

Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent

Luke 4:1-13

I have heard it from adults recently baptized. I have heard it from Christian who been in the Church a long time. "I figured that following Jesus would be easy and free of temptation." Surprise. Many times, new Christians, longtime Christians, and even you and I find ourselves in the wilderness: A Barren Place, A Place of Hunger, A Place of Temptation. Some Have shared, I have never experienced temptation like I have now."

After Jesus came from the baptismal waters of the Jordan River, The heavens open, the Holy Spirit Descended upon Him like a dove, and the voice of God the Father came from heaven, "This is my Son, my beloved, with you I am well pleased." Then the Holy Spirit leads Jesus to the wilderness. Where it barren, with no food, no flowers...some have referred to the wilderness as anti-Eden.

One thing about this wilderness. It was brought on by our sins, The stripping away of God's good gifts, bareness if you will, A place of hunger, the place of Thirst, the place of evil. The felling of the absence of God's Presence.

And that is the place the Holy Spirit led Jesus after His baptism. Jesus enters the battlefield we often find ourselves in our lives as God's people. The Holy Spirit leads Jesus there to confront the devil. Jesus fasts for forty days, and Luke repots, rather casually, "He was famished."

At this opportunity, the devil pounces. "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."

For Jesus this appears to be a rather simple to do satisfy His hunger. So, what is the harm. But Jesus does not. Maybe the simple and little things can be the biggest temptations and the greatest dangers. You know, things that we can easily get away with. Things that do not appear to be big sins. You know, a little glance, a little disobedience, a little taste of the forbidden fruit.

But Satan knows and Jesus too, all sins are big sins. No ranking them from harmless to greatest. All sin severs our relationship with God and one another, and leads to death. It is apparent that Jesus hungers for something else rather than material food. He hungers for righteousness. He hungers for you and me and our righteousness as well. He tells Satan so, "Man does not live by bread alone

but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Life is given and sustained by God.

The devil, not to be discouraged, “takes Jesus and shows Him all the Kingdoms of the world in a moment’s time.” What does this mean? The glory of Rome. The big cities, magnificent palaces and buildings, architectural wonders, and all the wonders of the world?

I do not think all that really matters much too Jesus. He can have all that with exceedingly more magnificence in heaven. What grabs the attention of Jesus? How about all the people of those Kingdoms. The people He came to save. People oppressed by sin, bent low by heavy burdens, weighed down by sorrow and grief. It is you and me that the devil shows Jesus. The devil says, “let us make a trade.” Jesus, you worship me, and I will let them go. Jesus sees through the lie. If Satan can take Jesus down, God in Flesh, all of this will be the devils. There just a little bit of truth here. Jesus did come to trade. But not by giving Himself into the hands of the devil. Jesus came to give Himself into the hands of God the Father on the cross by taking on our sins and giving us His Forgiveness. By taking on our death Jesus gives us life in Himself and winning all for the Father. That’s the trade.

All the devil promises is slavery to sin. No deal! It is better to be a Child of God under His care, with struggles and afflictions. “You shall worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve.”

Well played Jesus! The Devil does not easily give up. Off to Jerusalem and the Temple. OK Jesus, Let us see if God the Father has the same dedication you have to Him. Throw Yourself off the pinnacle of the Temple. Show us that you really trust Your Father in Heaven. Show me the fidelity of this Father You serve. Show me that God really loves You. Show me that He will send His angels to bear you up lest you dash a foot against a stone.” Just like says here in Psalm 91:11-12. O the devil is good, he knows the Bible. He uses it to ask, “Do you really trust God’s Word? Maybe you have your doubts.”

Is God’s Word good enough for me? Show me God. Prove that you love me.

God’s does. Jesus in a manger. Jesus in the wilderness tempted like you and me. Jesus under the whip. Jesus on the cross. Jesus in the tomb. Jesus risen from the

dead. The risen Jesus in the upper room with disciples who forsake Him. There is you proof.

Today, Jesus in the Word this morning. Jesus in your Baptism. Jesus in bread and wine. Jesus in our presence. Jesus giving God's gifts of life and salvation. Jesus giving Forgiveness. Jesus restoring you and me back to our Father in Heaven. Jesus showing you.

And Jesus responds to The devil, "you shall not put the LORD to the test."

Jesus' rebuke is our assurance. You do not need to put the Lord your God to the test. Jesus' rebuke is our rebuke to the devil, "Jesus has already done it for me."

And at that, "the devil departs from Jesus until an opportune time." The devil is done with Jesus for now. Satan found that opportune time against Jesus on the cross. If you are the Son of God, Save yourself. Come down from the cross. Send a legion of angels. Jesus resisting on the cross, resisting to the end. He would stay on the cross to atone for your sins. He would stay of the cross to die so that He can be raised on the third day to conquer death for you and me.

Just as the battle for Jesus began at His baptism, so it is for you and me. As we all know, even with God's assurance in our baptism, the devil is not done with you and me. But we now, we have Jesus victorious and His word of assurance. Use this Word to rebuke the devil's attacks. If you succumb to the devil's trickery, use this Word for it is a balm of forgiveness when we get burned. God's Word and Gospel Jesus is our healing medicine.

That is Jesus' love for you. We have an opportunity to thwart Satan once again. I believe in God The Father...In God The Son...In God The Holy Spirit. Say it with conviction, as you mean it to be true. And this too, Just as the devil desired for Jesus to turn a stone into bread, Jesus will do better for you this morning. He will turn this bread into His body given for you. He will turn this cup to the blood shed for you. Eat and drink in faith for the forgiveness of sin. Let us continue to receive Him in Word and His gift of this sacrament. Receive His victory. Receive His Life to strengthen you in this Christian life.

The peace of God that passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.