

Order of Worship for March 6, 2022

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”* - Hymn #657

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Deuteronomy 26:1–11

R: “When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. “And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. And He brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which You, O LORD, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

P: Just as You, LORD God, called Abraham and his descendant to follow You, You calls us to You through Baptism. As You told the people when they entered into the promised land after their rescue from slavery in Egypt:

C: **“Bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which I have given you. And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.”**

P: But we forget You. We take You for granted. We go on in our lives as if You don’t exist.

C: **We offer You the scraps, not the first fruits.** ALL: **Forgive us, LORD.**

P: Christ Jesus came in our place and kept the Father first and foremost in His life. His offered His first fruits—His whole life in service to His Father by taking the path that led to His death on the cross in our stead. By His command and promise I, a called servant of the Word, forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;

C: I will rescue him and honor him.

P: With long life I will satisfy him

C: and show him My salvation.

P: Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—

C: the Most High, who is my refuge—

P: no evil shall be allowed to befall you,

C: no plague come near your tent.

P: For He will command His angels concerning you

C: to guard you in all your ways.

P: On their hands they will bear you up,

C: lest you strike your foot against a stone.

P: You will tread on the lion and the adder;

C: the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;

C: I will rescue him and honor him.

P: With long life I will satisfy him

C: and show him My salvation.

P: The Lord be with you, **C: and also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

P: O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: *“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”* - Hymn #427

Holy Gospel: Luke 4:1–13

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the fourth chapter. **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: 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. 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.’” 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.’” 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.’” And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: “*When Peace, Like a River*” - Hymn #763

Sermon: “*Testing God*” - Luke 4:1-11

The first Sunday of Lent always includes the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness by the devil. The temptations he uses aren’t what we usually think of as powerful temptations. Often when we think of temptations in our own lives we think of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. But Satan doesn’t tempt Jesus with any of those. Instead, he tempts Jesus with bread, power, and safety. He tempts Jesus to doubt God’s word. He tempts Jesus to put God to the test.

Temptations come from questioning God’s word, from testing God’s commands. It started that way in the Garden of Eden, when the serpent asked Eve, “Did God actually say...?” We still do that. We still test God, wondering if God’s commands still apply to us today. Sometimes, when we don’t get struck by lightning, we think we’re ok. We think we’ve tested God, and found out things aren’t like we thought, that God’s word isn’t true. But the damage to us often comes later.

The reason the first temptation is to get us to doubt God’s word and what it says about is that words matter. Because words help us define our reality. They help us explain reality. And if we don’t use God’s words, we try to take the place of God, in creating our own realities instead of the one God has created.

We don’t have the ability to create our own realities with words when we’re driving. Yes, we’ll often think of speed limits as mere suggestions, but that doesn’t change what happens when we get pulled over. Many years back I was hit by a car who was at a stop sign, while I didn’t have a stop sign. They had stopped, yet began to pull forward as I had the right of way. According to the accident report, the other driver thought she only had to stop for a little bit, not remain stopped until the intersection was clear. Words and definitions matter.

We see this in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, too. President Putin tried to define Ukraine as a part of Russia, as a creation of Russia, that therefore gave him the right to invade and control. The people of Ukraine, even those who have some cultural ties to Russia, didn’t see things the same way.

When the devil tempts Jesus, that’s what is happening. The devil is trying to redefine words. The devil is trying to define reality, instead of letting God’s words define reality. Immediately before, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The Holy Spirit had descended on him like a dove, and the voice from heaven had said “You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). Jesus’ identity had been confirmed. Reality had been defined. Jesus was clearly described as God’s Son.

Yet it is right after that, right after his identity has been confirmed, right after it is clear who he is, that Jesus is sent into the wilderness. Jesus goes into the wilderness for forty days, where he doesn't eat and faces temptations. Then, when He's at His weakest, the devil comes looking for Him. The devil comes to tempt Jesus, to test Jesus, to make him doubt who He is, what His mission is, and how God the Father cares for Him.

The devil's first temptation is to challenge Jesus to use his power for his own needs, to make bread out of stones after he's been fasting in the wilderness for forty days. Jesus needs to eat. But he knows that his power is not to be used selfishly, for himself alone, but for others. But here, responding to the devil, Jesus quotes from the book of Deuteronomy, Moses' farewell sermon to the people of Israel when their forty years in the wilderness was coming to an end. And the part that Jesus quotes is about how God had been with the people of Israel, providing for them, giving them bread from heaven. God had showed them that he would provide for his people, but the people of Israel grumbled, complained, and didn't trust in God. Jesus, though, does show his trust in his Father.

