



Table Talk

The First Sunday in Lent, A

March 01, 2020

Matthew 4:1-11
“Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted...” Vs. 1



Jesus is led by the [Holy] Spirit into that place where temptation was possible—that is, the wilderness where so many things are lost to sight. There, in the wilderness, the devil sought to break Jesus’ reliance on faith alone. He attempted to provoke Jesus into self-sufficiency, proving to the devil’s sight that he was indeed the Son of God. With each attempted provocation, Jesus demonstrates his complete dependency upon the Father’s provision, protection, and patronage.

When provoked to assuage his great hunger by turning stones to bread, a famished Jesus affirms his Father’s provision by emphasizing that he lives from God’s Word. When provoked to prove the Father’s promised protection, Jesus affirms the truth of the promises but admonishes the devil that they’re not something to be willfully tested. When provoked to obtain earthly kingdoms and their glory from the devil’s patronage, Jesus responds that he has but one Lord, one God, one patron whom he serves. The implication is that God the Father provides Jesus with all the patronage he needs. And, as the Apostle Paul learned (2 Co. 12:9) the power, glory, and grace of this patron is

perfected in weakness. At that point, Jesus rudely and summarily dismisses the devil, “Be gone!”

Every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “and lead us not into temptation...” Yet, time and again, the Holy Spirit leads us from the sanctuary... from that place of Word and Sacrament ministry... from that place where faith is not only possible but worked by the Holy Spirit... from that place, we are led by the Spirit out into the world where our faith is tested. Like he did with Jesus, the devil attempts to provoke us into self-sufficiency by proving to him in visible ways that we are truly sons and daughters of God. And, like Jesus, we have the opportunity for demonstrating our complete dependency upon the Father’s provision, protection, and patronage. As Jesus possessed a Word from God with which he could turn aside the devil’s provocations, so do you and I possess such a Word. Through this Word the Holy Spirit works faith... faith in Christ... faith that our Lord Jesus has already met these provocations and prevailed against them. Because he knows our weaknesses, our Lord comes again and again at the pulpit, font, and altar, working in you... working in me... all the faith we’ll need.

Table Talk: Speak of the distinction between “will power” and “faithpower” in resisting temptation.

Pray: Heavenly Father, lead me not into temptation. Amen

Written by Rev. Timothy J. Swenson
Dean of Chapel for the Institute of Lutheran Theology

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Matthew 4:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

4 But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple

6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.”

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.



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