



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 9 MARCH 2025 – Lent 1

COLLECT

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 91.1-2, 9-16

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ♦
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
2 Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold, ♦
my God, in whom I put my trust.'
9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge ♦
and the Most High your stronghold,
10 There shall no evil happen to you, ♦
neither shall any plague come near your tent.
11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, ♦
to keep you in all your ways.
12 They shall bear you in their hands, ♦
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; ♦
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
14 Because they have set their love upon me, therefore will I deliver them; ♦
I will lift them up, because they know my name.
15 They will call upon me and I will answer them; ♦
I am with them in trouble, I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
16 With long life will I satisfy them ♦
and show them my salvation.

A reading from the letter to the Romans, chapter 10, verses 8b-13.

'The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart'

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 4, verses 1-13.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

Reader: Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

ALL Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Reader: I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

ALL Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, Chapter 4, verses 1-13

And, at the end:

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ALL Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 4. 1-13

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 tempted 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 their glory and all this authority; 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 took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying 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.

A Reflection from Peter

There's something about Lent that brings a sense of heaviness, a sense of discomfort and even guilt. For most of us there are memories from childhood of being encouraged to give up the things we liked most of all – and six weeks seemed an eternity. Much of the language was about sin, wrongdoing, making amends. I always remember a Good Friday service for children when our parish priest held up his hands and asked the children if they knew why his right hand was larger than his left. Of course we didn't, so he told us: it was because he had used his right hand to smack naughty children when he was a teacher! I can only hope that we have grown out of that kind of distortion.

Nonetheless the contradictions persist. The old English word Lent means 'lengthening' – referring to the lengthening of the days as the sun returns. It is also used as a word for spring. These suggest hope and growth, but we still have a lingering sense that we are supposed to be given over to introspection and improvement!

When we turn to the Gospel for this Sunday there are some very striking things. First, it is the Spirit who is the key player. And just to underline the point, the reading begins, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit..." Then, it is the Spirit who leads Jesus into the wilderness. This wasn't some guilt trip, but an exploration, an adventure. Curiously, being tempted by the devil isn't the big deal. After all, that's how life is. We are constantly being tempted – by all sorts of things – tempted by the devil. What is important is the particular shape of the temptations and the response Jesus makes. And the way the episode is written makes it sound as though the tough questions came at the end, when Jesus was tired and hungry. "Go on, turn this stone into bread!" And then, "OK, if life is more than food, then how about power? Just make me your god..." And finally, "OK, if you're still insisting that life is more than all this, jump off the temple – and see if anyone will save you..." This time it is the devil who quotes scripture, - and unwittingly turns everything upside down. "The angels will protect you, ... they will bear you up so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

Here is the heart of Lent: the discovery that God is, for us all, the way, the truth and the life. We can all benefit from some time deliberately set aside for God; time to take stock and to set out afresh – but from a place of hope and light, led by the Spirit, not out of guilt or empty duty. As St Paul put it in our first reading, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."