

1st S. in Lent 3/9/2025
Luke 4:1-13 C

SERMON TEXT: APPOINTED GOSPEL READING FOR TODAY, FROM THE 4TH CHAPTER OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

Today is the 1st S in Lent and the Gospel reading for the 1st S in Lent is always the Temptation of Christ. You cannot separate the temptation of Christ from what happens just before Jesus is led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil – He is baptized in the Jordan River, and the Father speaks from heaven, *“You are My beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”* (3:22).

MI: To be a father and son is to have a relationship and the relationship between the God the Father and God the Son is a relationship of **obedience**. The Son is obedient to His Father. The Son can obey His Father because He knows that the Father will show Him only love, care, and concern. That Son knows that, even when the evidence points to the contrary, He can trust His Father's love and care. He can trust His Father's Word.

God had a son, the nation of Israel. God's son was enslaved in the land of death, Egypt, so God sent Moses to Pharaoh with this message, *“Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve me.’ If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son”* (Ex 4:22-23).

As you know, Pharaoh refused. So through the use of 10 plagues – the last being the death of the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt – God secured the release of His son and God's love and care was all over His son.

He led them all the way to the Red Sea waters. God parted the waters so that His son could pass through with unmoistened foot. But

when Pharaoh's army tried to pass through those waters, God closed those waters upon them and they were drowned.

God led His son into the wilderness. For 40 years, God's son wandered in that wilderness. During that time, God took care of His son. The son could trust His Father's love and care, after all He was the one who had led them out of Egypt. So the son would be unconditionally obedient to the Father, or so you would think.

But life in the wilderness was tough; it was hard. It wasn't long after they left Egypt that God's son got hungry because food was scarce in the wilderness and God's son began to grumble and complain,

"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).

Even with their grumbling, God's love and care was there for them. He feed them with manna from heaven.

When they got to Rephidim, there was no water and God's son grew thirsty. Once again, they grumbled and complained, *"Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst (Ex 17:3)?"*

God responded to the grumbling and complaining of His son by giving them water.

God's love and care was there for them. But where was the obedience of God's son? It was nowhere to be found, there was only grumbling and complaining

And when His son was about to enter and possess the Promised Land, God said this,

“And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (De 8:2-3).

But even in the Promised Land, they didn't learn. If they had, they would have been obedient to the Father. They would have trusted His word. They would have trusted His love, and care, and compassion. Instead, they envied their pagan neighbors and wanted to be like them, so they abandoned the Lord their God for foreign gods.

God had another Son. This Son He also called out of Egypt. He led Him through the waters, not of the Red Sea, but of the Jordan. That Son was Jesus.

He too went out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights, being tempted by the devil. And at the end of those days and nights, He was hungry, hungrier than Israel in the wilderness. It was in His hunger that the tempter came to Him and said, *“If you are Son of God, command this stone to become bread”* (v. 3). The devil knew who Jesus was. The temptation the devil put before Jesus was this: because you are God, since you are very God of very God, use your power to serve yourself – put an end to your hunger by commanding these stones to become bread for you to eat.

Satan had seen this before. God's son, Israel, was in the wilderness and they were hungry, and they didn't do so well. They **didn't** trust the Father. They **didn't** trust His love and care. Instead, they grumbled and complained. Well, if one son will act that way, then maybe this Son will act

that way, as well. But He doesn't. This Son trusts the Father. This Son is obedient to the Father. This Son knows that even though all circumstances are pointing to the contrary, the Father's love and care are with Him.

So in response to Satan's temptation, Jesus speaks to the devil these words, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone (v. 4).'*" One son is disobedient. This Son is obedient.

God has another son, a son He called out of the Egypt of sin, death, and hell. A son He led, not through the waters of the Red Sea or the Jordan, but the waters of the font of Holy Baptism. That son is you. And here you are – in the wilderness, where the devil comes to tempt you each and every day.

I ask you: How is your obedience going? Are you trusting the Father's Word? Are you trusting the Father's love and care? Is your obedience like that of Jesus, or like that of the other son, Israel?

I. All too often it's like that of Brother Israel. Temptation comes. You're standing before the Red Sea waters of cancer, drought, family problems, with Pharaoh's army of regret and guilt closing in on you, and you worry, stew, and fret. You've hungered and thirsted for earthly things – money, sex, power, popularity, and you've grumbled and complained that you didn't get what you wanted. Like your brother Israel, you are disobedient. You fail. You fail to trust God's Word. You fail to trust in God's love and care. For that, you deserve death and hell.

II. And that's what you would get if it weren't for your brother Jesus. He is in the wilderness for you, in your place, to face the devil for you. He hears the devil's temptations. And He stands firm. He trusts the Father's Word. He trusts the Father's love and care. The Good News for you is that

He is always obedient to the Father – even obedient to the point of death, death on the cross (Ph 2:8).

Take a good look at Him upon that cross – bearing Israel's sin, bearing your sin. God's Word said He would be pierced for our transgressions; He would be crushed for our iniquities (Is 53:5). He was beaten, flogged, crowned with thorns, and now, nailed to a cross, bleeding and dying, fulfilling God's Word for you. And then it happened: God the Father abandons His own Son, turns His back on Him, condemning Him for the sins of Israel, for the sins of the whole world, yours included.

What does Jesus do? He trusts the Father's Word; He trusts the Father's love and care, so much that says this, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*" (Lk 23:46)! And He dies, the sacrifice for your sins. And that means all of your sins are forgiven. And you can be certain of that because He rises to life again the 3rd day.

III. When you were baptized, you were clothed with His perfect obedience so that it is given to you, as your own perfect obedience. And God continues to do His work in you, strengthening that faith He began in your baptism so that you do trust the Father's Word. You do trust in the Father's love and care for you, in all times and all places, even when the evidence points to the contrary.