

WELCOME 8th September 2019 – 13 Pentecost '19 C

Matthew 6:9-13, Psalm 32:8-11 and Luke 4:1-13

Good morning! Welcome to worship today! Special welcome guests & visitors! It's our privilege & joy to serve you in worship.

Like a stalker, it harasses you with unwanted and obsessive attention. It never leaves you alone, following you wherever you go - at home, in the schoolyard, at work, in shops, restaurants, even your car. It knows your history, your routines & where you are most vulnerable. Nope...not Google, one of the tech giants or computer virus.

Every step we take in this world, there is an orchestrated & calculated attempt to tempt us deceive us shift our allegiance, trust, & confidence away from God toward some substitute that promises "more/better"....The Evil One constantly inserts question marks where God has put a full stop.

But when doubts arise & questions overwhelm, remember who you are – a bought & paid for in Christ, beloved child of God. The only way through is to pray "*Lead us not into temptation...*" And just as He promised, we experience the Father's Guidance

We'll experience & celebrate that together today...

Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Father in heaven, we come to your throne of grace with the confidence of children. For the sake of Christ our Great High Priest we admit our temptations & testings knowing he knows and you know how frail our faith. You alone are our strength & defense. You alone are our refuge & help. You alone give your Spirit to guide & sustain. Let it be so today for your glory & our witness to the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen!

13 PENTECOST '19 C – FROM HIS FULLNESS: THE FATHER'S GUIDANCE

FAITH CHAT:

1. When are you most vulnerable to temptation? why?
2. Is there a part of your life you find it hard to give fully over to God? why?

My sister's oldest boy...oldest US nephew...is an Electrical Engineer. He has often tried to explain his work to me...He might as well say the Great Wall of China keeps out rabbits... But when we last spoke he told me he's now working on something I *DO* partially understand. GPS...He & the folks he works with are working on ways to "spooof & un-spoof" Global Navigation Systems. He's figuring out ways to trick GPSs into thinking they're somewhere they're not or un-tricking GPSs that have been tricked by someone else; or have become confused for some other reason...I don't get the science, but I get the idea. I even understand military/civilian applications...sounds cool.

But what I really wish he was working on is something to un-spoof my GPS...My Guilfoyle Positioning System...I wish he could invent something to clear up the various confusions - misdirections - vague sense of lostness I experience any given week/day. You know the...how do I deal kindly with this less than likeable person...what house should we look at make an offer on...what parenting decision is the right one...for this child/time...what health choice is right...for me...my family...my mom...what course of action what decisions are best for our mission here...widen our mission kingdom impact given our varied assumed constraints...faithful w/ \$\$\$ & people?

You face your own confusions & misdirections & lostness...I know you do. We often sit over a cup of coffee & talk or pray through them. You just shared moments of vulnerability & those "I can't let this one go even though I don't know" moments. At almost every step we take in this world, there is an orchestrated & calculated attempt to deceive us & shift our allegiance, trust, & confidence away from God toward some substitute that promises "more/better"...toward my own insight or this advisor's expertise or what my friends are doing...current/popular/expedient... Every time we buy into that deception that misdirection...we experience that sense of lostness & confusion & get farther out of alignment with what God really has in store for us...Because you see...

Deep down we know God intends good for us & has his desires for our lives here... We know we weren't put on earth without a purpose. We're not here to simply grope blindly through the darkness bashing into walls/tripping over the coffee table. But that's the way life feels sometimes. We all want to stand before the Father on the last day & hear, "*Well done good & faithful servant.*" None of us want God look at us quizzically & say, "What you did was fine...but that's not what I had in mind."

In fact we have a promise that holds us...Ps 32:8 *The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you & watch over you..."* So we pray "*Lead us not into temptation...*" trusting that as He promised, the Father will do just that...guide us to what is best...advise...watch over...steer us through the worst the tempter throws our way...

BIBLES – LK 4

It's funny...most of us...me included...look at that promise & that prayer & we limit it to right this minute...the current circumstance that has us up late bleary-eyed scratching our heads & crying out...Ok God...this health crisis this job collapse this drought decision trauma relationship is on fire out of control wearing me out... Guide me now lead me now assure me now...but God never starts "right now." Right now whatever "right now" has you by the throat, is after the fact for God...Wut?

We can't fully understand the temptation Jesus experiences as Lk records it in Lk 4 outside of what Lk has already shown us the Father is doing in Jesus in Lk 3...turn back to Lk 3:21-22...*One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, & the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son; you bring me great joy."* John baptizes Jesus & as Jesus emerges from the river the Father declares his relationship of love & delight over Jesus...

To be the dearly loved Son is to have a permanent unshakable unbreakable standing before the Father. To be the dearly loved Son is to share the same purpose & mission as the Father. **THEN THEN THEN**...Lk 4...

