

From the Minister

‘Not by bread alone’

When I was a child, I was often ‘encouraged’ to eat my meals with the words ‘well you can always just have bread by itself’. Not that I don’t like bread, especially a nice crusty loaf or a French stick. But the threat of missing out on the variety of flavours and textures, to be replaced with bland sliced white, usually did the trick.

One day, when Jesus was fasting and faint with hunger, Satan approached Him and tempted him to satisfy his hunger by creating bread. Jesus countered by quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Of course this wasn’t the same scenario, bread alone wasn’t an ‘encouragement’ in quite the same way. Jesus’ words didn’t mean that we were to only eat bread, rather he is stating a fact: We are spiritual beings and thus can’t exist on material goods alone; we also need spiritual nourishment.

You see this was one of the three temptations that Jesus faced during his 40 days in the wilderness. Coming straight from the ‘High’ of his baptism where God declares him His Son, Jesus is now tempted to use, or abuse, that status with the words ‘If you are the Son of God’. Use your power/status to Satisfy your own needs! Come on prove Gods love with a miraculous stunt, and Why not bring about Gods kingdom by power and become its dictator. Yet to each of these Jesus, referring back to scripture, reminds himself that he is serving the Father, not himself.

During Lent, Christians traditionally fast, possibly using the idea of the forty days Jesus fasted as an example. These days the fast is often watered down to giving up a luxury of pleasure (often chocolate!). Yet just to give something up, especially something we can do without anyway, may be missing the point. As we approach Lent and Easter, maybe we too should be reminding ourselves of our own call to follow Jesus. To remind ourselves that it is the Father we serve and not ourselves. If we can do that by not eating chocolate then fine, but we may be better using it as a period of renewed devotion instead. Maybe set aside a few (more) minutes each day for prayer or study? Try reading a devotional book or take yourself away for a period of retreat?

Whatever works best for you, let’s all decide this Lent, to focus not on ourselves, but on the Father, and take one step closer to Jesus.

Rev Rick