

Circuit worship – Prepared by Dr Stephen Appiah

Call to Worship: Romans 5:9-12

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

Hymn Stf 113 Oh worship the King (stf 54 I will worship)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv2BqFgm6_M

<p>1 O worship the King, all-glorious above ; O gratefully sing his power and his love : our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.</p> <p>2 O tell of his might, O sing of his grace, whose robe is the light, whose canopy space ; his chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form, and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.</p> <p>3 The earth with its store of wonders untold, Almighty, your power has founded of old ; established it fast by a changeless decree, and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.</p>	<p>4 Your bountiful care what tongue can recite ? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light ; it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.</p> <p>5 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, in you do we trust, nor find you to fail ; your mercies how tender, how firm to the end, our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.</p> <p>6 O measureless Might, ineffable Love, while angels delight to hymn you above, your ransomed creation, though feeble our praise, in true adoration our voices we raise.</p> <p>Robert Grant (1779–1838)</p>
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Prayer and Praise

Our Father and our God we join your churches around the world to bring you praise and honour and glory, that when we were far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. He declared your great love and grace to the world and opened the door to your kingdom to us. May we who have responded to his call continue to live in the hope of eternal glory in your Kingdom. May the light of your Holy spirit continue to shine in us and keep us firm in our faith through this time of Lent. Amen.

Let us confess our sins

Most merciful God, we confess that we have fallen short of your expectations in our lives – both in thought and in deeds. Help us to amend who we are so that we may be able to walk in your ways through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord Jesus we meet in your name as we are. Fill us with your love and may your spirit rise above this worship and make it acceptable in your sight.

Amen

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 who trespass against us,
 and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen

Hymn STF 236 Forty days and forty nights

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5Nq4YXlcX8>

<p>1 Forty days and forty nights you were fasting in the wild ; forty days and forty nights tempted and yet undefiled.</p> <p>2 Burning heat throughout the day, bitter cold when light had fled ; prowling beasts around your way, stones your pillow, earth your bed.</p> <p>3 Shall not we your trials share, learn your discipline of will ; and with you by fast and prayer wrestle with the powers of hell ?</p>	<p>4 So if Satan, pressing hard, soul and body would destroy : Christ who conquered, be our guard ; give to us the victor's joy.</p> <p>5 Watching, praying, struggling thus, victory shall be ours too ; angels minister to us, as they ministered to you.</p> <p>6 Saviour, may we hear your voice ; keep us constant at your side ; and with you we shall rejoice at the eternal Eastertide.</p> <p>George Hunt Smyttan (1822–1870) <i>adapted by Jubilate Hymns</i></p>
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Bible Readings: Genesis 3: 1-13 & Luke 4:1–13,

Hymn Stf 471 Lord I come to you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSi-9PPPGnI>

<p>1 Lord, I come to you, let my heart be changed, renewed, flowing from the grace that I found in you. And Lord, I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me will be stripped away by the power of your love.</p> <p><i>Hold me close, let your love surround me ; bring me near, draw me to your side. And as I wait, I'll rise up like the eagle, and I will soar with you, your Spirit leads me on in the power of your love.</i></p>	<p>2 Lord, unveil my eyes, let me see you face to face, the knowledge of your love as you live in me. Lord, renew my mind, as your will unfolds in my life in living every day by the power of your love.</p> <p>Geoff Bullock (b. 1956)</p>
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Sermon

Scriptures tell us that God did not send his Son to condemn the world but through him all will be saved. The divine plan was that humanity had fallen and restoration into God's Kingdom was necessary. The fall was due to the first Adam failing in their temptation. Romans 5 says death reigned because we all fell from grace. In the second Adam, the plan of God was for us to find grace and righteousness. The plan would involve suffering and death but it was for this reason Jesus came.

The devil's plan however was to disrupt the plan of God by

1. Challenging the confidence of the Son of God
2. And challenging the obedience of the Son to his Father
3. And make him question his own integrity as the Son of God
4. And question the assurance of his Father
5. With the aim of persuading the Son of God to serve him Satan

At his baptism, The Father and the Holy Spirit endorsed the Jesus so that John the Baptist could bear witness about him.

After the baptism Jesus was then taken by the Spirit to the Judean desert to encounter the devil.

After 40 days and nights of fasting the person of Christ who is truly Man and truly God suffered from hunger – and it was at that point that Satan appeared to confront Him.

