

Sermon Luke 4 1 13 1st S in Lent Series C

Sermon: First Sunday in Lent

Text: Luke 4:1-13 – The temptation of Jesus

Theme: The temptation

Goal: To show how Jesus won (and still wins) the temptation for us.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: A temptation, at the first moment, seems to be something good for us. We are not tempted by thing that we don't like or that we don't need. Bread, wealth and God's protection are God's blessings and it is all that we wish for our lives. – The fruit that the serpent offered to Eve in the paradise "was good for food and pleasing to eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Gen 3:6). Where is then the problem with a temptation? It is a matter of trust: either we trust that God gives us bread, wealth and security by His grace and love, free, according to His will; or we accept Satan's offer to get bread, wealth and security following his paths, acting against God's will to get them and denying our faith. *"The devil tries to use what God intended as blessing for evil"* (S.C. p. 91).

Martin Luther wrote about the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "And lead us not into temptation": *"God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory."*

Let us see what kind of temptations Satan uses to tempt us:

I – Bread

After fasting for forty days, Jesus was hungry. Starvation is a big problem in the world. Bread is a primary need of each of us. To have the daily bread, people are doing whatever is possible or impossible, sometimes honestly, sometimes using questionable ways. But we cannot deny that there are millions of hungry people around the world.

Bread means not just bread; but as Luther explained in the Small Catechism: “*Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.*” – And he said more: “*God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.*”

To avoid starving people doing something wrong and fall into temptation to get their daily bread, God invites us to share with the needy what He gives us. Remember the Old Testament lesson for today: “Bring the first fruit to God’s house.” Luther’s Loot and special designated offerings in an envelope can help some needy people to have their daily bread without falling into temptation to get it on a wrong way.

Jesus went further in His answer to Satan. He pointed out that the most important thing is the Word of God that gives eternal life. And His promise is sure: “Seek first His kingdom and His

righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt 6:33).

II – Wealth

Many people are falling into the second temptation: Power, authority and wealth. “The devil led Jesus 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.” But there is a price: “So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”

Many countries are well known about corruption. The news is full of new scandals every week, even inside some churches. Like Judas Iscariot, people sell their soul, not just for some silver coins, but for millions of dollars (or Rands) – money that belongs to the people but its final destination is the pocket of the corrupted. - Corruption is not just a matter of some politicians; we see it close around us as well sometimes. Money, wealth and power are always a temptation.

Life is short. Don't sell your soul to get some coins, or power, or authority in a dishonest way. Be pleased with what God gives you and use well the opportunities you have in your lives according to God's will to work honestly and to get what you need in a right way, not in a wrong way, denying your faith. Jesus came to overcome the power of the devil and to give us the eternal riches. “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt 6:33).

III – Security

The devil doesn't take us to the highest place of the temple anymore as he did with Jesus; but he tempts us with a false

security feeling: *“There is no danger. Skip the medicine. Join the wild party. You don’t need church every Sunday. You’re God’s child”* (S.C.p.91). It is a misunderstanding of God’s protection. You cannot just cross the road without looking to both sides and say: God will take care of me... “Do not put the Lord your God to the test” was Jesus’ answer.

In His grace and love, God gave us intelligence and called us to be His children by faith in Christ. We shall live according to His will and we shall not put ourselves in risk going to places full of sins or exposing ourselves to danger that can harm our soul and our body. We are responsible stewards of our lives, of our family and of our goods. Jesus himself taught us to pray: *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* Martin Luther explained again: *“We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”*

Conclusion: “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.” The devil doesn’t give up. He comes again and again with different temptations. We need to be aware and be strong in the knowledge of the Scripture to know how to respond to the different temptations. But we can be sure that as Jesus won over the temptations in the desert, He gives His victory and strength to us by faith. He is our Savior, He is our Victor. His main victory happened on Good Friday, when “He cried out in a loud voice:.... It is finished!” (Matt 27:50; John19:30), and on Easter Sunday, when He won even over the death. With Him “we are more than conquerors” (Rom 8:37). Amen.

