

Sunday 4th October, 2026

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Welcome to Church. Today we have another chance to come to our great and mighty God and worship the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As we prepare to do so let us turn to Psalm 91 and remind us ourselves why this is such a good thing to do.

Psalm 91. *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. 9 If you say, 'The Lord is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, 10 no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; 12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone 13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. 14 'Because he loves me,' says the Lord, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. 16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.'"*

Let us pray. *Father we thank you for church this morning. Whether we are seated at home or in the building together, we thank you for the salvation we enjoy. Forgive us for the times this week when we have forgotten your goodness and greatness. We are sinful. We are selfish. We deserve to face the storm of your justice and wrath. Lord, we ask for your mercy and grace. We thank you that Christ bore the judgement we deserve, in his body, on the tree, but then three days later, rose from death, victorious, the risen, conquering king. We thank you for our forgiveness. We thank you for our assurance of salvation. We thank you that heaven is our home. Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son? Who else invites me to call Him Father Only a Holy God. Amen*

Song – Behold our God [Behold Our God - \[Official Lyric Video\] - YouTube](#)

1. Who has held the oceans in his hands? 3. Who has felt the nails upon his hands? Who has numbered every grain of sand? Bearing all the guilt of sinful man Kings and nations tremble at his voice God eternal,

humbled to the graveAll creation rises to rejoiceJesus, Savior, risen now to reign

Chorus: Behold our God, seated on his throneChorusCome, let us adore himBehold our king, nothing can compareBridge You will reign foreverCome, let us adore him (let Your glory fill the Earth) x8

1. Who has given counsel to the Lord?ChorusWho can question any of his words?Who can teach, the one who knows all things?Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

Chorus

Behold our God, seated on his throneCome, let us adore himBehold our king, nothing can compareCome, let us adore him

Bible Reading –Deuteronomy 6:13-19 & 8:1-3(NIV)

3 Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. **14** Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; **15** for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. **16** Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah. **17** Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. **18** Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors,

19 thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the Lord said.

8 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. **2** Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. **3** He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Announcements

Focus for the month: God's Word. During school holidays our normal routines can go out of kilter. But it is really important that we prioritise our time with God at this time – spending time in the word of God & in prayer. It is also a good time to take stock. Is my time in God's word working for me? Is there a depth to it? Is it challenging my everyday life? Am I growing in faith and in trust of God? Why not have a chat with someone after Church about what you could do that might work for you into the future.

School Holidays. NSW schools are currently in the middle of two weeks of holidays. Which means all our regular activities are in recess to give our faithful Creche, kids Church, SPARKLERS, IMPACT, Bible Study leaders a good break as well. TODAY our kids will stay in the services but there will be kids packs for all those in primary school if required.

Annual Leave. Both Stephen and Audric have been away on annual leave but Audric should be back tomorrow and Stephen back on deck on Thursday. If you need any pastoral assistance before then please speak to Mal (Swansea), Ross or Steve Gillard (Charlestown AM) and Luke Wigney (Sunday @ 6)

Operation Christmas Child. It's time to collect your boxes and have fun filling them.

occ.samaritanspurse.org.au has ideas and some inspiring short videos. Or you might like to have a box filled on your behalf for \$25. Visit charlestownpresbyterian.square.site to make your payment. Enquiries to Kathryn O'Callaghan or Grace Baker. Please have filled boxes returned by Sunday 18th October

Church Administrator. Many thanks to those who showed an interest and/or applied for the position. Unfortunately, we weren't able to fill the position. We might try again towards the end of the year. That means that things might be a bit clunky for a while! The bulk of that administration will go back to Stephen but he is committed to responding in a timely manner. But please note that he will be away until this next Thursday. Please keep sending your questions and requests to the admin@cpres.org email – what you have to say is extremely important to us.

HSC Supper | Wednesday 7th October 7:30pm Quick word for anyone finishing their HSC or turning 18 this year. That stretch of life can be exciting, but it can also feel like you're standing at the edge of something with no idea what's next. We don't want you walking into that alone. So we're putting on a supper where we can pray with you, hear what you're thinking for next year, and talk about what it could look like to be mentored as a young adult here at Charlestown. It's happening down at Yochi in Charlestown Square. If that's you, or you know someone it's for, come along and bring a friend. Chat to Audric or Jannah if interested.

JOY. Will be on this Friday from 10-11am at 16 footers.

Big Topics(if room)

We are hoping to provide a chance to get together and discuss some big topics. These will not be seminars but round table discussions where those who are interested will read (or watch) something in preparation, before meeting up to pool ideas. The first of these topics will be AI and Us and will be held at the Charlestown Church from 11:45-12:45 on Sunday 25th October. All welcome.

