

1st S. in Lent 2/14/16
Luke 4:1-13 C

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.

Adam had just gotten done eating a quite delicious piece of fruit that his wife had given to him, that she had picked from “the tree,” when he realized that he and his wife were both naked and someone was coming to see them. So, he took his wife and they hid among the trees. After all, that someone was the Lord their God. He was out walking in the cool of the day and called out the man, “Where are you?” And the man answered his Creator, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” To which His Creator responded, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” Adam was busted and he knew it. But, that didn’t stop him from doing what we poor sinners do when confronted with our sin – he blamed his accuser, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate (Genesis 3).” “That’s right, God, its not my fault. Its all your fault! If you hadn’t given me this woman, she would not have given me forbidden fruit from the tree, and I would not have ate. So, God, if you want to blame someone, blame yourself for giving me that woman.”

When God turned His attention to the woman, guess what she did? She, too, blamed someone else, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

By their willful disobedience to God’s instructions not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve fell into sin. And because they did, the Scriptures teach us, “For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners (Ro 5:19). Many – that’s you

and me. Adam and Eve listened to the lies of the devil and failed miserably.

Israel was fresh from the Red Sea and on their way to the Promised Land. But that's a long way, and they grew hungry on their way to the Promised Land. So, they did what good Lutherans do in these situations -- they complained – against Moses, against Aaron, against God, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Ex 16:3). The Lord their God heard their complaints and He did something about it. He caused bread to rain down from heaven. “Manna,” it was called. And the LORD God gave them clear instructions: they were to gather only as much as they needed for that day, and no more; there were to be no leftovers. That is, until the 6th day, then, they were to gather enough for two days, for they were to do no work on the Sabbath Day. And, Israel failed miserably. They went out and saw the manna and gathered as much as they could, because they worried about tomorrow. Tomorrow came, and the leftover manna smelled to high heaven and was full of maggots.

As it went with Adam and Eve, so it went with Israel. They disobeyed God. And, as it goes with Adam, with Israel, so it goes it with you.

The devil has one chief weapon to use against you, Dear Child of God, -- THE LIE. And, he comes to you to whisper his lies in your ear to appeal to your appetite, the desires of your belly.

“Did God really say ‘You shall not murder’.” The desire of our belly says its ok to be angry, to seethe inside. After all, you've been wronged, you've been hurt. So its ok to exact your sweet revenge.

“Did God really say ‘You shall not commit adultery’?” But, come on now, we can all say the lie together, “We love one another.” No, the truth is your love yourself and the way the other person makes you feel about yourself. And, the devil has lied to convince you that is perfectly ok.

You find yourself hungering and thirsting for a more money, a bigger house, a better car, your son or daughter to be the star of the sport’s team. This is the appetite you have and why shouldn’t you be satisfied? Why shouldn’t you be allowed to do whatever it takes to make you happy?

The reason why you should not have an appetite for sin and think it will make you happy, Dear Child of God, is because sin is an abomination to God and He becomes quite angry over the rebellion of our sin. He commands you not to sin. In fact, He promises death to the soul who sins.

We may think of sin lightly, but God doesn’t. The Good News of the Gospel is that God hungered and thirsted for your salvation. So, He sent His Son to save us. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil,” the Bible says (1 Jn 3:8).

You probably looked at your bulletin cover this morning, and thought, “That’s creepy.” What kind of bulletin cover is that? ON VALENTINE’S DAY, NO LESS! I’m honestly not sure if its scary or just plain weird, but our bulletin cover teaches us the truth of the Christian faith and life. Today is the 1st Sunday in Lent. And this Sunday reminds us that the devil is our mighty, lifelong enemy.

He is your mighty lifelong enemy because He is the enemy of Jesus. Remember, the devil has one chief weapon – the lie. And He lies to keep Jesus from the cross, because He knew that the day Jesus died, his head would be crushed and he would be eternally defeated. So, he lies to keep Jesus from the cross:

- “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread ...
- To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If you ... worship me, it will all be yours ...
- 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’.”

But, Jesus doesn't fall the lies of the devil. He is not like Adam, or Israel, or you. He is obedient.

Because you believed the lies of the devil and were disobedient to the Lord your God, Jesus fulfilled the law for you, perfectly obeying it for you, so that His righteousness would be your righteousness. That's what He's doing in the wilderness this morning.

And He goes to the cross as the Good Shepherd to lay down His life for us disobedient, unfaithful sheep. He dies for all the times you believed the lies of the devil; all the times you went ahead and sinned, because you foolishly thought sin meant happiness, and that sin was no big deal. Because He died, you are forgiven of all your sins.

It is no joke to take sides against the devil and be saddled with such a mighty, lifelong enemy. But, we are not alone in our fight. Jesus, the valiant one, fights for us. The book of Hebrews teaches us of Jesus, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4).”

Because we are baptized into Christ Jesus, He lives in us and we live in Him. Jesus was a human being. He was tempted by the Evil One. When we are tempted to deny Him with our sin, the Lord knows what temptation we are suffering. Living in us, He gives us the power and the strength and the desire to see the sin in our lives and overcome it. As we

hear His Word and eat and drink His Body and Blood, He gives us grace to keep us strong in our Christian faith. We do not fight alone, for us fights the Valiant One.

In faith and confidence, we can say with St. Paul, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom (2 Tm 4:18).”