

1st S. in Lent 2/10/19
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.

The Apple. The Grumbling. The Golden Calf. That's why Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for forty day. Adam, Israel, -- you -- were tempted and disobeyed God and gave into that temptation and sinned. So, Jesus came, He was tempted, but He was the Obedient One for you and for your salvation.

God created the perfect home for us to live in forever and ever, without end. But, the "serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made" and he tempted the women, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God (Ge 3:1, 4)?" And the woman saw the tree was good for food and "she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate (Ge 3:6)."

God led Israel with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters. And as they journeyed to the Promised Land, they grew hungry. And though they had seen with their own eyes the wonders and miracles of God, they grumbled 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.

Their leader Moses went up on Mount Sinai to hear from God and “When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, ‘Up, make us gods who shall go before us’ (Ex 32:1).” And fashioned for them a golden calf and all Israel said, “these are you gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt’ (Ex 32:4)”.

As it went with Adam and Eve, so it went with Israel. They were tempted, gave into to the temptation and disobeyed God. And, as it goes with Adam, with Israel, so it goes it with you, Dear Child of God.

The devil has one chief weapon in his arsenal -- THE LIE. And, he comes to you to tempt you with his lies, just as he did Eve, just as he did Jesus.

“Did God really say ‘Remember the Sabbath Day,’” hold His Word sacred. But, you don’t hold it sacred, you doubt the promises of God in His Word. Especially when bad things happen that we don’t like, you don’t walk by faith in God’s Word, you walk by your reason and emotions, and you despair.

“Did God really say ‘You shall not murder’.” But, you do. No, maybe not outwardly ending your neighbor’s life. But you stay angry, you seethe inside, you can’t wait for the day when your neighbor gets his. After all, you’ve been wronged, you’ve been hurt, and you have your pride – your

sinful, self-centered, self-serving pride. So, you murder by keeping a record of wrongs and not being reconciled in Christ.

“Did God really say ‘You shall not commit adultery’?” But, come on now, you love one another, right? No, the truth is you love yourself and the way the other person makes you feel about yourself. And, the devil has lied to convince you that sexual activity outside the bond of marriage is perfectly ok.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,” Jesus says (Mt 5:6). But you don’t. You find yourself hungering and thirsting for a more money, a bigger house, a better car; revenge. The Lord your God said that you are to have no other gods but Him. But, you do, and you fear, love, and trust in the gods of your own design.

Like Adam and Eve, like Israel, God told you not to do it, and you did, so now He says the soul who sins shall die.

The Apple. The Grumbling. The Golden Calf. Your sins of thought, word, and deed. That’s why Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for forty day.

Look at the lies the Tempter puts before Him:

- “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 for the lies of the devil. He does not give in to temptation. He is not like Adam, or Israel, or you. He is obedient.

And, that is the Good News of the Gospel. Jesus is in that wilderness, being tempted, so that you may be saved. Adam and Eve,

Israel, you were tempted, and you were disobedient. Jesus was tempted, but He was faithful, perfectly obeying the Father's will so that you would be saved.

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. "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners," St. Paul writes, "so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteousness (Ro 5:19)."

The one man's obedience to the Father's will meant that He humbled Himself to be born of a Virgin and become fully human and dies on the cross. He dies for all the times you believed the lies of the devil; for all those times you gave into temptation; all the times you were not obedient to the Lord your God. Because He died – as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world -- you are forgiven of all your sins.

And, in the new birth of your baptism, He makes gives you that forgiveness to be your very own and He rescues you from the devil and all Satan's lies and ugly accusation. And, He gives you that wonderful promise, "I am with you always, to the end of the age (Mt 28:20)."

And that is great comfort for you, in your fight against your mighty and lifelong enemy. You are not alone in your fight; your victory in your battle with the great liar and the father of lies does not depend upon the depth of your resolve, nor the strength of your might. But as the Battle Hymn of the Reformation teaches us, "But for us fights the valiant one (LSB 656:2)." Because we are baptized into Christ Jesus, He lives in us and we live in Him. Jesus was a human being. And the Bible teaches us this, "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).” 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).”