

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobonier, Illinois
Lent 1C
March 6, 2022
Luke 4:1-13

Jesus Tempted For You

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. . . . 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:1-13 ESV)

In the Name of Jesus, the only Savior of the world.

God says, "You shall have no other gods." Luther tells us this means that "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." In his Large Catechism Luther expands on this: "A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. . . . [In effect God says,] 'Whatever good thing you lack, look to me for it and seek it from me, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, come and cling to me. I am the one who will satisfy you and help you out of every need. Only let your heart cling to no one else.' . . . We are to trust in God alone and turn to him, expecting from him only good things; for it is he who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings. It is he who protects us from evil, he who saves and delivers us when any evil befalls" (Tappert 365-368.2, 4, 13-15, 24). With this in mind, we can better understand today's Gospel reading and take it to heart.

Jesus had just been baptized by John in the Jordan. At that event "the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (Luke 3:22). Soon thereafter, Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. We're told that Jesus fasted those forty days and during that time was tempted by the devil.

Indeed, Satan had Jesus right where he wanted Him. Isolated. Alone. Hungry. So he hits first where Jesus seems most vulnerable. "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." What's wrong with that? But, you see, this was really a temptation to not trust God. For the temptation is really, "Did God really say you are His Son? If so, then why doesn't He give you something to eat? Go ahead and do it Yourself." But Jesus feared, loved, and trusted His Father above all things. "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone,'" Jesus said, but "by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." (Deut. 8:3). Jesus trusted that His Father would provide everything He needed in His time, and He used the Word of God to repel Satan's temptation.

Likewise with the second temptation to desire the authority and glory of all the kingdoms of the world. All Jesus would have to do is fall down and worship the devil. But again, Jesus resisted. He trusted His Father's Words - spoken at His Baptism and written in Scripture. "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" Besides, all authority and glory does not belong to Satan to give to whom he will, and Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. Later, after having risen from the dead, Jesus would say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matt. 28:18).

And when Jesus was tempted to throw Himself from the Temple to prove God's promise, Jesus again showed His perfect trust in His Father. He didn't have to prove anything, to Himself or to Satan or to anyone else. He trusted that His Father would take care of Him and He didn't need to test His Father. Jesus simply believed God's Word and that was enough. He feared, loved, and trusted His Father above all things. And His Father had provided a perfectly good staircase.

Yes, Jesus withstood and resisted every temptation. He never failed to fear, love, and trust His Father. Not even once. And because He resisted every temptation, we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses for He has in every respect been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15).

This gives us comfort and strength to withstand temptation too. For in your Baptism, God spoke to you saying, "You are my son, my daughter, whom I love." And with the words "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" you received the Holy Spirit as all of your sins were washed away and faith was created in your heart.

Furthermore, St. Paul says that when you were baptized into Christ Jesus you were "baptized into His death." You were "buried with Him through baptism into death." Your old self was crucified with Him so "that the body of sin might be done away with, that [you] should no longer be [a slave] to sin" (Romans 6:3, 4, 6). So it is that you have been freed from the power of sin, death, and the devil. Through Baptism, Christ's resistance to temptation is your's as well. And this is no small thing. Christ overcame temptation for you, and as you are in Him you too resist temptation.

And do we ever need to be in Him! Satan tries to isolate us – from God certainly, but also from one another. He tries to get us to think we can go it alone, that we can stand on our own two feet, that we don't need to be in God's House each week. He convinces us that we can resist temptation on our own, when, in fact, we are all too eager and willing to comply to his wishes. He tempts us to deny Jesus and all that He has done for us. The devil tempts us to distrust God by convincing us that God is holding something back from us. He tempts us to want to be like God. Rather than trust God, we want what we want when we want it, with no regard to God's Word. The devil tempts us like he tempted Jesus, trying to raise doubt in our minds and hearts.

"*If* you are a child of God . . . Do whatever you want to do. After all, God will forgive you, right? If you are a child of God, why shouldn't you have a nice house, a new car, and whatever else your heart desires?"

And when we give in to temptation, when we sin, Satan continues the assault. "If you are a child of God, why do you do what God tells you not to do? If you're a child of God, why don't you do what He does want you to do? If you're a child of God, why do you have those evil thoughts about others. If you're a child of God, why do you speak such horrible words. If you're a child of God, why do you ..." You get the idea.

And if that's not bad enough, the devil also tempts you to not trust God's promise of forgiveness for Jesus' sake. He'll tell you that God doesn't, in fact can't, love you. He'll tell you that because you're a sinner, there's no hope for you. He'll do everything he can to get you to doubt God's love and forgiveness.

Yet, the devil is full of lies. Jesus even calls him the father of lies. For the truth is God does love you. God does forgive you. In fact, He comes to you to forgive you and strengthen you against Satan's attacks. In His Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments, your Savior is near you. In His Word and Sacraments, God forgives you all your sins. For Jesus knows full well what it's like to be tempted. He's been there, done that. And though He repelled every temptation, He bears in His body the stripes your sins deserve. Though He never sinned, Jesus became the chief of all sinners as He took the sins of the world upon Himself and was forsaken by God. Though He never sinned, He became sin for you and suffered the eternal wrath of God so that you could have His perfect righteousness. In your place, Jesus suffered the judgment of God toward sinners without mercy and without compassion. On the cross of Calvary, He shed His holy, precious blood for you.

And, "If God did not spare his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things?" And this is your defense against temptation. For God has given you everything you need for this life and for the life to come – including power to resist temptation and forgiveness when you don't. So don't isolate yourself from Christ and His gifts, His Word, His grace, His mercy, His life, and your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Rather, gather with them as often as possible to receive grace to resist temptation, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.