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LENT 1C

6h March 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Call to worship

Here I am, to worship, to meet with you, O God, in the midst of all the uncertainty of the world we live in.

I come to be forgiven and accepted, to love and be loved, to hope for a better world and to take inspiration to play my part in building that world.

I have come. Come, O come Immanuel.

Amen.¹

Centreing Prayers

Holy God,

In the hands of basket weavers, bamboo fibres and leaves become the tools for creativity and possibility.

In your hands, similarly, our lives become the tools to build your kingdom here on earth.

Today, I pray for the work of All We Can's partner in Zimbabwe, the Zubo Trust, working with groups of women to train them in basket weaving.

I call to mind the image of a basket, the empty vessel, the storage place, the offering plate, the fruit bowl, the bread holder, the coin collector. A basket has many uses, and each design is suited to a particular need.

As I look out on your world, help me to listen, with an attentive ear, to the role you have called me to play, to meet the needs I am called to meet, to make use of my skills in the building of your kingdom.

Gracious God, weave my life with those around me, as the basket weaver weaves, Weave our lives by your love.

Amen.²

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version most familiar or comfortable to you.

Hymn: 696 STF – For the healing of the nations - [YouTube](#)

Readings: [Luke 4:1-13](#)

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by All We Can

Responding to the reading

What is your experience of temptation?

What is your particular 'weakness'? Perhaps it is doughnuts, or kit-kats, or whiskey, or the way you talk to people who annoy you, or Netflix (you can have too much of a good thing)! What is the area in which you are most likely to get tempted into making unhealthy and unhelpful choices?

How do you manage the impact of temptation? Are you someone who finds it relatively easy to turn away from these vices and distractions, or do you find it really difficult?

Today, in the Gospel reading, you have heard Jesus' story of how he wrestles with the temptation brought by the devil in the wilderness. This is the story we read every year at the start of the season of Lent, the season in which we prepare for Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in Holy Week and the miraculous Easter weekend.

The early church, in setting out these liturgical seasons, recognised the importance of preparation, of prayer, of stilling ourselves and turning aside from the business of our day-to-day lives, in order to fully appreciate the impact of these ancient stories on our journey of discipleship. How are you choosing to mark Lent this year? Often, people give up something that they see as a 'vice' or 'weakness', often because of this particular reading and the emphasis on temptation that we have here at the start of Lent.

Perhaps that is what you need this Lenten season – perhaps you need to wrestle with your own experience of temptation.

Or perhaps you need something very different. If you picture your life of discipleship as a journey, as you take the next steps in seeking to follow Jesus and live a Kingdom-inspired life here on earth, what do you think you need to nourish you at this point in your journey? Are you ready for a little rest by the side of the road, and a time of filling yourself up with energy, or are you ready for another little burst of activity to help you gain a little more ground? Do you need to wrestle with a particular obstacle or item of baggage that is slowing you down?

Lent can be a helpful time to check-in on your journey. At this point in Luke's gospel, Jesus is just about to begin the busiest and most significant three years of his ministry. In order to prepare himself for that, he heads into the wilderness (at the invitation of the Holy Spirit). To a place of quiet, of limited distraction, and a place where he can wrestle with the temptations that might occur at this point in his earthly ministry – the temptations to solve everything quickly, to be glorified on earth and in heaven, to spread the gospel-message to the whole earth in an instant.

He wrestles with these temptations, and overcomes them.

But what about you? What do you need today? Why not use this Lent season as a chance to do a kind of spiritual pit-stop?

You might like to use the next few minutes to pray in silence.

Silent prayer or meditation is a great test of the impact of temptation on our lives – as the temptation is to think about the to do list, or to replay significant moments from

the day. As you hold the stillness, acknowledge these thoughts, then let them pass and seek to return to a place of quiet, of reflection, of prayer.

When you are ready, you could say this blessing out loud:

Blessing

I will go in peace, and seek to play my part,
I will go in grace, and remember that all is gift,
I will go in love, and show that love to every person who I meet,
I will go in hope, believing a better world is possible.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 7th March

- Lord you have my heart, and I will search for yours.
Show me the next steps I am to take in my journey of discipleship,
Show me how to love you more completely,
Show me how to learn more of your plans for me, and the part I can play in building your kingdom here on earth.
Show me. Show me. Show me.
Amen.

Tuesday 8th March

- Today is international women's day. Today, in your prayers, you might like to celebrate the inspirational women in your life and your story, as well as pray for gender justice around the world.
- If you'd like to join an online event to help you in your prayers and with inspiring stories of change from around the world, our friends at All We Can are hosting an International Women's Day Celebration on Zoom at 6pm today. Sign up for a Zoom link at www.allwecan.org.uk/lentgroup

Wednesday 9th March

- Today is the feast day of Saint Frances of Rome, a mother, mystic and organiser of charitable work from the 15th Century, who founded a religious community. Frances' community followed a rhythm of prayer and meditation, but were not bound by the formal vows or cloisters of many other religious orders of the time, meaning its members were able to respond to the changing needs of the society they lived in.
- Perhaps this community can be your model today as you pray: Lord, show me how to be drenched in prayer, and a positive force for God in my community.
Amen.

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Thursday 10th March

- Look at your hands. You might like to open them up and look at them.
- What do you use these hands for? As well as all the usual things, like sending text messages, washing up and getting dressed. How do they reflect what you believe about the world, and desire for the world?
- Lord of all grace, help me to use these hands to build your Kingdom here on earth. Help me to be your hands and feet, O Lord.
Amen.

Friday 11th March

- Exactly two years ago today, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic. Around the world, we are still living with the impact of the disease, and many places are still waiting for access to vaccines that might allow them to loosen restrictions again.
- Amongst all the uncertainty about the future, take a moment today to lament the past: the past two years, the people who have died, the people whose lives and livelihoods have been ruined, the ongoing mental and physical health challenges that people are facing as a direct or indirect impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Lord, today we weep with the weeping, grieve with the grieving, stand in solidarity with those whose lives have been ruined over the last two years. Come Lord Jesus. Come Lord Jesus.
Amen.

Saturday 12th March

- Today, O God, I give thanks for the sunrise. Each new day begins with a dawn, with the light bursting out of the darkness to bring energy to the plants, to wake the sleeping, to guide me in the journeys I have to make today.
- Thank you for this daily reminder that your light is always with us, and comes to us in the darkness and most difficult places of our lives.
- Today, I thank you for the sunrise. Amen.