

Sunday Worship on March 9, 2024

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Dr. Robert Revington)

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 57 You who dwell in the shelter
- Prayer for Worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11
- Second reading: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 4:1-13
- Sermon: The Testing of Jesus
- Hymn BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly
- Communion
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 624 Blest are they

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

One: In the wilderness, Jesus was tempted to abandon God

All: for the false hopes of indulgence, arrogance and certainty.

One: During our Lenten journey, we recognize we too are tempted

All: to turn aside from seeking only God and God's ways.

One: As we worship, may we celebrate all the bounty of God's grace

All: and always return with mindfulness and gratitude to God.

Praise song – BOP 57 You who dwell in the shelter

Prayer of Adoration

Holy and merciful God, you are our refuge and strength, we rejoice in your grace and love, which has called creation into being and makes all life complete. We praise you for Jesus Christ, who reveals your loving purposes for all people; in his face, we glimpse your love; in his life, we see the pattern for our lives. We bless you for the Holy Spirit who guides us and strengthens us, drawing us into the embrace of your tender love. And so we praise you, O God, our eternal,

creating Father who loves us with motherly care, united with Christ, our Saviour, and your Holy Spirit, the breath of life, Three in One, now and always.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*

Almighty and most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in things we have done, and things we have neglected to do. We have held back from giving to protect what we have. We have not trusted in your goodness and relied on the world's empty promises instead. Forgive what we have done and direct who we shall become. Help us to serve you by serving your world with generous spirits.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (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

Hear and believe the good news of the gospel! Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life is gone. The new life has come.

Know that you are forgiven, and so, in Christ, forgive one another.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 496 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet

Prayer for Children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11
- Second reading: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: Luke 4:1-13

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: The Testing of Jesus

Today is the first Sunday of Lent, **a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal.** Lent is like spiritual maintenance. We take time to examine our faith, to strengthen our relationship with God, and to resist the temptations that pull us away from God.

As Christians, we live in a world that is often driven by values that are contrary to the gospel. The world chases after pleasure, money, comfort, convenience, and high position. These values are self-centred, focusing on the immediate reward and personal gain. In contrast, Christian values call us to serve, to love, to give, to forgive, to sacrifice, and to endure. The focus is not on ourselves but on others and, ultimately, on God.

In our Wednesday Life Connect Group, we discussed how **Jesus is a teacher, a miracle worker, and a deliverer.** J.D. Greear pointed out that we are delivered from demonic oppression. In our modern world, we hesitate to talk about spiritual warfare, but Scripture is clear about the presence of evil forces.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, **Ephesians 6:12, “for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”**

Similarly, 1 Peter 5:8 warns us, **1 Peter 5:8, “Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary, the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.”**

Whether we acknowledge it or not, the battle is real, and we must be prepared.

In today’s Luke passage, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. This moment was significant because Jesus had just been baptized. He had heard the voice of the Father affirming him: **Luke 3:22, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”** But immediately after his declaration, he was tested.

We often find that after spiritual highs, we face intense battles. After moments of great blessings, challenges arise. This is not a coincidence. The enemy seeks to attack when we are vulnerable. However, Jesus teaches us how to overcome.

The first temptation was to turn stones into bread. The devil said to Jesus, **Luke 4:3, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.”** Jesus was hungry. He had been fasting for forty days. The temptation was to use his divine power to satisfy his physical need.

The world tells us that satisfying our desires is most important whether it is hunger, lust, or comfort. But Jesus resisted, saying, **Luke 4:4, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”** Jesus teaches us that true life is not found in material things but in God’s word.

The second temptation was to bow down to the devil. The devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said, **Luke 4:6-7, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”**

This is the temptation of power, success, and recognition. Many people compromise their faith for status, influence, and authority. But Jesus refuses, saying, **Luke 4:8, “It is written, ‘worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”** True success is found in obedience to God, not in worldly recognition.

The third test was to throw himself down from a high place. The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and said, **Luke 4:9-10, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you.’”**

One thing we need to highlight is that the devil used Scripture to deceive. The devil urges Jesus to prove his identity by forcing God to act. We sometimes fall into this temptation by demanding signs from God. We say, “God, if you really love me, do this for me.” But faith is not about testing God. Jesus answered, **Luke 4:12, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”** Trust does not need proof. Faith is the gift from God and it rests in God’s faithfulness.

Through the story of Jesus’ temptation, we can learn the ways to overcome temptations. **ONE, recognize the devil’s tactics.** The devil always attacks in predictable ways. He uses our desires, our pride, and our faith. For example, we love money. Is it bad? Is it good? Money does not have any moral value. It is one the tools we can use for our life. The devil intensifies our love for money and blinds our eyes, so we walk away from God.

