

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

Old Orchard Church
Second Sunday in Lent
March 20, 2011 – 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

Jesus, what a strength
in weakness!
Let me hide myself in him...



Christ Consoled by the Angel on the Mount of Olives

...tempted, tried, and
sometimes failing,
He my strength,
my victory wins!

Celebrating Jesus, Divine Son of Man: Sorely Tempted

However often we find ourselves
“tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,”
Jesus Christ remains the Friend of those who cling to him.
Taunted in the wilderness, tempted in Gethsemane,
he withstood the appeal of evil and
remained the light of goodness in the enveloping darkness.

Blessed be our Lord Jesus;
Praise be to our Elder Brother, our Friend!
He knows our weakness, and loves us;
He carried our failures to the cross, and covered them.
By his life he has become our Sympathy;
By his death, our Victory.
In the presence of his congregation,
sing him your praises!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 17:1-7
Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Sermon Series on Ruth

“Jesus Christ in the Book of Ruth”
Ruth 1-4

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

The Sweet Pull of the Easier Way

The account of Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he died is one of the most mysterious and, at the same time, one of the most reassuring chapters in the gospels. Last week we celebrated the resoluteness of Jesus' will: “**He set his face to go to Jerusalem.**” Why did he? To fulfill his Father's charge that he live for us and die for us. But here we find him, on the eve of his destruction, recoiling from the terribleness of it all, and pleading with God, “**Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me.**” And the text of Luke 22 goes on to say that he was “**in anguish.**” Nowhere, with perhaps the exception of the account of his being born or his dying, is Jesus more clearly revealed in Scripture as human, someone like us.

But what was really going on in Gethsemane? Two things in Luke's account imply that right in the midst of his prayers to his heavenly Father, Jesus was battling Satan's temptations—temptations which may have been fiercer than any he had ever known.

First, when Jesus returns to his three disciples and finds them sleeping, he says, “**Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.**” It may well be that he says this precisely because it's what he's doing: using the weapon of prayer to fight the sweet lure of easing the pain of obedience by stepping off the path to the cross.

Second, when Judas and his cronies seize him, Jesus submits—with these chilling words: “**But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**” Jesus is aware not only that Satan is on the prowl, but that his sinister power to deceive is drawing everyone into the dark vortex of evil.

How could the resoluteness of Jesus' determination to die become anguish in which he actually asks the Father to keep him from death? Because he was a real human being like us who had to **fight** to keep himself from giving in to the pull of every attractive alternative to God's will. We know this because Hebrews 2 tells us that Jesus **suffered** when he was tempted by evil.

It is mysterious, isn't it? How could he truly suffer in temptation, because how could evil possibly hold any allure for him? In his sinlessness could he not see the folly of disobedience to God with perfect clarity—the kind of clarity that makes the choice so easy because so obvious? It would seem so, and yet it isn't so. There was mental anguish and suffering in his attempts to resist evil and remain faithful to God.

But thanks be to God he did resist! Even this week let the reality of Christ's suffering in his temptation reassure you that you're not alone when you suffer in yours, and let the power of the victory of the Son of Man over temptation fortify you just at the moment you feel yourself powerless to resist.

—Ron Lutjens

