



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 9th March 2025

compiled by Rev. Chris Jackson

Call to Worship

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."

Psalm 91:1-2

HYMN: Mission Praise 423

1] Living under the shadow of his wing
We find security.
Standing in His presence we will bring
Our worship, worship, worship to the King.

2] Bowed in adoration at His feet
We dwell in harmony.
Voices joined together that repeat,
Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb.

3] Heart to heart embracing in His love
Reveals His purity.
Soaring in my spirit like a dove,
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

David Hadden (b. 1952) & Bob Silvester

PRAYER

Loving God, we gather penitently in your name to seek renewal –
receive our repentance.

We gather joyfully in your name to worship you –
receive our praise.

We gather full of hope, seeking your help and guidance –
receive our questions.

We gather because we love you and we want to worship you –
receive our commitment.

May we worship with expectation, openness, receptiveness and sincerity

Give us the refuge we need, O loving God,
refuge beneath your wings.

Protect us from all that we fear, O faithful God,
by shielding us from danger.

Guard us from temptation, O gracious God,
that we may choose the right path.

Be with us, and make your presence known,

O compassionate God, on every step of life's journey. AMEN

LET US JOIN IN THE LORD'S PRAYER TOGETHER

READING Luke 4:1–13 (NRSV)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished.

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.”

Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’ ”

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

And the devil said to him, “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.”

Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”

Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed 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 command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’

and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

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

When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

HYMN: Mission Praise 160

1] Forty days and forty nights
thou wast fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights
tempted, and yet undefiled.

2] Sunbeams scorching all the day;
Chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
Prowling beasts about thy way;
Stones your pillow; earth thy bed.

3] Let us Thy endurance share
And from earthly greed abstain;
With Thee watching unto prayer,
With Thee strong to suffer pain

4] Then if evil on us press,
flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
May we never faint or fail!

5] So shall peace divine be ours:
holier gladness ours shall be;
come to us angelic powers
such as ministered to thee.

George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870)

Reflection

I can remember many times when I was tempted and distracted away from something important, but I want to share a funny story from my wedding day. Our maid of honour's husband was a fanatical “petrol head”, he just loved his cars, any opportunity he had to look at a vintage car or a and old land rover in particular was something not to be missed. He was charged by his wife to make sure he got some good photos of the bride and groom, however he got into a lot of trouble from his wife, because when the film was developed (yes it was a while ago), all she saw was photos of vintage land rovers. Unfortunately unbeknown to the rest of us, he had discovered just around the corner from our venue was a land rover show! He simply could not resist; the temptation was too much. We still remind him of this even now!

Our gospel story today can be focussed on temptation, but perhaps we should instead not be distracted ourselves from what is perhaps the real lesson for us today...true worship.

Who is it that we worship?

I suppose we should know the answer in that it is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So why is God the focus of our worship? It is perhaps the question that the devil in today's passage is asking Jesus. He is saying to Jesus, "go on prove it then"

Jesus answers each of the devil's questions from the book of Deuteronomy, which literally means the second law, where Moses restates and reminds the people of Israel of the laws that have already been laid down at an earlier time. I'm sure this would not have been lost on the devil who is well versed in the scriptures, as we see from our text.

Jesus is emptying himself of power and glory in order to show his obedience to his Father in all things. In this case the devil uses the examples of bodily needs, authority over the nations and physical protection from harm.

Jesus did not have to prove who he was by the means determined by the devil, but simply by obedience and surrender to his Father in heaven. Trust and protection comes from above for Jesus and from nowhere else. Jesus was certain of his personhood, who he was as a human being and who he was as the Son of God. The devil was always going to lose this battle.

True worship of God, surrender to God and full trust in God brings us to a place of inner peace in our lives. It doesn't mean that all things (in human terms) will be well, but putting our faith in God will sustain us, enrich us and because of that, all those around us. When trials and temptations come, let us truly take our example from Jesus and lean on our Father in heaven. AMEN

Prayers

As we enter the journey of Lent and reflect on the challenges of its story;
when we look into our own hearts and struggle to live by the responsibilities of our calling:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we feel lost and alone;

when trouble comes to our door and we do not know how to face the future:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we are lured by seductive voices of power, money and control;

and we no longer know what is true:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When our dreams and relationships lie shattered by conflict, circumstance or cruelty

and we place our trust in what cannot fulfil us:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we invest more in developing weapons than we do in the work of peace building –
more on what divides us than on the work of unity:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we look at cities that lie deserted;

when citizens flee in fear for their lives and our enemies encircle us:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we take more than we should;

when we do not treat the earth with kindness and our habits and choices create a wasteland:

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness.

When we look ahead and all is dark: send us light.

When our hearts are dry, our pathway full of ash and dust, send us water to renew our souls.

God of life,

Lead us through the wilderness. AMEN

HYMN: Mission Praise 41

1] At the name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2] Humbled for a season,
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom He came;
Faithfully He bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious,
When from death He passed.

3] Bore it up triumphant
With its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures
To the central height,
To the throne of Godhead,
To the Father's breast,
Filled it with the glory
Of that perfect rest.

4] In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour,
Let His will enfold you
In its light and power.

5] Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With His Father's glory,
With His angel-train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.

Caroline Maria Noel (1817-1877)

Blessing

The God of all grace
who has called us to eternal glory in Christ,
make us perfect,
confirming and strengthening us
and to him be the power for ever and ever. **Amen**