Next preaching programme – Swansea/Charlestown AM.

Romans 9-16 "In view of God's mercy."

11/10 Romans 9 God's sovereign plan

18/10 Romans 10 The wind and the sailor

25/10 Romans 11 God's great mission

1/11 Romans 12:1-8 Your (whole) self!

Song – God is for us <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPZnFLhltzQ>

1. We won't fear the battle, we won't fear the night
We will walk the valley with You by our side
You will go before us, You will lead the way
We have found a refuge, only You can save

Chorus

Sing with joy now, our God is for us
The Father's love is a strong and mighty fortress
Raise your voice now, no love is greater
Who can stand against us if our God is for us

1. Even when I stumble, even when I fall
Even when I turn back, still Your love is sure
You will not abandon, You will not forsake
You will cheer me onward with never-ending grace

Chorus

Bridge

Neither height nor depth can separate us
Hell and death will not defeat us
He who gave His son to free us
Holds me in His love

Repeat Bridge
Chorus x2

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for Bangladesh (Population 176 million. Christians 1 million). Christian converts face severe restrictions, discrimination, and attacks. Some extremists took advantage of 2025's political turmoil to violently persecute Christians. Pray for healing for these believers. Pray that Christians who convert to follow Jesus and face pressure from both family and community will know they are not alone. Thank God for the brave, resilient faith of many believers in Bangladesh, who continue to walk with Jesus despite the risks.

Pray for Cath Read (NCS). Give thanks for the opportunities NCS has had over the past 4 weeks to share with students about Jesus at daily outreach stalls and through the 3 evening events in collaboration with the Philosophy club. Please pray that "D" will be willing to read a gospel with ncs students. Please pray we'll be able to follow up other students interested to talk more. Please pray that God will raise up a new campus director.

Pray for school's return. Pray for our children and young people as they return to school, that God would give them confidence, joy in learning, good friendships and opportunities to live openly and faithfully for Jesus.

Pray for teachers and school staff, that God would give them wisdom, patience and energy as they care for and educate young people, often under significant pressures and responsibilities. **Pray for parents,** that God

would give them wisdom and grace as they support their children through another school term, and that our families would use the opportunities God gives them to point their children to Christ.

Pray for those who came to our invitation services, our Discover studies and our Taste and See evenings. That God would write the good news of Jesus onto their hearts and draw them to himself by faith. That they would find in us a Church family that cares and supports them in their walk with Jesus. Pray that their presence will encourage us to continue to share our faith and to grow in our own faith.

Bible Reading – Luke 3:21-23 & 4:1-13(NIV)

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” 23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” 5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 If you worship me, it will all be yours.” 8 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” 9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” 12 Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Sermon: The Disciplines of Jesus (John H)

In this sermon I'll be talking about someone I don't usually like to mention in church, because, after all, we're here to worship and talk about and focus on God and who he is and what he has done, not about the powers that oppose him. We don't really want to give them too much time and attention and distract from our real purpose for being here. However, if we are to preach the full Bible we can't avoid mentioning Satan and his fellow participants in evil when we come to a passage like Luke 4, where Jesus has an encounter with Satan in the wilderness. My prayer is that in doing this we will not only glorify God, and God alone, but also that we will be challenged and encouraged into action in our spiritual walk.

The Bible clearly teaches that both God and Satan exist, and that there is good and evil at work in the world. In the passage we are looking at we see all of these at work; God and Satan, good and evil. In life we must know

how to discern between these opposing forces. How to choose between right and wrong? How to choose between God's good will and Satan's evil schemes and temptations? How not to get drawn into and adopt non-biblical worldviews through the subtle yet persuasive arguments presented by our governments, schools, work places, the media, our non-Christian friends, and dare I say it, unfortunately and tragically, even through the teaching in some churches?

Before we go any further, we need to look at who Satan is? In a book called "Essential Truths of the Christian Faith" R. C. Sproul gives a good summary of Satan and demons. He writes, "In Scripture, the term Satan means 'adversary'. We [also] know him as the devil. He is a high angelic creature who, before the creation of the human race, rebelled against God and has since battled with human beings and God. Demons are supernatural beings who are subservient to Satan. They, like Satan, were once angels. They joined Satan in his rebellion and were cast out of heaven with him [Rev 12:7-9]. [Satan] is called the prince of darkness, the father of lies [John 8:44], the accuser, and the beguiling serpent [Genesis 3:1-7]. He [also] appears as an 'angel of light' [1 Cor 11:14], which points to Satan's clever ability to manifest himself under the appearance of good. Satan is subtle, beguiling, and crafty." [But we need to remember that] "Satan is, after all, a creature. He is finite and limited. He is limited in space and time. He cannot be in more than one place at a time. He is never to be regarded in any way as an equal with God. Satan is a higher order of being than humans; he is a fallen angel. But he is not divine. He has more power than earthly creatures but infinitely less power than almighty God."

