

Text: Luke 4:1 – 13

Theme: Away From Me Satan!

Do Not Tempt Me:

1. To Stop Trusting in My God (1-4)
2. To Worship a False god (5-8)
3. To Tempt God Himself (9-13)

This past Wednesday was Ash Wednesday. We have now entered the Lenten season. For our Mid-Week Worship Services this year, we are using as our theme, "We Preach Christ Crucified!" The Good News of God's Word is that Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, was willing to leave his place in the glory of heaven. He took on human flesh. Jesus willingly suffered and died on the cross as the full payment price for all of your sins and mine. During our worship services on Wednesday evening, we follow Jesus, as he willingly goes the way of the cross as our one and only Savior. In contrast, the Sundays in Lent are referred to as "Little Easters." During our Sunday Worship Services during Lent, we remember the Good News that our Savior who was willing to suffer and die is also the victorious Lord who has defeated our enemies of sin, death and the devil. The Gospel Lesson for the First Sunday in Lent shows us how Jesus was not willing to give in to ANY of the temptations of the devil. This event in our Savior's ministry is recorded by three of the four Gospel writers. The Gospel writer Matthew, in his Gospel account, records for us these words of the Savior, following the last temptation by the devil: "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan!'" It is Jesus our perfect Savior, who gives you and me the strength to say in the face of the devil's temptations, "AWAY FROM ME SATAN!"

First, you and I say "Away from me Satan! Do not tempt me to stop trusting in my God. We read from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4. We read the first four verses at this time:

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

It was at his Baptism, that God the Father said of Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased." Now Satan questions Jesus about His true divinity. He tells Jesus, who had not eaten for the entire 40 days He was in the desert, to turn the stones into bread. In a way Satan was saying to Jesus with this first temptation: "If you really are the Son of God, why wait for the Father to provide for you? Do it yourself! There is no need to trust in the Father. You have the power to do whatever you want!" How does our Savior respond to this first temptation? He fights off Satan using the powerful Word of God. He quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3 which reads: "Man does not live on bread alone . . ." Just as God provided for the children of Israel in the wilderness as they journeyed to the promise land, our Savior also had the confidence that God the Father will use his almighty power to provide for all those who place their trust in Him.

Today, Satan tempts you and me just as he tempted Jesus almost 2000 years ago. He never gives up trying to get someone to sin against their God. He would love it if we stopped trusting that our Father in heaven would take care of us. He loves to hear us complain when things aren't going the way we think they should be going. When you complain that you are always sick, Satan loves to hear that. When you worry about paying the next month's bills, Satan loves to see that. When things are not going well for you and me, Satan loves to create doubt in our minds. He will whisper in your ear: "Maybe God doesn't love you as you thought He did? Maybe you should find someone or something else to put your trust in." When Satan comes with this temptation, you and I are able to "Away from me Satan!" We have the powerful shield of God's Holy Word to fight off his temptations. We know passages such as the words of Paul in Romans 8:28 which assure us "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Sung Response: #200 v. 1 "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

Satan would not only love it if all of us here this morning would stop trusting in our God, but he would love it if we put aside our relationship with the true God all together and worshiped the false gods of this world. Our Gospel Lesson continues:

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Satan tries once again to get our Savior to sin. This time he tries to get Jesus to worship a false god – namely, Satan himself. Satan tells Jesus that if he would worship him, then he would give to Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth along with their splendor. This temptation may have been the most alluring of all the temptations Jesus faced. This temptation held in front of Jesus the opportunity to win all the kingdoms of the world which he came to this world to win. He could have all these kingdoms, without having to suffer the agony and the shame of being crucified. Jesus could avoid the Father's will for him and gain those he came to gain the easy way. All he had to do was bow down and worship Satan.

But this is just another example of the lies Satan tries to use to trap people. The earth is not his to give away. In Psalm 24:1 David writes: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. . ." Our Savior responds to this temptation, this lie of Satan, the same way he had responded to all the other temptations; by obeying what God's Word says. Jesus knew the First Commandment which says: "You shall have no other gods." Jesus knew it would be a sin to worship Satan, who is not only a false god, but the chief of the false gods. Our Savior again uses the Word of God to fight off Satan and his temptation. This time Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:13 which reads: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." Jesus knew God's direct command that only he, the one and only true God, is to be worshiped and served. Again Jesus showed his faithfulness to the will of the Father by resisting the temptation of worshiping a false god.

Satan must love what he sees when he looks at our earth today. So many things are at his disposal for him to use to tempt us with. In our material world in which we live today, we are tempted to leave our God behind, and worship other false gods. We worship the false gods of this world when we make them more important in our lives, rather than our true God who loves us. An example of this would be when we would rather simply sit at home, or participate in some activity, rather than coming to the Lord's house to worship him. When we are tempted to put aside worship of the one true God for the false gods of this sinful world, may the Lord God give you and me the strength to say: "Away from me Satan!" As David writes in Psalm 122: "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'"

Sung Response: #200 v. 2 "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

Satan's temptations are very real for us. They were very real for our Savior as well. As true man, Jesus felt Satan pulling hard to get him to sin. Having failed to win Jesus over with the other temptations, Satan does not give up. He continues to tempt Jesus. Luke records one more attempt of Satan to get Jesus to sin.

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

This time we see Satan taking Jesus to the highest point of the temple. Again, Satan tries to create doubt in the mind of Jesus. Satan's train of thought with this temptation went something like this: "You believe your Father will care for you and prolong your life, so throw yourself down. Prove it! Since you are in the habit of quoting Scripture, look at what your Father has said in Psalm 91:11,12! He will command his angels to protect you from harm and danger. So throw yourself down! For you have nothing to fear – if you do believe your Father will protect you."

Again, our Savior fights off this temptation of Satan by using the powerful Word of God. He allows Scripture to interpret Scripture. This time He quotes from Deuteronomy 6:16 which reads: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." By using the word of God as his weapon, our Savior successfully resists the temptation to tempt God himself. Having lost his battle with Jesus, verse 13 tells us that the devil left him. However, he would not give up. For we are told that Satan "left him until an opportune time".

Today, Satan tempts you and me to put our God to the test. It is much like a little child, who knows that he or she is not to do something, but they will see how far they can go before their parents will yell at them. You and I often face the temptation to put our God to the test. Isn't all right to say something bad about someone, if they have said something bad about me first? How far can I go on a date? Is it really that big of a deal if I spend time looking at some of the pictures on this or that web site? You and I will fight the temptation to give into the pleasures this world has to offer, thinking "What's the big deal! God will forgive me anyway, won't he? Rather, we will say: "Away from me Satan!" You and I know what God says in His Word. Romans 6:1 – 2 reads: "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Rather than tempting God to do something about the evil we do, we will gladly obey all of God's will for us.

Today, perhaps more than ever before, we are being tempted to abandon our God. Satan will use everything this world has to offer him, to try and get us to sin against our God. With his death on the cross and by his victory over death in his resurrection, we are now dear children of our God. When your enemy Satan comes tempting you, turn to the powerful Word of our God. Through that Word and by the power of the Holy Spirit you will find the strength to fight off the temptations of Satan. Through that same Word and Spirit, he promises to give all of us the faith to boldly proclaim: "Away from me Satan! I will never tempt my God. I will trust only my God. I will only worship my God." Amen.

**Sung Response: (8:00 AM) #200 v. 3 – 4
(10:30 AM and Monday) #200 v. 3**