

# A Message from Godfrey

Why did the temptation of Jesus occur at this point in his earthly ministry? Why did the Spirit deliberately drive Jesus into this situation? If we may suppose that Jesus was being tempted to diverge from the path set before him, then it may be that we can answer both questions.

Jesus was facing a journey with a particularly gruesome destination. Not only that but he would also face obstacles in reaching that destination, which would be erected by his enemies, friends- “but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me Satan, for you are not on the side of God but of men.” He even found obstacles that he created himself like the overturning of the tables of the money lenders in the Temple, an action that put him on a collision course with the Jewish authorities whose authority he not only called into question but held them in utter contempt.

At the start of a journey it is vital to identify the destination with absolute clarity if there is to be any chance of staying on course. It is also necessary to be adequately prepared for the conditions that will be faced. In his wilderness experience, Jesus could focus on the ultimate and not just the immediate. He was already on the road towards Jerusalem. However, this experience brings the big temptations to light. Usually, simple every day concerns can distract us from our journey quite satisfactorily. As a final preparation for his earthly or public ministry, Jesus is given the opportunity to take stock of what lies before him, both in terms of destination and the obstacles in between.

We too need this constant refocussing, guided by the Spirit.

Jesus goes into the wilderness, then, as a player in a larger drama. His first role is to face a formidable adversary we might be forgiven for mistaking Jesus as a weapon used in a war between other, superior forces or as a new recruit who still needs to prove his mettle. We see that he has been shown a vision of what lies before him and it is a life that is full of confrontation.

When we go on a journey we are placing ourselves in a relationship of trust. We hope that the pilot knows what he or she is doing or that the driver will deliver us safely. We will be influenced by the people we meet who are not like us or who come from different cultures or religions. We will experience new influences and may even find something or someone that will be life changing.

And that is what Lent is all about. It is an invitation, indeed, a challenge to get out of our spiritual comfort zone and fast and give money and see exactly where we are on our journey.

I find great solace in poetry and wish I were clever enough to write some. May I end by reading a Lenten Poem by Ann Weems, an American poet.

*Lent is a time to take time to let the power  
of our faith story take hold of us,  
a time to let the events get up  
and walk around in us,  
a time to intensify our living unto Christ,  
a time to hover over the thoughts of our hearts,  
a time to place our feet in the streets of  
Jerusalem or to walk along the sea and  
listen to his Word,  
a time to touch his robe  
and feel the healing surge through us,  
a time to ponder and a time to wonder....  
Lent is a time to allow  
a fresh new taste of God!  
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,*

*for thoughts come unbidden.*

*Perhaps we're afraid to face our future  
knowing our past.*

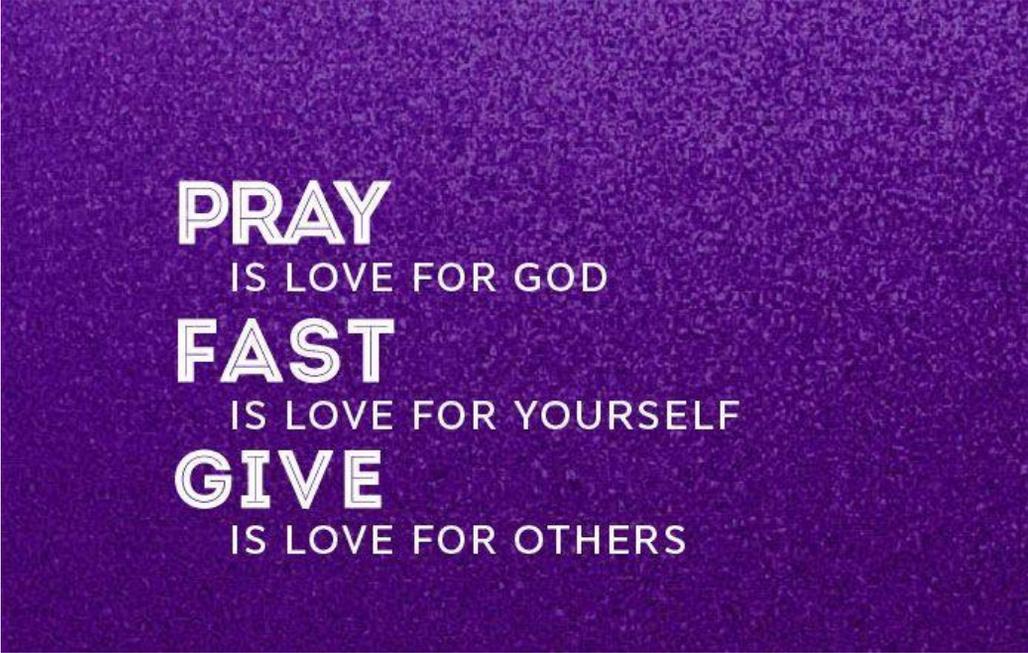
*Give us courage, O God,  
to hear your Word  
and to read our living into it.*

*Give us the trust to know we're forgiven  
and give us the faith  
to take up our lives and walk.*

Whatever you decide to do this Lent, my prayer for you is that it is a meaningful and life changing period on all levels.

Thoughts and prayers

Godfrey



**PRAY**  
IS LOVE FOR GOD

**FAST**  
IS LOVE FOR YOURSELF

**GIVE**  
IS LOVE FOR OTHERS