

**Worship on February 26, 2023** (CCLI: License Number #3156883)  
(Welcoming Elder: Robert Revington)

**Sunday Order of worship**

**We Gather**

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 357 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
- Prayer for worship + Lord’s Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Time for our children and youth
- Praise song – BOP 201 We come to ask your forgiveness

**We Listen**

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
- Second reading: Psalm 32 (refrain 2)
- Third reading: Matthew 4:1-11
- Sermon: The temptation of Jesus
- Prayer for the people

**We Respond**

- Offering, Doxology & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 461 Be thou my vision

**We Serve**

- Benediction

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As we come into the presence of our God, let us open our hearts and minds,  
and focus on our Lord and King.

**Responsive Call to Worship**

L: Just as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness,

**P: the Spirit sends us into places of uncertainty where we confront our weakness and insecurities.**

L: In the wilderness, we, too, are confronted by our hunger and thirst.

**P: We are tempted to grab at empty promises that offer an easy way out.**

L: Like Jesus, we are tempted by power and prestige.

**P: Unlike him, we often submit to their glamour.**

L: We wonder whether God is with us.

**P: We wonder whether we can trust God to take care of us.**

L: We can only move forward in faith.

**P: Let us stand on the cliff edge and, like Jesus, dare to trust.**

**Praise song – BOP 357 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds**

**Prayer For Adoration and Confession**

God, our Creator and Companion, Your love is as fresh as the new day, rising like the sun to guide us. In Jesus Christ, you walk with us to challenge and encourage us, revealing our

weaknesses but offering us hope. We praise you for such gifts! In this time of worship, open us to the new possibilities you create for the world you love. With the power of the Holy Spirit, energize us to embrace the future, trusting in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God our Creator and Companion, you created us to be your partners in creation, but we confess that we're not happy being partners. We prefer to have our own ways. We like to manage the world without your guidance. We want our own ways. We are tempted to satisfy our own desires without counting the cost to others, or to the earth itself. Lord, forgive us; have mercy on us.

**This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray:** (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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

Friends in Christ, The Apostle Paul declared our hope, asking this question: "Who is in a position to condemn?" The Answer? "Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us; Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for us." Trust this Good News. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's generous grace.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. Let us take few moments to greet each other and share our peace.

### **Prayer for children and youth**

All powerful and almighty God the Father, thank you for calling us your children. Thank you for sending us your one and only Son Jesus Christ to save us. Thank you for bridging us to God making us righteous in the eyes of God. Lord Jesus, help us teach this to our children and youth. Help them to accept the truth as they form their inner being. Let them be rooted and established in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Your saving grace is non sense. God the Son died for mere human being. Righteous God died for sinful and selfish us. Let the hearts of our children and youth be filled up with this precious truth. Lord Jesus, save them, guide their lives and be their Lord and be their God. Give them wisdom to discern and give them courage to act. Be glorified through them. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

### **Praise Song: BOP 201 We come to ask your forgiveness**

### **Prayer for Illumination:**

God of Life, send your Holy Spirit to guide us as we listen to stories from Scripture that may sound familiar. Speak your truth in ways that open our minds and hearts to a deeper understanding of your Living Word. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

**First reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7**

**Second reading: Psalm 32 (refrain 2)**

**Third reading: Matthew 4:1-11**

**"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."**

## **SERMON: The temptation of Jesus**

Today's sermon title is **"The temptation of Jesus."**

Many of us are familiar with today's story of Jesus' temptations. We are used to think that there are three different temptations. **Bread – materialism, Jump off – safety and security, and bow down to the devil – prestige and dignity.**

For all these three different looking temptations, the answer of Jesus was always consistent. **Listen to God. Trust God. Worship God. Jesus shows his total reliance on God the Father.** Jesus is God's Son, with whom God is well pleased. Clearly, Jesus did not avoid temptations whatever it costs. We can say, it is inevitable for God's children to face temptations.

**Temptation 1: Change this stone into bread, so satisfy your hunger!**  
**"One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."**

**Temptation 2: Jump off, so we will make sure that your God will send angels to protect you. // "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."**

**Temptation 3: If you bow down to me, I will give all the things we can see.**  
**"Away with you, Satan! Worship the Lord your God and serve only him."**

Jesus never go beyond God the Father. He acknowledges the power of God, the authority of God. When we take a close look at these three temptations, we can understand that there are not really three temptations. These are three variations of one temptation on the same basic theme. The devil has a one-track mind. As from the beginning, he tempts his victims to go for power.

**Genesis 3:1-5, "1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' 2 The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"**

The devil knows that there is no better way to internal contradiction and self-destruction to make his victims turn away from God.

If we look at these three temptations with the perspective of the power of God, we are able to see the devil's temptations all throughout the Bible and our daily lives. I just introduced the temptation of Eve in Genesis. There were Aaron and Miriam who challenged the God-given authority of Moses. Job, King David, Jesus, and his disciples experienced the temptations of choosing their own power and strengths in order to overcome the difficulties in front of them.

