

Sunday 5 July – Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Sermon by Christine Newmarch

An audio recording of the sermon from St Luke's will be available after the service at [Sermons \(tk-tiptree-braxted-benefice.org.uk\)](http://Sermons(tk-tiptree-braxted-benefice.org.uk)

When I chat with people they often tell me that they come to church to unwind and clear their minds, to find peace. I hope you do too.

When we are here, in every service we say the Lord's Prayer, the words Jesus taught his disciples. It is easy to rush through, but each petition in the prayer is important.

The first part focuses on God; the second on human needs.

'Lead us not into temptation'. We say it every day, which is important as temptation is all around us. We probably all have different weakness, but how easy is it to resist these (images of squares of chocolate)? Or these (images of various items of clothing and accessories)? Or these (image of various alcoholic drinks)?

I am sure you have heard this expression – "I can resist everything but temptation." Can you tell me where the quote comes from? It comes from Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. It's just a light-hearted throwaway line in a comedy about manners. And of course we know that temptation can be overwhelming!

In the reading from the letter to the Romans we heard St Paul being troubled by knowing what was right, yet going astray. He does not tell us what his weaknesses were, but we hear how distressed he is with himself for falling short again and again. Paul acknowledges that it is a problem of living in the flesh, even though he delights in God's word in his inmost self. Whatever catches us out, we must not be downhearted.

Jesus saw a similar problem with the people around him, they were complaining about John the Baptist, complaining about his own way of life, struggling to see that God was speaking to them. Still today there is a lot of complaining around – in the press, among friends and families, and it can bubble up in churches too if we are not careful. But Jesus reveals himself to us. He has carried our burdens, and will always do so when we ask.

In his little Lent book 'The Things He Carried' Stephen Cottrell meditates on all Jesus carried in Holy Week: the crown of thorns the weighty cross beam, the ridicule of the soldiers and the crowds, a broken heart.

Even so, He invites all of us with heavy burdens, physical, mental, spiritual to lay them on him, and find rest.

When we accept this invitation, we find new life in him, where carrying his yoke is easy and light. It is another agricultural image remembering that the yoke worn by a beast of burden was rarely light.

The stoles worn by priests are to remind us of this very passage of scripture.

But the invitation and the promise is for all who lay their burdens on Jesus, including St Paul, who understood that only Jesus could rescue him from inner turmoil. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, he wrote. Amen.