TWO, stay rooted in Scripture. Jesus overcame temptations with the words of the Lord. If Jesus didn't know the Scripture, he couldn't have used them. So, we must read, study, and memorize Scripture, so that we have God's truth to rely on when trials come.

THREE, rely on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us strength to resist temptation. Pray daily so that we are sensitive to the word of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He will give us the wisdom when we need him.

FOUR, fix our eyes on God's Kingdom. This world promises instant gratification, but Jesus calls us to live for eternity. We must keep our focus on what truly matters.

In the wilderness, Jesus demonstrated complete reliance on the Father. He did not act on his own strength. He did not seek immediate solutions. Jesus trusted God's word. This Lent, let us follow the example of Jesus. When we face temptation, let us not try to fight with our own strength. Instead, let us rely on Scripture, stand firm in faith, and trust in God's promises. In doing so, we will grow stronger, deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ, and experience true victory over sin.

I will finish today's message with **Hebrews 12:2, "We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne!" (CEV)** Amen.

Praise song – BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly

Communion At The Lord's Table

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God. We come to this table not because we are strong, but because we are weak. Not because we have righteousness, but because we seek the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, at the Lord's Table, Christ meets us in grace and strengthens us for the journey of faith. Come, all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for our Lord Jesus invites us to share in this holy meal.

(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) ***(Please say BOLD print together)***

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

L: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, Creator and Ruler of the universe. In the wilderness, you sustained your people with manna from heaven, teaching them to trust in your word. Through the prophets, you called your people to worship you alone, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, who was tempted in every way as we are, yet remained without sin. He showed us the way of faithfulness, relying not on earthly power but on the living word of God. Therefore, with all the faithful of every time and place, with angels and archangels, and with the whole company of heaven, we lift our hearts in joyful praise, singing:

(Sanctus) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of Your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L: Jesus Christ, we praise and worship you for your faithfulness. Even though it was so painful, you did not run away from the cross. Jesus Christ, you are the same yesterday and today and

forever. You still love us, and you still care for us. Thank you for taking our sin. Thank you for coming to us and experiencing our life and emotions. We are grateful that you understand us through and through. You are perfectly God and perfectly human. Therefore, we recall the mystery of our faith:

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and the blood of Christ. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, that we may be strengthened to resist temptation, to walk in faithfulness, and to serve as Christ's hands and feet in the world. Nourish us with this holy meal, that we may live for your glory until that day when we feast with you in your kingdom. Through Christ, by Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

(The minister breaks bread in the presence of the people, saying:)

The Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(The minister may pour wine into the cup, lifting it while saying:)

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in remembrance of me."

(Distribution of the elements)

Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Take some time for personal prayer)

Prayer after Communion:

Loving God, we thank you for feeding us with this spiritual food, for strengthening us in faith, and for reminding us that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from you. As we go from this table, may we walk in the power of your Holy Spirit, resisting temptation and living as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Merciful Father, because of your love, Jesus Christ, your one and only Son, and our Lord and Saviour had to take the cross in our place. Amazing love and grace. By being tested, he showed an example of what we need to do to overcome it. Thank you that you understand us inside and out, all our desires and emotions. Help us follow your example.

Gracious God, remember our church. We seek your mercy. Fill us with you. Renew us. Holy Spirit, with your truth, stir our hearts and help us focus on the things that truly matter. Help us be the life giving organism. As we remember each other and pray for them, may we see you are working in us.

There are people struggling with their health conditions. Help us recover. Embrace their hearts and bodies. There are people having difficulties with emotions, and self-identity. Fill their hearts with your love. Assure them of your love and teach them their true identity. There are people with relationship issues, financial difficulties, and other hardships. Life is full of trials and errors. Help us walk with you. Help us rely upon your strength and wisdom, not our own.

As we continue our faith journey with you, help us focus on you and worship you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

We all have something to share. As we present our offering this morning, know that what we share enables the Church to reach out in Jesus' name, meeting needs, offering hope, and working for the justice Jesus proclaimed. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him. (*BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, we thank you for all the goodness we receive in Christ and in creation. Bless the gifts we offer to share in the work of the kingdom Jesus declared, and bless our lives so that we may be witnesses to his love and mercy. Help us follow you all through our lives. In your name, Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 624 Bless are they

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. There will be temptations. The best way is to run away from it. In our daily lives, may God give you wisdom and courage to run away from temptations and to resist them. Jesus showed us the way, let us walk with him.

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