### **What are the temptations we are facing today?**

As we can see from our passage, temptations come in different forms. The devil uses many different practical methods to make God's people fall. First, the tempter asks us to go against the created order. Changing stones into bread is an attempt to displace the original Hebraic commitment to creation. God created stones to be stones

and called them good. So, changing God's creation is going against God's power. What if Jesus brought the kingdom without the cross? What if Jesus performed a miracle to avoid the cross? It is standing against God.

**Matthew 4:1, Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

This tells us that Jesus was following the will of the Triune God. He was not acting upon by himself. Then, it is safe to say that Jesus was put to hunger by the Spirit after staying in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights.

When the devil tells Jesus to satisfy his hunger, how would he feel?

We must remember that Jesus was a perfect God but at the same time, he was a perfect human. He had the same body as you and I.

**How long have you been fasting the most?** About 25 years ago, there was a special fundraising event from World Vision called **30 Hour Famine**. With my youth group, we stayed at church not eating for one whole day plus 6 hours. After 30 hours of fasting, I was able to smell all kinds of food around. But, Jesus fasted for 40 days, not 40 hours. What I am saying is, it was not easy for Jesus to overcome the temptation. When in hunger, nothing comes before eating. One of the purposes of Jesus being tempted is to give us an example. This is how we, as the disciples of Jesus, should overcome temptations in our lives.

The second temptation and the third are similar. **On the pinnacle of the temple**, Jesus was hungry and tired. He must have wanted to rest in the hands of God with the angels' assistance. For the third temptation, when the devil showed Jesus all the riches and glories of the world, Jesus might have thought of being glorified instead of taking all the shame and pain and suffering on the cross.

But, Jesus said to the devil, **"Get out of here, Satan!" "You must worship the Lord God and serve only him."** (Matthew 4:10, NLT)

Jesus pointed out the core message of the temptation. Worshipping God and serving God only is the worst thing for the devil. He tried to make God's people not to worship God, not to serve God. The devil tries to make us worship our own power and serve our own wisdom and strength. That is the goal for the devil.

**When we turn from God, who's happy?**

Of course, we do it because we follow our own wisdom and our own desires. Many times, we know that it's not beneficial for us in a long run. But, due to our fleshly and selfishly desires, we cannot help. We try to be happy, but eventually, we lose happiness through our choices when tempted. So, we make the devil satisfied.

Today's passage is very simple and straightforward. No explanation. Why?

Because the message is crystal clear. Jesus shows us what to do when tempted.

We are to look up to God, not us. The devil wants to mislead us, so we lose God and disobey God.

**What are we holding on to with our whole heart?** What do we trust firmly?

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Jesus Christ died on the cross to give us life. In other words, **Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour purchased us as his own with his blood, so that we know who has the control of our lives.** Let us remember who is in charge of our lives. Let us

invite Jesus Christ our Lord in the centre of our hearts in this time of Lent. Letting go is very difficult, but the power of almighty God resides within us through His Holy Spirit. Let us relax our grip, surrender to Jesus, and rely on His power and strength.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

**Prayer for the people of God:**

God of wisdom and wonder, we sometimes question many things from the Bible. Today's passage might be one of them. Jesus was sent to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The Creator of the whole universe was bothered by a small creature. Jesus showed us the true way. Jesus taught us how to follow him to live in the truth, in the freedom, in joy, and in gladness, and in the beauty of life. Lord Jesus, thank you for purchasing us with your precious blood. Now, help us know the beauty of this life and truly glorify you through our lives.

Lord God, we hear too many failures. There are too many people following their own fleshly voices. Loving God, speak to us. Open our ears and eyes so we know your truth. Stop the violence of war. Selfishness causes destruction and death and misery. Life is not meant to be miserable. Be merciful to all the people who are under the influences of selfish powers. Release them and let them freely serve you and worship you. In order for your truth be known to all the world, use us. Strengthen our inner beings, so we are confident in sharing the truth we have in our hearts to our surroundings. Let us shine your light and show our true identity. We are your light. We are supposed to show your goodness because we are bought by your blood. Our life is not ours, but yours, Lord.

As we worship you as one church, we thank you for bringing us here so that we can connect to each other. As one church, help us love each other and pray for each other and care for each other. We pray for those who are in difficulties. Pour out your grace upon them and help them, guide them, and help them. Help them. Let them live in your presence and in your love. Lord, Jesus, we give you all the glory and power and honour. In Jesus' precious and beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to the offering:** This is the time for offering. God has given us so many gifts in Christ and in creation. We offer our gifts in gratitude for the possibilities we enjoy, trusting God to multiply what we bring for goodness' sake. As we offer our gifts, let us praise God and glorify him. // **The Doxology (BOP 830)**

**Offering prayer:**

Lord God, we offer our gifts in thanksgiving for all the goodness you provide. Bless our gifts and our lives so that we become a source of goodness for others, in the name of Christ, our strength and our hope, we pray. Amen

**Song for the Journey BOP 461 Be thou my vision**

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Jesus overcame the temptation. He did not lose his focus from God. He did not lose his grip on the truth, but let go of the beauty and glory and glamour of the world. Why? Because he knew the true glory and beauty and glamour. Let us open our eyes and realize the truth. God is holding us and waiting for us. Let us give our hearts to our God the Father.

**Benediction:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.