

Worship At Home

22nd February 2026 - First Sunday of Lent

Prepared by Rev. Kevin Hooke, Superintendent
South Devon Circuit



STF 254: Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah...

Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds out from the mouth of God.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah...

Karen Lafferty (b 1948)

Prayers

“Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing all you who are upright in heart!” (Ps 32:11)

Lord God, we come to you at the start of Lent, preparing ourselves to celebrate the good news at the end of 40 days – that your love for us knows no end, that you entered our world in Jesus and have redeemed us by the cross, and that your love is stronger even than death itself.

We rejoice in the hope and promise that is ours through him, and reach out to you in faith and worship. You alone are our God.

“Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered” (Ps 32:1)

And Lord God, we come to you at the start of Lent, knowing that this is a season of reflection and self-examination. We know that we constantly fall short in faith and love, and are in need of transformation and grace.

As we recognise our own failures and our part in the world’s sinfulness, we ask both for your forgiveness and for your Spirit to continue to be active within us, re-forming and changing us more into the likeness of Christ. We ask sincerely, humbly and confidently, and so hear your words of grace to us: Our sins are forgiven.

And so, we may join with the psalmist, **“Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.”** Amen

Reading: Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “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.”

Jesus answered him, *“It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

Reflection

On the first Sunday in Lent, the lectionary asks us to reflect on the story of Jesus’ temptations, this year from Matthew’s gospel. There are all sorts of things we could note from the passage.

For instance, it is the Spirit that leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted – so this is a necessary and Godly part of his preparation for his coming ministry, a time of growth and strengthening, maybe a period of testing as much as temptation. The experience reinforces in him some of the key principles which will hold and guide him in the time ahead: not to prioritise his own needs; not to display his divine sonship by overt displays of power; to focus solely on God and serve him alone.

And then, we can note that both Satan and Jesus cite scripture – so being able to quote biblical texts is not in itself an answer. Just as important is our overall vision and understanding of what Jesus and the Kingdom are about – a couple in one of my local churches say that for them, their guiding response to any issue is, “what is the most loving, and what is the most personally responsible, thing to do?” How do you make decisions when faced with tough questions?

And assuming there is an historical event behind this story, it can only have been related by Jesus himself – and if so, why did he tell his disciples? To encourage

them in their own times of searching and struggle? I don't know what temptations you face, or whether you are going through a time when your faith is being tested. However, remember that this is a part of your faith journey, and remember that you are not alone, even when it feels that way. God holds on to you, even if at times you may struggle to hold on to him, and others will be holding you in their hearts and prayers. And hopefully for you too, the wilderness experiences and this season of Lent may be a time of strengthening and growth.



Prayers

I invite you to spend a few minutes in stillness and silence, remembering in turn:

Those who are going through wilderness experiences at the moment: through illness or loss, through national or local circumstances beyond their control;

Those preparing and training to be ministers and leaders in the church;

The church in places where it is hard or dangerous to be a Christian;

Those in positions of responsibility and leadership in society, and those who face the temptation to misuse their position;

Those searching for meaning and direction in their lives;

For yourself in this season of Lent;

For those you know and love;

And for those with whom you will spend time with in the coming week, that your words and actions might be of Christ and for Christ.

Draw your quiet reflection to a close by joining with the whole Church, in the Lord's Prayer:

The Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father who in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.*

Blessing

May the God of all grace and peace guide your steps and guard your heart, this day and this Lent; and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, and all you carry in your hearts, now and always.

Amen.

STF 238: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

**Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing,
if our God our Father be.**

**Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert thou didst go.**

**Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.**

James Emeston (1791-1867)