“If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And presumably eat the bread he has made from the stone.

We all do need bread for our day to day life and we always pray Lord's prayer, “give us our daily bread” - but our Lord Jesus did not need bread at that time. He was focussing on the spiritual dimensions of his ministry.

Jesus replies - life requires more than physical bread. Our spiritual needs require expression of our faith and every Word of God is food for us at this time of Lent. That is where our own focus should be – our spiritual needs as we journey with our Lord.

Satan used similar approach to persuade Adam and Eve to break the word of God and plunged humanity into darkness.

We need to be aware that Satan is out and about to sabotage the plan of God.

This is not Satan's only method of attack and in scriptures Satan had made things difficult for people who trusted God. Job was attacked and battered so severely by Satan. He lost his home, his family, his business and Satan was able to get Job's family and friends to ask him to speak against God. But Job insisted even if God slays me I will praise him.

When a Jewish person says it is written, they mean it is written in scriptures. And scriptures cannot be altered and so it is written "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God".

Temptation 2

Then the devil, taking Jesus up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give you, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be Yours."

The treachery in this statement is that he was saying to Jesus, there is a simpler way than the way of the cross (dela rosa) which will cause you pain, humiliation and shameful death and you might not end up taking the Kingdom from me. But if you wink in agreement, we could do this together just between the 2 of us in this quiet place and I will hand the earthly kingdom to you. Look across Europe, Africa, the Americas, far East - the world civilisation - all could be yours.

Your father's way will be too painful to you.

Nobody has delivered the earthly kingdom to Satan, he has taken it by deceit. Besides he was asking Jesus to worship him and abandon his Father's salvation plan.

This is not negotiable.

Jesus is the author of the Law and he has stated that thou shall not have any other gods besides me. Satan is a thief and Jesus knows him well so he told him "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" And that is not a statement for negotiation.

Temptation 3

Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set 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 shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you," and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Satan's plan is for Jesus to test his Father's assurance. Let's see if his angels will bear you when you fall and let's see what will happen to your feet - will they touch the ground?

Does Jesus need to jump from a Temple to prove his Father's integrity? Does he need to jump to prove that he is the Son of God? The problem with the devil using scriptures is that he misinterprets scripture and applies it wrongly.

Every local preacher is taught something called hermeneutics - it means scripture must be used to interpret scripture. You cannot pluck scripture and mould it to suit your needs. Satan clearly has quoted scripture and misapplied the scripture.

As far as Jesus is concerned, God his father says has confirmed his Sonship and that settles it.

My position is the same “I need no argument and I need no other plea, it is enough that Christ died for me and that settles it for me as well”.

Satan is dismissed but he is not finished yet. He is roaming like a roaring lion looking to devour Christians.

In this Lent as we journey with Christ, let us bring to focus his divine commitment to the salvation plan to bring the Kingdom of God to us and bring us hope of eternal life in his Father's Kingdom. Jesus is Lord. Amen

Hymn Stf 489 All I once held dear (Stf 455

All my Hope in God is founded)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Merf00qcQik>

1 All I once held dear,
built my life upon,
all this world reveres,
and wars to own,
all I once thought gain
I have counted loss ;
spent and worthless now,
compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.*

2 Now my heart's desire
is to know you more,
to be found in you
and known as yours.
To possess by faith
what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift
of righteousness.

3 Oh, to know the power
of your risen life,
and to know you in
your sufferings.
To become like you
in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live
and never die.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Prayer of Intercession

Gracious God whose Spirit helps us in our weakness and guides us in our prayers, we pray for your church and the world in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Renew the life and faith of the Church in this Lent period; strengthen our witness and make us one in Christ. Grant that all who confess that Jesus is Lord may be faithful in your service and be filled with the Spirit and that your mission in the world will continue to grow.

Comfort those in sorrow, heal the sick in body and mind and grant us compassion for all who suffer.

We mourn the death and destruction in recent earthquakes and other disasters.

And we pray for souls of those who died and may their families and love ones be comforted.

We pray for the living survivors, be with them, Lord, in this traumatic time and let them experience your healing. We pray for the communities affected that they may come together in love to rebuild a new life.

We pray for our leaders, that they may be able to broker peace in our world and bring to an end the terror of war, and end injustice and poverty in our world. May we and all your people share the life and joy of your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Blessing

May the Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and proclaim the word and works of God.

And the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father remain with you always

Amen

Go into the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ.

Amen