

To dissuade him, to turn him back

The first two temptations play on the very same strength that Jesus has just received

The words God spoken over him...*This is my son whom I love, with him I am well pleased*

Ok...says the voice of the Devil

IF you really are God's son, surely you don't need to go hungry?

You have the power to get food for yourself...what could be wrong about that?

You can turn these stones into bread

Then we are told the Devil took him to the holy city and stood him on the highest point of the Temple

If you really are God's son...

...Why not do something really spectacular. Surely you want people to see who you are?

Throw yourself down...the angels will catch you...that's what it says here in the psalms

See how the Devil misuses the scriptures for his own purposes

Something we may also be tempted to do... or have suffered from at the hands of others

Finally, the devil comes right out with it and offers Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world and their splendour

Right now

All of this...all of this can be yours...Just give me what I want...YOU

Forget your heavenly Father

Just worship me and I will give you power, prestige, possessions... and greatness like no one has ever had

Feel the temptations...because they are our ever- present temptations

Jesus sees through the devil and his traps

He answers each time with words from scripture...But this with spirit and truth of God's word

He will live off the word of God

He will trust God completely without testing him

He will serve God alone

His human flesh might cry out for relief, comfort and satisfaction...for release...

The world may seek to seduce him...

The devil may well offer undreamed of worldly powers...but Jesus will stand firm

He trusts God and he clings onto the truth

His loving Father offers the truth behind the lies

The reality of what it is to be fully human...To be made in God's image

To be the Messiah...The true Israelite

And as we shall see that last point is very important...especially to Matthew

If we turn to the biblical texts that Jesus uses to defend himself against the tempter's words...

... we can see how this extraordinary passage fits into Matthew's Gospel at this point

Each scripture is chosen by Jesus from the story of Israel in the wilderness

Jesus has come through the waters of baptism...as Israel had escaped slavery through the Red sea

He now had to face temptation

He now had to face forty days and forty nights in the wilderness....

In the same way that Israel had to face in 40 years of wandering in the wilderness

We know that Israel had failed and fallen to temptation time and time again

They had succumbed to fear and doubt...they had tested God...and they had even created their own gods

BUT...Jesus remained faithful where they had fallen foul of the tempter's whispers

Here then, in Jesus...is the true Israel

He has come to do what Israel had been called to do

His vocation is theirs...To bring light to the world

*In Jesus the people who sat in darkness saw a great light...*as Isaiah has prophesied
But we must go even deeper into the scriptures

To understand the depth of these passages

Back even further into the mists of the Biblical narrative...

There we will find the story of Adam and Eve in the garden

They are given a single command by God

They are offered a single temptation by the liar

And the result is devastating

Jesus stands now at the centre of it all...God's chosen answer to it everything

He keeps his eyes on God and will not be led astray

Unlike the first man and woman...He will not listen to the lies

He will not seek to be God...but to be fully human as God intended

And therefore, in Jesus God begins again

And that is precisely what we are seeing now...A new beginning

Jesus' mission is to heal and undo the depths of our rebellion against God

Jesus is going to meet the tempter at various times and in various disguises

The Devil will speak through Jesus' disciple
Peter...

...trying to persuade Jesus to change his mind and turn back from the road towards the cross

Away from me Satan...Jesus will say once again

The Devil will mock him and question him through the priests and the bystanders as he hung on the cross...

And again, they will use the words of the liar...to tempt him

Again they will ask him to doubt who he is and what he is called to....

If you are God's son

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying: You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself. Come down from the cross, if you are the son of God

Once more the temptation is to doubt God's calling...his vocation

This is not an accident

When Jesus resisted the tempter, he was embracing the way of his Father

When he rejected power, self-satisfaction and worldly glory

He was embracing the way of the cross

All of these whispers...all of these distractions...all of these lies...

Were to lead him away from his fathers will

Just as it was in the garden of Eden

They were to turn him off the path of servanthood that would lead to his suffering and death

The tempter was trying every trick and trying to exploit every weakness...to prevent God's son from redeeming the world

To stop Jesus from undoing the work that the serpent had done in Eden

Let's pause for a moment...Jesus fought his battle and he won

But what about you and I?

Jesus knows our weakness...He knows our frailty

He has stood exactly where you stand child of God

He was tempted in every way that we are tempted

It's true that the decisions we face...

...And the temptations we suffer, day by day and at particular moments of decision and vocation may be different from those of Jesus

But they have exactly the same point

The whispers are not only trying make us do wrong

To commit another sinful act

To drag us further into self-doubt, self-loathing and fear

They are also trying to distract us from our calling

And that vocation for you and I and this church is the path of servanthood...

...to which our own baptism has called us

We too have heard God speak his blessing over us

God has a wonderful and costly vocation for every one of us...and for all of his people

The liar will deny that. He will cast doubts into our minds. He will test our every weak point

He will give us every reason to give up...Not to be church in the image of Jesus...

He will seek to lead us away from our calling...filling our heads with self-doubt...

Leading us accept the fear and cynicism of this age

He will do everything to try to prevent God's will from being done in you...in us

And so...We need to be wise

If we have heard God's voice welcoming us as his children...we will also hear those whispers

But we are not on our own

We can use the same defence as the son of God

We must immerse ourselves and seek God's wisdom in the scriptures...and in Jesus himself...

We must listen carefully for the voice of God's spirit and seek to bear his fruit...The fruit of Jesus life

Friends...

When we understand Jesus we understand truth about ourselves

We need to live on the bread of the word of God

We must keep our eyes on Jesus and trust him for everything

Not just with our words but with everything

Remember your own calling to bring light into the world...

Remember your calling to be Jesus in the world...

Stand firm...now more than ever

Say no to the voices that call you into the darkness of fear and doubt

Say yes to the call of grace and love

Amen

PRAYERS

By Katy

As we are tempted to walk our own path

Let us pray for the world who wanders with us.

Lord God

In Your great power and splendour

You are our life giving word

Lord God

As we enter into a time of remembering the road towards Jerusalem

For our forty days in the wilderness

We pray for our world.

When we are tempted to doubt and despair

Lead us to recognise Your bread of life.

We call on your grace and mercy

And pray for those who hunger for Your nourishing

Heal the hearts that are full of longing

Bless those who call with painful cries in the depths of the night.

Comfort those with the deepest of sufferings

And the greatest of guilts.

Love those who mourn and grieve.

We worship You

And serve only You.

When we are tempted to test you

Leads us to your Kingdom goodness

We call on Your Kingdom to come among us.
And pray for those who live on the edge of hope.
Please help the lost and lonely to see Your light.
Rescue the abandoned from their own thoughts
Give complete rest and shalom to the frightened and fearful
Make truth be heard above the noise of the world
Let us trust without test in Your greater power
We worship You
And serve only You

**When we are tempted to our own will
Lead us towards Your will.**

We call on Your way to become our way.
And pray for strength to become our narrative
Please show the angry and greedy they do not need to rely on their abilities
Raise up the least to show us Your justice
Comfort the victims of abuse and battle
Let Your wisdom be our guide
And for the peace of God to become seen as power for the world
We worship You
And serve only You.

**When we are tempted to hide
Lead us towards Your gaze**

We call on You to give us eyes to see
And pray for those who are in need today
We pray for those who suffer from COVID and are finding it hard to breathe
Please bring pure and impossible healing
We thank You for all that is good, joyful and wonderful
In a moment of stillness, we bring You our prayers for those that we love.
Hear our prayers, merciful and powerful God.
We worship You
And serve only You.

In Your Majesty
In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

BLESSING

May the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all today and forevermore.

Amen