

Greetings from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Amen

Journey in the Wilderness

Luke 4:1–13

In the Lent time we stop and reflect and confess that we need Jesus. The Temptation of Jesus reminds us that we need Jesus, who is our Victor over the devil, sin and death.

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. Jesus after His baptism, full of the Spirit of God, was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to do God the Father's Will perfectly. The Will of God is to defeat the devil **for our sake**, to begin the ending journey to the cross, for the salvation for mankind, the ransom for sins of all mankind. For the God head is in the flesh to battle for you, for mankind. Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. We need Jesus to be our victor over sin, death and the devil. You cannot do it yourselves. You are powerless against the devil by yourself! For as we sing in stanza 2 in *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*:

*With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the valiant One,
Whom God himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.*

And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'

The devil comes to Jesus at a time of weakness. Jesus being weak in His physical state by not eating, the devil comes to tempt Jesus to change the stone into bread. In the same way the devil comes and tempts you in your time of weakness. The first temptation is closely related to the temptation that caused Adam and Eve to fall into sin by eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge. Also, the temptation is closely related to the 40 years of Israel wandering in the wilderness and falling into sin. Jesus has solidarity with all flesh. He is true man, a son of Adam. He must eat bread. But this human eating must remain inside the boundaries of what it means to be a human being, namely, to be "son of God" and obedient to

the Father's will. In the case of Adam, he was not. Adam ate; he sinned. The first temptation was for Jesus to quickly become the "bread king of the earth." "Go past the cross" and collect the temporary glory, but not real glory. The devil tempted Jesus to enter into his glory fast and quick with no suffering, abandon God's Salvation plan for mankind. The devil did not want Jesus to follow God the Father's Will. You have to admit that you would be deceived quickly and most people would, follow the path to quick glory and self ratification rather thinking of others' needs. Jesus uses the Scriptures, Word of God, to overcome the devil. Jesus was trusting God to provide for Him. You find yourself sinning by doubting that God will provide for you. Or you sin by wanting to obtain undeserved power and fame by the cost other's efforts. But here you see Christ standing in your shoes ... acting in your place ... doing **for you** what you are unable to do.

And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."
And Jesus answered him, "It is written, " 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.' "

The devil tempts Jesus to 'give in' to the authority of the devil and worship him to obtain an empty promise of glory and power. Adam and Eve found that when they sinned (trying to gain for themselves greater "glory" by knowing good and evil, they actually **lost** their status of "glory and power" as children of God. You and I are always battling with our sinful flesh by placing the pursuit of power and authority as number one in our lives according to ourselves. Jesus counters the devil and wins again, by using the Scriptures once again. Jesus holds fast to the God the Father's Will. And He is willing to humble Himself to the Will of the Father, even unto the death of the cross – all for you!

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "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," and " "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." " And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Since Christ defeated the devil by the use of the Holy Scriptures, the devil now resorts to using the Scriptures but **his** version (or

interpretation) of the Scriptures, quoting them for his purpose and twisting them, making them sound like the truth when his purpose is a lie. The devil wants Jesus to question if He is really the Son of God. God is not really with you, for you, or upholding you. Jesus once again defeats the devil by the using the Scriptures, the Word of God – properly ... and in context. You and I do from time to time fall into sin by doubting the love God for you, doubting God's care for you, and doubting that God will provide and protect you because of Christ.

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

JESUS IS WITH YOU, HE UPHOLDS YOU, AND KEEPS YOU SAFE IN THE WILDERNESS OF LIFE FOR HE HAS GONE BEFORE YOU.

Jesus rightly uses the Word of God to defeat the devil when He was tempted. As you are tempted by the devil, do not run away from God's Word but dive into God's Word, be in God's Word, allow God's Word to surround you, uphold you and feed you! And so you can sing Stanza 3 of *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* in full confidence that the 'one little word' is God's Word, Jesus Christ:

*Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill,
They shall not overpower us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
He's judged; the deed is done'
One little word can fell him.*

In Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, we may be confident, for God's Word in Hebrews states: ***Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For 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. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*** (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Christ has defeated the devil, by His Word and by the cross and by His resurrection. As you wander through this life, in this wilderness of sin ... and this valley of the shadow of death, you are not alone. The Lord is with you and He has gone before you to bring you safely home to Himself. You, as the child of God, God sustains you in His Word. You can rest in His Word, for it is the power to save, to protect, and to sustain your faith unto

eternal life. Jesus feeds you and sustains you by the life-giving bread of His Word and Sacraments each Sunday. Therefore, you are able to sing stanza 4 of *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*:

*The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With his good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our victory has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.*

And may the peace of God, which is beyond all human comprehension, keep your hearts and minds through your faith in Christ Jesus. Amen