It was Satan, disguised as a serpent, who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and caused themselves, along with all future human beings, to become sinners. (Genesis 3:1-7; Rev 12:9, 20:2)

This is who Jesus had to face in the wilderness in Luke 4. This is who came to tempt Jesus to abandon his mission. The last thing Satan wanted was for Jesus to continue doing his Father's will. Satan didn't want Jesus to teach the truth, to heal the sick, to cast out demons; and he especially didn't want Jesus to go to the cross for our sins and then rise again. Satan didn't want Jesus to make it possible for us to be saved, to be forgiven, to be redeemed, and to be restored into a relationship with God. Satan would do anything to stop these things from happening and so he came to Jesus in the wilderness to offer Jesus some other options, to give Jesus a choice.

Leading into the passage about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness, Luke 3:21-22 tells us that Jesus submitted himself to his Father's will and to the ministry of the Holy Spirit by being baptised by John the Baptist. "Now when all the people were baptised and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.""

In these two verses we see the Trinity at work: Jesus, the Son of God, who did not count equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit something to cling to - to avoid what needed to be done, but rather came to earth to be our Saviour, submitted himself to being baptised, where the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and the

Father said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” We also note that Jesus prayed, as he usually did before significant events, facing trials, working miracles and providing teaching and commands. Following his baptism Jesus headed into the wilderness to face Satan and his temptations, options and choices.

Preparation - Luke 4:1-2 “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.”

The first thing we notice in the passage is that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Holy Spirit. We also note that Jesus stopped eating in the wilderness, that is, he was fasting. And as we will see, Jesus knew and quoted from the Scriptures.

So we can see that Jesus had prepared himself spiritually for the ordeal he was about to face, he engaged in the spiritual disciplines necessary to meet the trials and temptations life and Satan was about to throw at him — he was baptised, he submitted to the filling and leading of the Holy Spirit, he read and knew the Scriptures, he prayed, and he fasted.

And it was the hunger that resulted from Jesus submitting to the discipline of fasting that Satan tried to use to his advantage for his first temptation.

Temptation 1 - Luke 4:3-4 “The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Matthew’s parallel account of this temptation says, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4) I want to note four things from these parallel passages in Luke and Matthew.

Firstly, note the challenge made by Satan to Jesus: “If you are the Son of God...” Now Satan knew that Jesus was the Son of God, he knew the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before humans were even created. So he wasn’t questioning Jesus’ divinity. What he was actually saying was — “because you are the Son of God, you shouldn’t have to put up with this hunger and depravation in the wilderness. Because of who you are your life should be easy.”

And Satan tempts us in the same way. He might say to us, “because you are a Christian and say you love God, how can you give into temptation and sin” or “if God is really loving and loves you, how can he allow bad

things to happen in the world and to you and those you love?" He attempts to sow seeds of doubt in us and attempts to test our faith and our trust in God just like he did with Adam and Eve in the Garden when he said, "did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

Secondly, note that Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Satan offered Jesus physical bread for his physical hunger but Jesus said that we need more. Jesus was emphasising that people need to consume food for the soul as much as food for the stomach. The two need to go together in sustaining a balanced and healthy spiritual and physical life.

Thirdly, note that Jesus responds to Satan's temptation with the words "It is written" (or "it is said"), which he does in all three of his responses to the temptations, and in doing so, he is quoting directing from the Scriptures, from Deuteronomy 6:13, 6:16 and 8:3.

Now Jesus didn't have the Scriptures in a convenient book like our Bible to carry around with him. But we do, and Jesus is encouraging us to learn what we need from the Scriptures to be like him and use Scripture to help us resist temptation. And the Bible tells us that when we read and study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will help us to remember them at the right and appropriate times.

The Holy Spirit can bring to our memory Bible verses that we may need when we face trials in our life, to overcome temptation to sin, to oppose evil, to persevere through persecution, to encourage a brother or sister in their faith, and to witness to non-believers. But we need to have read and remembered those Bible verses first. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you read, understand and memorise key verses from the Bible so that you can recall them when needed.