THEN Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Full of the Holy Spirit in the full strength of the Father...Jesus is led by the Spirit in the wilderness...God never starts "right now." Right now whatever "right now" has you by the throat, is after the fact for God. Jesus experiences a full on grapple with the evil one AS HE IS LED BY in the strength of as he enjoys the love & delight of the Father...Jesus lives the Father's guidance INTO the tempting circumstance...God doesn't show up like the ambos to a car wreck...late to the party...The Father has already given Jesus all he needs for that moment...The Father does the same for you & me & every one of his children...The Father has already given Jesus all he needs for that moment...

The Father does the same for you & me & every one of his children...watch how that unfolds as Jesus lives the Father's guidance **INTO** the tempting circumstance...

I'm not going to plow through the intricacies & specifics of the temptations except to say they read to me like an anti-Lord's Prayer...the exact opposite of how Jesus teaches us to relate to the Father. Think: stones to bread – earthly glory/power – divine intervention in self-inflicted crisis. Provide for yourself. Exalt yourself. Demand from God for yourself. But what set of heart does Jesus' prayer lead us into? Humility before the Father's greatness & holiness. Lifting up the Father's Name. Appealing for the Father's Kingdom & will to be fulfilled. Resting in the Father's provision. Acknowledging our need for the Father's forgiveness & healing of our hearts & lives. Trusting how the Father feels toward you is true & is enough: *"You are my dearly loved Son; you bring me great joy."*

Jesus lives the Father's guidance **INTO** the tempting circumstance...God doesn't show up like the ambulance to a car wreck...to clean up a mess...The Father has already given Jesus all he needs for that moment...To be the dearly loved Son is to have a permanent unshakable unbreakable standing before the Father. To be the dearly loved Son is to share the same purpose & mission as the Father. To be beloved of the Father is to know God has an indestructible claim on you, an eternal intention for you & an unyielding embrace of you.

The Father's guidance isn't some mapped out plotted & charted 100% blueprint certainty...For Jesus it was about the distance of one sentence at a time. For most of God's people God's guidance is the length of one act of obedience...Noah had never seen a flood, but he built an ark. Abraham's night on 100, Sarah's past 80 & neither had ever heard of a place called Canaan but they headed west out of Ur & didn't stop until Isaac was born to peals of laughter. Joseph's got a bloody nose a couple cracked teeth & he's up to his hips in mud at the bottom of a well while his brothers debate killing him or selling him as a slave but he knows God has shown him his mom dad & his bully brothers bowing down to honour him. Gideon's outnumbered army did little more than blow trumpets & light their lamps in the middle of the night...he pretty much never believed it was going to work...but God routed the Midianites anyway. David took a rock to a sword fight & Jehoshaphat put the choir ahead of the infantry & God sent their enemies home in body bags.

I don't know who "Winkie" Pratney is...I feel sad for his nickname...but on the GP today: Many people say they can't get God's guidance. What they really mean is they wish He would show them an easier way. For most of God's people God's guidance is the length of one act of obedience...simply do the thing right in front of us...*Ps 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet & a light to my path"* is not some LED set of highbeams that light up the road 300 metres in front of you, but a flickering guttering oil; lamp that lights up the next step..and then the next one and then the next one...

To be beloved of the Father is to know God has an indestructible claim on you, an eternal intention for you & an unyielding embrace of you. Luther says: God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard & keep us so that the devil, the world, & our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, & other great shame & vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them & win the victory.

At almost every step we take in this world, there is an orchestrated & calculated attempt to deceive us & shift our allegiance, trust, & confidence away from God toward some substitute that promises "more/better"...toward my own insight or this advisor's expertise or what my friends are doing...current/popular/expedient... Every time we buy into that deception that misdirection...we experience that sense of lostness & confusion & get farther out of alignment with what God really has in store for us...

But we have a promise that holds us...*The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you & watch over you..." - Ps 32:8*

We have a Father who claims us as his own...*See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! - 1 Jn 3:1*

We have the Son our Saviour whose life death & resurrection gives us his victory over the devil, the world, & our sinful nature...*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials & sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world. - Jn 16:33*

And that Son assures us, *I will never leave you or forsake you...And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. - Heb 13:5 & Mt 28:20*

So we pray *"Lead us not into temptation..."* trusting that as He promised, the Father will do just that...guide us to what is best...advise...watch over...steer us through the worst the tempter throws our way...and bring us to himself just as he has held us to his heart into & through every temptation trial & trouble here...

Let's pray with that in mind...Father you alone are good and you alone are our sure course in this life. Fill us with your Spirit as we live through every trying season or difficult day. Give us your wisdom and grow in us the fruit of your word. Make us obedient to you in the way of Jesus and finish the work you have begun in our hearts. We pray in Jesus' Name...Amen.