

Luke 4:1-13  
“The Lord Prevails”  
First Sunday in Lent (C)

March 6, 2022  
First Ev. Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.  
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

***[Intro]***

Despite our best efforts, ***“[We] do not do the good [we] want, but the evil [we] do not want is what [we] keep on doing”*** (Romans 7:19).

Life can be frustrating. Life is frustrating. Oftentimes, we try our best, but our best just isn't good enough. We try our best to focus on our sinful condition and renew our efforts to resist temptation, but we often find ourselves seduced by temptation, which often leads to sin.

But it may be good to keep in mind that temptation by itself is not sin. Temptation can be only a suggestion or thought entering the mind. Temptation only becomes a sin when that temptation becomes a delight in our mind. So, if you fail to act on the temptation – *in thought, word, or deed* – that is not a sin.

On Ash Wednesday, we began the penitential season of Lent. Lent is a period of 40 days, plus Sundays. This season is a time of penitence and focus. Today on this First Sunday in Lent, Jesus takes on Satan firsthand. Jesus takes on Satan intentionally.

***[Temptation of Jesus]***

Now, Satan and his minions knew full well that Jesus is the Son of God. He knew the true identity of Jesus as soon as Jesus took on our human flesh. But it is likely when Satan heard the voice of God the Father proclaiming about Jesus: ***“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”*** (Luke 3:22) at His baptism, this set him off.

It was then – *at the announcement of His public ministry* – that Jesus – *filled with the Holy Spirit* – immediately went into the wilderness to take on Satan. Satan took the bait, but he thinks that he is clever enough to take on God and win.

Part of the reason Satan believes he has a chance to best God is that God is also fully man. With this in mind, knowing that Jesus has not eaten in 40 days, Satan begins his temptation by using his favorite trick: seduction.

In the past, seduction has been a great success. Adam and Eve thought the forbidden fruit looked good enough to eat, but only after Satan pointed it out in the Garden. Jesus, too, was hungry. Satan knew that Jesus had to eat. So, Satan said to Jesus: ***“If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread”*** (Luke 4:3).

Jesus must have thought, *“I am hungry, I must eat.”* But unlike Adam before Him, Jesus would not succumb to Satan’s seduction, instead Jesus responds saying: ***“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone’”*** (Luke 4:4).

Jesus lives by the Word of God. He is the Word of God. And He will not betray Himself – *even if experiencing extreme hunger.*

But Satan continues thinking of himself as ever clever by showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and then says: ***“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”*** (Luke 4:6-7).

Oddly enough, Satan may be correct here. This world and its glory really does belong to Satan. But the thing is, the “authority” and “glory” that Satan claims is only temporary and Satan only makes promises that in the end, he cannot fulfill.

Satan’s authority is only over a fallen world, estranged from God. And he only has this authority because he usurped it from God when he tricked Adam and Eve into sin. In this fallen world, Satan lures us into unchastity, laziness, deceit, deception, anger, impatience, luxury, power. He seeks to tear us apart. Satan wants us to be drawn into unbelief and false security.

Jesus responds: ***“It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve’”*** (Luke 4:8).

Satan’s power over this world will come to an end, as it is only temporary, because ***“the Word of our God will stand forever”*** (Isaiah 40:8b).

Precisely where Adam yielded and Israel failed, Jesus stands firm. Jesus proclaims that true worship is to worship the Lord God.

Satan, who still thinks of himself as clever, then took Jesus to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said: ***“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’”*** (Luke 4:9-11).

After twice bested by Scripture, Satan now appeals to it, but it is a cheap and deceitful imitation. Satan quotes here from Psalm 91, but he leaves out the phrase ***“in all Your ways.”*** You see, Satan knows how to misuse and misapply Scripture to make it sound like God’s Word. Over the many centuries, Satan has led many people to cherry pick Scripture in order to fit what our sinful nature wants.

But unlike Adam before Him, Jesus never wavered with Satan’s temptations. He came to do the will of His Father, not the will of Satan. To this third temptation, Jesus says, ***“It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test’”*** (Luke 4:12).

Interestingly, the only words Jesus speaks in this dialog with Satan are quotations from Deuteronomy when the Israelites were tested in the wilderness. Those Israelites ***then*** failed to be faithful. Jesus ***proves*** to be faithful.

Throughout every temptation, Jesus remained actively obedient to God’s Law. He held Himself subject to the Law and He fought temptation for us. He has taken our place, not only to die, but also to live a perfect life by keeping the Law of God in its entirety for our salvation.

### ***[Satan Tests Us]***

Just as Jesus was tested by Satan, Satan also tests us. Satan questions us: “Did God really say: He created mankind in His image?” “Did God really say: He makes no mistakes?” “Did God really say: Defend and speak well of your neighbor?” “Did God really say: Forgive one another?” “Did God really say: My Word is truth?”

Of course, “yes” is the correct answer to all those questions.

Satan attempts to trick us into getting us to think: “Didn’t God mean: love yourself and accept yourself as you are?” “Didn’t God mean: I can sin now and ask for His forgiveness later?”

You see, Satan tempts us to take things into our own hands, rather than trusting that God will take care of everything for us. Satan's goal is to lead us into despair and division.

And because of our sinful nature, we often fail in temptation. We become frustrated because we cannot overcome temptation and sin. We often give in. We do not do the good we want. Instead, we do evil. We sin.

### ***[Resisting Satan]***

So, how can we resist Satan? Well, we can quote Scripture right back at Him as Jesus did. But let us not forget: We must keep the Law. So, when Satan comes and accuses you of not having kept it, focus on Christ and say this: "There is the Man who has kept it; to Him I cling; He fulfilled it for me and gave His fulfillment to me. Thus, the Law is silenced."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus' temptation reminds us that our salvation is also tied to His victory over temptation that took place in the wilderness. If Christ had even once given into temptation, then His suffering and death would have no benefit to us. But indeed, Christ remained obedient to the Law, so that "***by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous***" (Romans 5:19).

Jesus has taken our place under the Law and fought real temptation for us. We are saved from the power of sin, death, and Satan by the blood of Jesus. And because of Christ's active obedience, God the Father forgives our sins and credits Christ's righteousness to us. Christ paid the price for our sin – *every sin of thought, word, and deed* – to make propitiation for the sins of the people. He did this, so that we would be declared justified, righteous, innocent, and holy.

Take heart knowing that our Savior knows what it is like to be tempted. He willingly faced temptation by our enemy, and He actively resisted every temptation for us and for our salvation! He won the battle, and His victory belongs to all who trust in Him! The Lord prevails and now we – *by grace through faith in Him* – receive the benefits: forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation! Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep you hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

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<sup>1</sup> Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 375.