**Home Service Sheet for Sunday 16th February 2025**

**Call To Worship Hebrews 4:14-16**

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, we thank You for making a way for us to come to You and know You. Even whilst we were far away, You sent Your Son to reconcile us to Yourself. We are not deserving of Your love, grace and mercy and yet You have poured these things out upon us, choosing us before the foundation of the world was laid. Lord, we glorify You because You have given us Your gifts of faith, repentance and eternal life. Without the sacrifice of Your Son we would be without hope, but because of Him we have a glorious hope for the future when we will live with You for eternity. Thank You, Lord. Amen.

**Hymn:**  **Before the throne of God above** by ***Charitie Lees Bancroft & Vikki Cook***

<https://youtu.be/l1OjbQb1cVY?si=THgfY7LgsXgc-eQl>

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea:

A great High Priest whose name is Love, who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands. My name is written on His heart.

I know that while in heaven He stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart;

No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within,

Upward I look and see Him there, who made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Saviour died my sinful soul is counted free.

For God, the Just, is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me;

To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there, the risen Lamb! My perfect spotless righteousness,

The great unchangeable I AM, the King of Glory and of Grace.

One with Himself, I cannot die; my soul is purchased by His blood.

My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ, my Saviour and my God;

With Christ, my Saviour and my God!

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading Luke 4:1-8**

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during 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 will all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God,
     and him only shall you serve.’”

**Reflection**

Everyone has their own struggles with temptation, sometimes giving in to them and doing what is sinful. This has been the case ever since the serpent spoke to Eve in the garden, questioning her about whether God really said she must not eat of the trees in the garden. That very first story of temptation in Genesis chapter 2 shows us where it originates, and that is with the devil. God created Adam and Eve as good and without sin, but Satan tempted the woman with the fruit of the forbidden tree. She ate of it, as did Adam, and through their disobedience sin entered the world. Before sin entered humanity, though, first came temptation.

Today, in our Bible reading, Jesus faced temptations directly from the devil. Jesus was genuinely tempted during His time on Earth, just as we are. However, as we were assured in our call to worship, from the letter to the Hebrews, He was without sin. Jesus never gave into temptation, and so was the perfect, spotless Lamb who could and did pay the price for our sin on the cross. This is an absolutely essential part of God’s salvation plan, and without Jesus resisting these temptations we would be without hope. As we look at how Jesus was tempted by the devil, and how He responded to these specific temptations we will also see an important way in which we too can resist temptation.

In verse 3 we read about the first temptation that the devil set before Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” During this period of 40 days, following Jesus’ baptism, He fasted and was in the Judean desert. This should remind us of other circumstances that lasted for 40 days or 40 years in the Old Testament. There was the flood in Noah’s day and then the wanderings of the people of Israel in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. Both Noah and Moses gave in to temptation and sinned, but Jesus did not. It doesn’t take a great imagination for us to know that Jesus would have been hungry after 40 days without food. It would have been a very real temptation for Jesus, who certainly could have made bread out of stone, but that was not the right use of His power.

Note how Jesus responded in verse 4, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” Jesus answers this, not with His own words of the moment, but with God’s Word that is recorded in the Law (Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus does not counter or rebuke the devil with clever arguments, but simply relies upon the very Word of God. These words were given by God to Moses whilst the Israelites were still wandering in the desert. In context, God was telling them not to rely on their own ability to provide food, and others things, for themselves, but rather on God.

The devil then issued the second temptation. In verses 6 and 7, we read this, “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 will all be yours.” We must not forget that the devil is described as the father of all lies (John 8:44), so we should not take everything he said at face value. Despite his claims to power, authority and glory, these are not things that belong to the devil. Rather power, authority and glory belong to God alone, and for this very reason God alone is worthy to be worshipped and praised. Jesus quotes from the law again, making this very point, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.” (v.8)

This quotation comes from the book of Deuteronomy again (6:13). It is another part of the law given to Moses by God up Mount Sinai. Satan seemingly offered Jesus an easier path that avoided the suffering and shame of the cross, but Jesus knew that it was not the Father’s will. Sometimes in life we are tempted by offers of an easier way through. Just let this thing slide, remain silent about that thing or just sit back and relax. It’s a regular temptation that we all face, but with God’s help and in obedience to His Word and His will, it is one that we must seek to resist. Amen!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be the second Adam, ushering in Your new creation. Thank You that He came to earth to identify with our sin and die in our place to pay for our sins and the sins of the whole world. We thank You for making us new creations through faith in Your Son, and ask that You would help us to live in submission to the Holy Spirit all the days of our lives, obedient to Your Word. May You fill us and all Your people with the Spirit so that we would do only those things that are pleasing in Your sight. May You purify Your Church and bring glory to Your Name, for we ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

**Benediction**

Send us out today to stand in Your strength for what is true and right. Help us to resist temptation and rather live in obedience to You. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.