Foiled once, the devil regroupes and tries again. He takes Jesus and shows him all the kingdoms of the world and all of their splendors. "If You, then, will worship me, it will all be Yours." The devil is playing God, demanding the worship that belongs to God alone. Not only is God the only one who is to be worshiped, but God is the only one who can give power on Earth. The devil may claim that the kingdoms of the world have been delivered to him, but we know that God alone is in charge and in control. Jesus knows that, too, and so He replies, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

Foiled yet again, the devil tries a third time and takes Jesus to the highest point of the temple in Jerusalem, and again slanders him. "If You are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here..." And here we see another of the devil's tactics; he can quote Scripture, too. He quotes Psalm 91, "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." But the devil here isn't just slandering Jesus. He's slandering God. He's testing God. He is planting a seed of doubt that God would really follow through on that promise.

But again, Jesus resists where the people of God had earlier fallen to temptation. He will not chance death just to test God. It's not that Jesus feared death. No, he knew that his death needed to mean something, and would be when and where God commanded it. As theologian Martin Franzmann put it, Jesus here proved that he was the "Son of God who would not leap from the temple at satanic suggestion but could at God's command leap from greater heights than the temple pinnacle to greater depths than the courtyard floor."

Jesus resisted the devil, and gives us the power to resist. More than that, he continued to resist the devil's temptations all the way to the cross, where the devil was defeated once and for all.

Jesus wouldn't make bread for himself, but he'd break bread to feed 4000 and 5000 people, and then, on the night before he was betrayed, he would take bread, break it, and give it to his disciples to eat. The Word of God and the bread would sustain them as it sustains us through our journey of life.

Jesus didn't take the power that the devil offered him. Instead, he gave up the power that he had as the Son of God and came to live among us. As Paul wrote in Philippians 2, Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus didn't test whether God would keep him safe. He knew that he had to give up his own safety to do accomplish what God had called him to do. And so he refused to call down an army of angels to rescue him from the guards in the garden of Gethsemane. He refused to leave Jerusalem when everyone knew what would happen if he stayed. Instead of testing if God would keep him safe, he knew that he had to do what God had called him to do, even when it wasn't safe.

Jesus knows who he is, and whose he is. He knows that he belongs to God, and not to the devil. Jesus doesn't let the devil's testing and tempting get him to doubt God's word and God's promises. He doesn't need to test God. And because we can trust Jesus, we know we can trust God's promises and God's word to us, as well.

Sixth and Seventh Petitions of the Lord's Prayer: (p. 324-5)

Epistle Lesson: Romans 10:8b-13

R: "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on Him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

R: This is the Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Prayer on God's Word

P: Lord God, we thank You for Your Word. By that Word you made us.

C: "Through the Word all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In that Word was life, and that life was the light of men." (John 1:3-4)

P: We above all thank You that Your Word is Your Son, Christ Jesus.

C: "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

P: In Your Word we see our lives anchored on Christ as we are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:20)

C: "These are the scriptures that testify about Me." (John 5:39) "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

P: Help us to be in that Word confident that "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

C: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

P: Show us the power of Your Word to work in our lives.

C: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17)

P: Help us to daily be in Your Word.

C: “And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15)

P: Lead us to use Your Word as law and Gospel to work in peoples’ lives.

C: “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) “God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6)

P: O Lord, “You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.” (Psalm 119:114)

C: “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O LORD, God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)

(other petitions)

P: All this we pray in Jesus’ name. **C: Amen.**

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts, **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. **C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Words of Our Lord:

Lord’s Prayer:

Distribution of Holy Communion

“Jesus, Priceless Treasure” - Hymn #743

“O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe” - Hymn #666

Song After Communion: *“Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace” - Hymn #937*

Prayer After Communion

P: Lord God, our strength, the battle for good and evil rages within and around us, and our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. Keep us steadfast in Your Word and, when we fall, raise us again and restore us through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C: Amen.**

Blessing (Pastor) C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“O Christ, You Walked the Road” - Hymn #424*

Postlude: