**“Tempted”**

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-11

 Lent 1, March 5/6, 2022

“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**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Whereas in the Season of Epiphany we’re shown the **Divine Nature** of Jesus, in the Lenten weekends (starting today), we’re shown **His** **Humanity** / **His** **Human Nature** and His Humiliation in a wilderness walk and temptation, fully in line with ours. He **had to be** that (**fully human)**, to **die** with everything that’s **US** on His **human** shoulders. “**Wilderness**” and “**tempted**” are words **describing the fact of our existence**. Those words are though, also, **descriptive of the** **existence of even God in Christ Jesus to SAVE US**.

**Text**

“**Wilderness**” identifies the logistics (or “**hereness**”) that we’d talked about last weekend. It’s the **context and place where humans existence within a fallen world**. **That** no different than it’s been for, now, six thousand years (documented as the same since thirty-five hundred years ago in Deuteronomy), the “wilderness” existence is **of “affliction, toil, and oppression”**. Not every moment **feels** that way, of course, but that’s because **expectations in humanity has been dumbed-down in six thousand and that God’s intervening in that reality gives blessings and hope even through this** **underlying condition of an (even-yet-today) “wilderness” reality**. And **forty days** relates to forty **years** and a whole **lifetime** (and **many lifetimes**) yet **viewable in the smaller cycle of days**. It was **that** when Moses was **with** **God face to face** for that long on Mount Sinai and with Jesus led by the Holy Spirit to an earthly location and context of “wilderness” and “temptation” **face to face with** **Satan**.

The Book of James calls the **“wilderness”** the “**trials**” and “**testings**” of this lifetime and “**blessed is the man who remains steadfast under them**”. Jesus got “led out**” (as a smaller portion of** **His entire earthly lifetime of it**) to **undergo all of that in “trials” and “testings” with the other additional kicker of direct “temptings” thrown in**. And James says that (**beyond “trials” and “tests”) are (for us also) “temptations” adding to the context**. Not only is there a **passive reality of “wilderness” and “wanderings” (like directionless paths through that “wilderness”)** but there are **predators. Satan the general that leads-from-the-front in that to “tempts” (is the “tempter), who encourages (and even arranges, always) what really does “tempt” … and did even God’s own Son**.

“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**.”

Jesus was **“returning from the Jordan”, baptized** and **thrust into the** **conflict**. Our baptism of Hugh this weekend **thrusts him into the conflict**. Satan with his minions will (from now on) **take a special aim on him** (pulled, by baptism, from the devils clutches that we’re born to into the protection of, now, the Fatherhood of God / Brotherhood with Christ). **Satan wants little Hugh back**, not as interested in “tempting” people who’ve remained his, but quite **vicious to undo what God has done in saving work**. Newly baptized babies I call the “purest among us” because “**wilderness**” and “**temptations**” are (in the minutes just after baptism) **not yet as much “now / that moment issues” as they are future and shortly and, then, forever yet in this life when remaining God’s**. Hugh will **pretty quickly be** “tempted” to act selfish and disregard his parent’s need for rest at night or otherwise. He’s **in, yet, the “wilderness” of a fallen world,** and **Satan will do his best on him**. God and repentance with forgiveness will have to be **taught Hugh, and he’ll need to remain in this life “eternally careful”**. We’ll find out (in a moment) that even Jesus shows **Himself having to set-aside Satan’s temptings by a closeness and use of God’s Holy Scripture**. It should not surprise any of us, then, that the same closeness and use of God’s Scripture **will work** **at keeping Hugh** **safe**.

The world’s, in general, **ugly**, and Putin reminds us of **barbary (but not just him)**. **Humanity as a whole’s** early industrialize capabilities were **directed quickly to war machinery and killing tools**. **Sickness comes still (we can’t keep ourselves fully from it), pandemic happen**, and the cancers of death and dying is **always an ever-present fact of our future**. “**Humanisms**” claim that the world is basically good is **a lie**, and every attempt to show **goodness in humanity** through stories and movies of heroism are only heroic (and interesting and inspiring) because **those kinds of actions regularly are not our “business as usual”**. “**Wilderness**” is as place that’s **far less than perfectly inhabitable**. God **makes some of the best of it**, but **IT, by itself, isn’t pretty**.

“Jesus **was hungry**”, so **weakened** and **vulnerable in an ugly context**, and all of the Lent’s forty days (a short form of a lifetime reminders of **God’s humanity to saved us …** **die as only a man could do**. Satan’s, here, aggressive **three-pronged approach to stopping Divine progress** is **shows us what we’re up against, and how we can endure (even succeed) through our own situations of “wilderness” and “temptation”**.

“If you’re the Son of God, first, Jesus, command this stone to become bread, so that **You can eat**.” **Materialism** and **worry that God won’t provide “daily bread” enough for us**, that’s the first **aggressive temptation in this “wilderness” journey**. It’s “wanting” more money or bigger homes and nicer cars and “trying to exceed our parents in things and speed of gaining things”, two income and fractured (always craving) families where our **“wilderness temptation”** has drawn us. We **expect** entertainment so “what’s in anything for us” is the **transactional mind-set** that’s **aggressively encouraged in us**. Dave Ransey is a company that’s built because of the literal **bondage of human families** to the debt of **wants trying to be satisfied**.

“Jesus **was hungry**”, so **He can relate**. He **“wanted” bread**, yet pulled from Scripture to say that “want is not what’s to be chased”. His “**want**” He never let move (in His head and heart) from just an awareness of it to a **craving He thought to let guide Him**. **In our brains, even, it does**, sinning by **thought** also, then (maybe) by word and deed. His answer (not doing what He could do in turning a stone bread … and not **even consider it**) was: “**It is written (documented in the Book of Holy Scripture / God’s Words)**, ‘Man shall not live by **bread alone**.’”

Second (and not unlike the first) was Satan’s tempting Jesus and any of us to desire or take **power wrongly given (**not recognizing **that** from what’s **received by God as not power but responsibility**). “The devil took Jesus up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time: “To You, Jesus, **I will give all this authority and their glory**. I give it to whom **I will** … if You’ll **worship me**”. “It’s **written**”, Jesus answered him (**tempted but un-swayed**), that “you shall **worship the Lord your God**, and **Him only shall you serve**”. Jesus **now again** has “authority (or responsibility and duty) over Heaven and earth”, but **that as “responsibility” and “duty”**. It’s an **obligation of love as it’s always been with Him**.

Then, lastly, “**testing God**”, **impatient with Him and insisting that He do our bidding rather than us His**. Satan 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 **also written** (see Satan knows God’s Words well also) that “The Father 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.’” “You **shall not (and no one should, including God’s Son Jesus in the context of His faithful and dutifully human life)** put the Lord Your God to the test”. Jesus **submitted to His Father all the way to death**.

## Application

“**Wilderness**” and “**temptation**” are the **realities of humanity**. They were the **humanity that Jesus shared** **… and had to share with us, but with perfection (not letting them defeat Him)**. He had to provide **perfect flesh, and then kill that as the sufficient sacrifice for sin.** When we are **honest about our challenges (and call them what they are … knowing our Savior and that He conquered the same ones**) **we’re going to know, also**, the **weapon that** **we have (as He did)** of that **closeness to and** **use of God’s divine Words to counter the bad**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.