**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**March 11th 2018. Cross Vision**

**Discussion notes: Wilderness temptations Matthew 4**

In this season of Lent, looking forward to Easter we have an opportunity in reading the gospels to see Jesus life and ministry in the context of that tumultuous week in Jerusalem, climaxing in His death and resurrection. The three years of Jesus ministry were planned and orchestrated with the Cross in mind. At the start of his ministry Jesus faced temptations which would define the course of his earthly life, a choice between naked power or self denial ultimately expressed at the cross.

1. Why do you think the Holy Spirit led Jesus into this place of testing at the start of his ministry (Matt 4:1)?
2. What was the nature of the temptations put before Jesus? Why would saying yes to them have been wrong? How does saying no to them lead Jesus to the Cross?
3. John’s gospel doesn’t record this wilderness temptation, but in the course of Jesus’ ministry, similar pressures occur, e.g. John 6:15. Can you think of times when Jesus would have had temptations to put power before humble obedience to his Father? In your own life of discipleship, how often are temptations a one off, and how often are they things that need ongoing vigilance and resistance? How does the example of Jesus help you to acknowledge and resist them?
4. What issues are there for the Church (and for Woodlands specifically) today in the use or misuse of power in mission or self-protection in the case of suffering?
5. Jesus took scripture (three quotations from Deuteronomy) as his authority in resisting temptation. In what practical ways have you found scripture helps you to do that too?
6. It’s disconcerting that Satan’s second temptation involves his quotation of scripture. What principles of handling scripture guard us against its misuse?

Jesus knew the scriptures well. The passages in Isaiah about the suffering servant must have informed his own calling and destiny. Pray that God will open your eyes as you read scripture to understand his will for your life.

‘Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God’ Hebrews 12:2.