

Sunday, March 5, 2017
First Sunday in Lent

INTRODUCTION

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

PRELUDE **"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"** Darwin Wolford

***GATHERING SONG** **"The Glory of These Forty Days"** **ELW 320**

**The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise;
for Christ, through whom all things were made,
himself has fasted and has prayed.**

**Alone and fasting Moses saw
the loving God who gave the law;
and to Elijah, fasting, came
the steeds and chariots of flame.**

**So Daniel trained his mystic sight,
delivered from the lions' might;
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became
the herald of Messiah's name.**

**Then grant, O God, that we may, too,
return in fast and prayer to you.
Our spirits strengthen with your grace,
and give us joy to see your face.**

***GREETING**

℟ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

☩ And also with you

***KYRIE**

℟ *In peace, let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ Lord, have mercy.

℟ *For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ Lord, have mercy.

℟ *For the peace of the whole world,*

*for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ Lord, have mercy.

℟ *For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.*

☩ Lord, have mercy.

℟ *Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.*

☩ Amen.

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE "Now The Feast And Celebration"**

ELW 167

Refrain

**Now the feast and celebration,
all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom;
praise and glory forevermore!**

**Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,
whose blood has freed and united us
to be one great people of God. *Refrain***

**Power and riches, wisdom and might,
all honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain***

**For God has come to dwell with us,
to make us people of God;
to make all things new. *Refrain***

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

℟ *Lord God, our strength,*

☩ the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!

ANTHEM

"Be Still My Soul"

Craig Courtney

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

^{3:1}Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Reflection

What responsibility does the man (or the human being, because in this story there is not yet a differentiated other human being, or woman) have for the garden of Eden? (verse 15) What does it mean to “till and keep”? Notes in the Lutheran Bible suggest that “till” could be translated “serve.” How do human beings best till and keep, or serve, the created earth? What do you do to serve the creation? What was the commandment God gave the man about the fruit of the garden? (verses 16-17) What is the consequence for disobedience? (verse 17) It becomes clear that death does not mean only the stopping of breath, but it has to do with the breakdown of relationships—between humans and God, other humans, animals, the earth, and shame within the self. (See Genesis 2:25 and 3:7) Why did God limit knowledge that was available to human beings? (verse 17) Who created the serpent? (verse 1) Do you think the serpent was put on earth to bring sin? What is temptation? What other created things bring temptation to humans? Did the serpent lie to the woman? What do you think the temptation was that is represented by the fruit of the tree? (Maybe it was a peach, which would be more of a temptation to me than an apple!) (see verse 6) What would it mean to you to be “like God”? Is the result of the action of the woman and the man in eating the fruit of the tree? (verse 7) What happens to the trust with which they were created? We have no way of knowing whether there were people named “Adam” and “Eve” in the garden of Eden. What we do know is that this is a universal story of temptation, disobedience, loss of innocence and trust. In what way is it your story? Our story? What tempts you?

PSALM 32

¹Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,
and whose sin is | put away!

²**Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!**

³While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,
because of my groaning | all day long.

⁴**For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.**

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not
con- | ceal my guilt.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.”

Then you forgave me the guilt | of my sin.
⁶**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to
you in | time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow,
they | shall not reach them.**
⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
⁸**“I will instruct you and teach you in the way
that | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye.**
⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else
they will | not stay near you.”
¹⁰**Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.**
¹¹Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart.

Reflection

This psalm is in some ways the same “story” as in our Genesis text. What is the state of the psalmist in the beginning of the psalm? (verses 1-2) What happens then? (verses 3-4) The sin is not described—but the result of the sin is. What were the consequences of the sin to the psalmist? What “healed” the psalmist? (verse 5) Does sin always result in sickness? What disorders besides ill health can be the result of sin? In what ways are confession and forgiveness gifts in our relationship with God and with other people? What does the psalmist advise us to do in a time of distress? (verse 6) How does the psalmist experience forgiveness? (verses 6-7) What do you think of the simile the psalmist uses to describe those who will not confess their sins? (verses 6-7) Have you ever been like that? What torments do those who do not confess and receive forgiveness experience? (verse 10) How does forgiveness act upon those who are forgiven? (verse 11)

SECOND READING

Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam’s disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ’s obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

¹²Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—¹³sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷If, because of the one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of

righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Reflection

I think it is interesting in this passage that Paul does not treat the story of Adam mostly as a historical event. Adam instead stands for all humanity who experience sin, even before the coming of the law. (This text is part of a larger argument about the effect of the law.) What is the experience of all those who sin? (verses 12-14) If Adam is the "first" of all human beings who sin, who is Jesus Christ? (verses 15) What came about, or what was the effect of the trespass of Adam? (verse 16) What is the effect of Christ's grace? (verse 17) Who were we (humanity) before Christ? (verse 18) What does condemnation mean? Who did we become with the coming of Christ and his obedience to God? (verse 19) As I read this, I think of one of our favorite hymns, "Amazing Grace." What is your favorite hymn about sin and grace?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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**Return to the Lord, your god,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger,
and abounding in steadfast love.**

***GOSPEL**

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

¹Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying 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,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.'"

¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Reflection

The same story that Paul tells in theological language in our Romans text, Matthew tells as a story in the gospel text. Who leads Jesus into the wilderness? (verse 1) What reason is given? What is Jesus' condition at the beginning of this story? (verse 2) I think perhaps the gospel writers who wrote this story of temptation had in mind the story in Genesis 3, when apparently Adam and Eve were hungry. What is

the first temptation? (verse 3) The tempter not only offers bread, but also calls into question Jesus' identity confirmed in his baptism. (See Matthew 3:17) How does Jesus answer the tempter? (verse 4) In what way does the Word of God sustain our life? Think of the Sacrament of bread and wine, and the life-giving joy the psalmist celebrates in Psalm 32. What is the second temptation? (verses 5-6) What is the significance of the devil quoting Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12)? How does Jesus respond? (verse 7) In what ways are we tempted to test the promises of God? Can we believe God's promise to us in baptism? What is the third temptation? (verses 8-9) How does Jesus respond? (verse 10) I see this temptation, as well as the other ones, as temptations to mistrust God's love for us. What might tempt us to turn to evil to accomplish what we feel is our right? Can you think of stories, from history, or literature, or your own experience of someone who does that? How do these temptations and Jesus' trust in God's loving grace help to prepare him for the ministry to come? How can our reliance on the word of God prepare us for what God calls us as a congregation to be and to do?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

"Tempting Obedience"

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

ELW 325

**I want Jesus to walk with me;
I want Jesus to walk with me;
all along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

**In my trials, Lord, walk with me;
in my trials, Lord, walk with me;
when my heart is almost breaking,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

**When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;
when my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

***APOSTLES' CREED**

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**☩ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!**

***PRAYER SONG "Cares Chorus"**

**I cast all my cares upon you;
I lay all of my burdens
down at your feet.
And anytime that I don't know
what to do,
I will cast all my cares upon you.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lifting our voices and turning toward God, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, lead your church on earth to do your will and strive for your kingdom. Teach us your ways and increase our understanding. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Show us how to care for your creation and to treasure the fruits of your creating. Guide our actions and increase our commitment. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give knowledge and wisdom to all leaders throughout your world. Turn hardened hearts of stone toward your nourishing word and let the powerful become providers of daily bread. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rush to the aid of your people in times of distress. Send your peace and healing to those in need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God, you are the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: hear our prayers and grant your healing for those who may be sick or in pain. *We especially pray for Bob, Sheylin, Terry, Stephanie, Dorothy, Linda, Scott, Alva.* We also pray for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Guide those preparing for baptism, sponsors, and this whole assembly toward living into the promises made in baptism. Lead us to scripture, the holy supper, and toward your will for all creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our Lenten journeys and inspire us by the witness of the saints who walked faithfully with you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love; through Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

☞ The peace of Christ be with you always.

☞ **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"You Are My Hiding Place"

**You are my hiding place;
you always fill my heart with songs
of deliverance.**

Whenever I am afraid

I will trust in you,

I will trust in you.

Let the weak say,

"I am strong in the strength of the Lord." (repeat)

ending:

"I will trust in you."

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *"Holy Ground"

**We are standing on holy ground,
and I know that there
are angels all around.**

Let us praise Jesus now.

**We are standing in His presence
on holy ground.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

☞ *Merciful God,*

☞ **receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

☞ *The Lord be with you.*

☞ **And also with you.**

☞ *Lift up your hearts.*

☞ **We lift them to the Lord.**

☞ *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

☞ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *Blessed are you, O God of the universe.
Your mercy is everlasting
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.
Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.
In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
With this bread and cup
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:*

**G Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

P O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast.
Grace our table with your presence.

G Come, Holy Spirit.

P Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us.
Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

G Come, Holy Spirit.

P With your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God,
blessed and holy Trinity,
now and forever.

G Amen!

***LORD'S PRAYER**

**G Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Return to God with all your heart.
Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.*

COMMUNION

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and*

keep you in his grace.

☩ Amen!

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

℟ *Compassionate God,*

☩ you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen!

***BENEDICTION**

℟ *May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into life renewed. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you ☩ peace.*

☩ Amen!

***SENDING SONG "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"**

**Lord, I lift Your name on high,
Lord, I love to sing Your praises.
I'm so glad You're in my life,
I'm so glad You came to save us.**

**You came from heaven to earth
to show the way,
from the earth to the cross,
my debt to pay;
from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift Your name on high.**

***DISMISSAL**

℟ *Marked with the cross of Christ,
go forth to love and serve the Lord.*

☩ Thanks be to God!