And fourthly, notice from Matthew 4:4 that Jesus said that we need to live "by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Not just the passages of the Bible we like, not even just the New Testament, but all of the Bible, every word from God. We should be immersing ourselves in the fullness of the Scriptures through our reading of the Bible and good Christian Bible-based books, and through our hearing of God's Word through Bible-based sermons, conferences and podcasts. Satan's first temptation of appealing to Jesus' hunger didn't work, but he didn't give up.

Temptation 2 - Luke 4:5-8 "And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"" (Deuteronomy 6:13).

In this temptation Satan is offering Jesus worldly power, authority, glory, and kingdoms; and all Jesus had to do to receive it all was — worship Satan. But to worship Satan would mean he wouldn't be worshipping his Father. He couldn't do both, the two are mutually exclusive. Jesus chose not to pursue worldly riches and power, he choose not to worship Satan, rather he directed Satan to the biblical command to only worship the "Lord your God".

We have to be so careful that we don't, without realising it, inadvertently worship Satan, by being tempted into worshipping worldly riches and power, and in doing so, do the opposite of worshipping God.

And one way Jesus taught us to resist Satan and the temptations of the world is to do the opposite of what Satan wants, and that is to worship God. Through our genuine and heart-felt worship of God we not only give glory to God, but we also block the influence of the world and Satan.

We can remember that, "he who is in you [i.e. Jesus] is greater than he who is in the world [i.e. Satan]." 1 John 4:4

Jesus remained steadfast in his love for and submission to his Father's will. And we see his love and submission reach a pivotal point in the Garden of Gethsemane when, facing his death by crucifixion, he prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:42) Satan's second temptation of appealing to any ambition for authority Satan thought Jesus might have didn't work, but he didn't give up.

Temptation 3 - Luke 4:9-12 "And he [Satan] took him [Jesus] to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said 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 guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"" (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Satan challenged Jesus again by saying, "If you are the Son of God..." but this challenge was designed to test both Jesus and the Father. How was Satan testing both Jesus and the Father you might ask? Well he was testing Jesus by suggesting that Jesus needed to prove that he trusted his Father to protect him if he threw himself off the high place; and he was testing the Father by stating that the Father needed to prove himself by showing that he would keep his promise to protect Jesus by sending his angels to guard him.

Jesus had another choice to make. He could have chosen to do as Satan suggested and prove that he did indeed trust his Father and that he believed that his Father would keep his promise to protect him.

From our perspective, it could appear that Jesus was caught between a rock and a hard place because if Jesus chose not to do what Satan suggested, wouldn't that give the impression that Jesus didn't trust his Father? "Do I prove I trust my Father and do what Satan is tempting me to do, or do I ignore Satan, and leave the impression that I don't trust my Father, and that maybe I am not the Son of God after all?" We sometimes refer to these situations as 'you are damned if you do and damned if you don't.'

But interestingly, while Jesus could have debated Satan and won the argument, he didn't accommodate Satan's testing and temptation by trying to argue one way or the other. He didn't weigh up in his mind whether he should jump or not, to prove his Father true or not. He simply went to that place in his mind and heart that he had prepared for such events as these in his life and rested on the truths in Scripture and said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." (Deuteronomy 6:16).

We need to remember that Satan is not only the father of lies but also a champion of the debating team. He is a master at arguing his point of view, so it is wise not to get into a debate with him. Our defences and victories lie not in winning a debate against Satan, but in knowing God and being able to call on his Word to guard, sustain and empower us.

We also need to be aware that Satan knows the Scriptures and will misquote them in order to tempt us to deviate from God's will, in the same way he tempted Jesus.

In this temptation Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12. In a desperate measure, when all else had failed, after Satan had appealed to Jesus' physical hunger in Temptation 1, and then tried to appeal to any ambition or pride Jesus might have in Temptation 2, he resorted to twisting and mis-quoting Scripture to get Jesus to do something against his Father's will in Temptation 3.

And guess what, Satan has been doing that ever since. He has attempted to twist and undermine the truth of God's Word in the minds of believers and in the deliberations of churches and church leadership throughout the ages. But Jesus has shown us how to defend against such evil attacks. We need to meet temptation in the same way that Jesus met it.

We need to know the Word of God and to hold on to and believe what the Bible says because we can trust it to reveal God and his truth. As Leon Morris wrote, "What does not agree with Scripture does not come from God". In other words, God speaks through his Word, the Bible. If we want to know what God says about something, we will only find that in the Bible. And from the other side of the same coin, we can safely say that everything we read in the Bible is what God says and wants us to know and believe.

