

303 | Lenten Prayers

Lent is the traditional time when we remember Christ's temptations in the desert. It's a time when Christ considered what form his ministry was going to take. It can also be a time for us to consider what form our Christian witness might take too.

The first temptation was to turn stones into bread.

The people were hungry – what better way to win them over than to meet their physical needs? Jesus' rejection of this temptation is a rejection of the idea that true love can be bought. Giving people bread might make them follow him, but for what reasons?

The second temptation was to jump from the Temple.

We live in a society in love with spectacle. People can be won over with tricks and fantastica. Jesus' rejection of this temptation is a rejection of the idea of celebrity. Doing tricks might amaze people, but was that love?

The third temptation was to give up.

We live in a world where persistence and tenacity are rare qualities, especially in the face of peer opposition. Marcuse outlines how pressures from our peers, from our own insecurities, and from the dominant power structures draw us towards 'one dimensionality': truth by big brother vote. Jesus' refusal to bow down and just 'take the money' is a rejection of the easy way out. It might make for an easy life, but was that what life was about?

These Lenten prayers could be used as a daily rhythm over these 40 or so days.

Prayer in the Morning:

God who refused to stone-grind flour, who had the wealth to buy all love,
I/we thank you for all I/we have as I/we break-fast this morning.
I/we will have power to impress people today.
May I/we not inflate beyond what is true.
I/we will be open to impressions today.
May I/we have a clear mind for this truth:
That true love cannot be bought or sold.
May I/we neither buy, nor sell,
But only generously give and receive.

Prayer at Lunchtime / After work:

God who refused to jump, who could have called on angels and lightening,
but refused,
solidify my/our candy-floss faith.
Among the glitz and glamour, the faux-celebrity clamour,
sneak in, come alongside and, though we see only through a glass darkly,
remove our shades, and let us meet the eyes of the other.

Prayer in the Evening:

God who refused to bow, who came on down, but refused the cash prizes,
God of infinite dimensions, inhabit all three of mine/ours:
To love you, to love my/our neighbours and to love my self.
May I/we give up on nothing,
save giving up my/our lives,
as you gave up yours.
Thank you.