Satan's third temptation of presenting his calculated mis-interpretation of Scripture didn't work, but he didn't give up, and he doesn't give up. Luke 4:13 "And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him **until** an opportune time." Satan retreated in frustration that he couldn't persuade Jesus to give into his temptations. But Satan didn't go very far away. He hung around. As R.C. Sproul put it, he "lurked in the shadows" (RC Sproul, Luke).

And I think Mel Gibson portrayed this 'lurking in the shadows' very well in his movie "The Passion of the Christ" through his depiction of Satan lurking in the Garden of Gethsemane, taking delight during Jesus' flogging by the Roman soldiers at his trial, and as he followed Jesus along the road to Calvary.

And he attempted to use the Apostle Peter to frustrate Jesus' mission a number of times, including Peter denying Jesus three times (Matthew 16:23; Luke 22:31; John 18:15-27). Satan ultimately failed with Peter but succeeded in using another of Jesus' disciples, Judas, to betray him, along with some of the Jewish and Roman leadership who fell so easily and willingly into his schemes to kill Jesus. But even in achieving the crucifixion of Jesus and the corruption of so many people as part of that, Satan unwittingly ensured that God's plan of redemption succeeded (Luke 22:3).

Jesus suffered and died on the cross, and rose again, and the mission of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. Jesus won the victory against Satan in the wilderness — and against sin on the cross. And one day Jesus will return and have the final victory against all evil and ungodliness in the world. But in the meantime, Satan still has power to tempt us to sin, and we know that we sometimes give into those temptations and we sin. We also know that because Jesus has won the victory over sin on the cross, God forgives our sins when Jesus is our Lord and Saviour and when we repent. (Luke 8:12; 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31).

But what can we do to resist the temptations of Satan? What can we do to avoid committing those sins in the first place so that we don't need to ask God's forgiveness for them? And to do this, we need to remember that Satan chose to be the enemy of God and that we are caught up in a spiritual battle, where God wants our salvation to lead us into sanctification and discipleship, while Satan wants only to lead us into temptation, doubt, sin and ungodliness.

Being caught in this spiritual battle is why Paul wrote in Ephesians that we need spiritual armour, and I want you to notice as I read this passage that each of the items of armour, each spiritual discipline, each noun; requires an action, a verb, a doing word.

“**Put on** the whole armour of God, that you may be able to **stand against** the schemes of the devil... **Stand** therefore, having **fastened** on the belt of truth, and having **put on** the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having **put on** the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances **take up** the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and **take** the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, **praying** at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” (Ephesians 6:11, 14-18).

And like Paul, Peter taught that we need to take action, when he wrote, “**Bewatchful**. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **Resist** him, firm in your faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9a). And like Paul and Peter, James, the brother of Jesus, wrote, “**Submit** yourselves ... to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4:7-8a). Put on, stand, fasten, take up, be watchful, submit yourselves, resist!

Paul and Peter and James are all telling us that to resist Satan’s temptations and evil schemes we need to do something, we need to attach verbs to the spiritual disciplines we know Jesus has called us to put into practice, the disciplines Jesus himself taught and put into practice, and thereby modelled for us, which include: being baptised, submitting to the filling and leading of the Holy Spirit, worshipping God, reading and knowing the Scriptures, fasting and praying.

We need to prepare ourselves for the temptations and spiritual battles we face in life in the same way Jesus prepared himself for the temptations and spiritual battles he faced in his life. After all, if Jesus knew that putting these disciplines into practice was good for himself, how much more is putting them into practice necessary for us.

Let’s pray, Lord Jesus, help us to be more like you in preparing for spiritual battles by putting into practice the spiritual disciplines you modelled for us to follow. Today may we be found worshipping and serving you alone, may we found submitting ourselves to you and drawing near to you, knowing that you have promised to be with us always, to the end of the age. Amen

Song – Cornerstone [Cornerstone - Hillsong - YouTube](#)

1. My hope is built on nothing less
His oath, His covenant, His blood
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
Support me in the 'whelming flood
And I dare not trust the sweetest frame
When all around my soul gives way
But wholly trust in Jesus name
He then is all my hope and stay

1. When darkness seems to hide His face
Chorus I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
When He shall come with trumpet sound
My anchor holds within the veil
Oh, may I then in Him be found

Dressed in His righteousness alone

Chorus Faultless, stand before the throne

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Savior's love
Chorus Through the storm He is Lord, Lord of all

Closing. Jesus said, "worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve" and his brother wrote, "draw near to God, and he will draw near to you". May we go from this place worshipping God alone and drawing ever and always nearer to him. Amen