

Invocavit  
St. Matthew 4:1-11  
March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Jesus Was Led Up by the Spirit

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who for the sake of the bitter suffering and death of Thy dear Son dost again, during the present Lenten season, graciously and earnestly offer to us forgiveness of sins, life, and eternal salvation: we beseech Thee, give us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not presumptuously or lightly set at naught the offer of Thy grace and mercy, but follow Thy gracious invitation with joyful obedience, and by holiness of living give Thee continual thanks and praise; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The temptation of our Lord + Jesus Christ seems to be confusing to some people. They cannot seem to understand how the Lord + Jesus can be tempted and still be without sin. The problem exists because people are equating their own temptations to the Lord's temptation. We are full of sin. We are easily led into temptation. Our Lord + Jesus, however, is without sin. He easily resists temptation because He is without sin. Some people will then say that He was not therefore tempted like we were, if He did not struggle with the temptation. Like our Lord + Jesus in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, let us hold only to the Word of God and not our own reasoning and consciences.

The Apostle St. Paul writes in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15). Our Lord + Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted as we are. He was, however, without sin, unlike we are. St. Paul also writes in that Epistle, "He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Heb. 2:18). He can give aid, help, succor, support to us, because He was tempted like we are. He Himself has suffered. Since He is without sin, however, He does not have the same evil desires and inclinations that we do.

St. James writes in his Epistle "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." (James 1:13). Our Lord + Jesus Who is not only a man like we are, is also very and true God. He is both God and man. The Lord God—our Lord + Jesus—cannot be tempted by evil. He is also not the cause of our temptation. We are the only ones to be blamed for our falling into temptation and sin. To emphasize this point, St. James also writes in his Epistle, "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." (James 1:14). We are tempted into sin because we want to be tempted into sin. We want to fulfill our "own desires." We want to be enticed into breaking the Commandments and doing want please the flesh of our Old Adam.

Our Lord + Jesus is the New Adam, however. He only wants to do what the heavenly Father will Him to do. He only desires to obey the Commandments. This is emphasized in the Gospel reading when St. Matthew tells us that the Lord + Jesus was “Led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.” Our Lord + Jesus is led by the Holy Ghost. After His baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, our Lord + Jesus is led by the Holy Ghost. He had been declared by the Voice from Heaven that He was the Only-Begotten Son of the heavenly Father. In Him the heavenly Father was well pleased. He was well pleased with His Only Son because He was without sin. He was well pleased with Him because He desired to do what the Father desired Him to do.

In the wilderness, which takes us back to the wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel, who wandered for forty years, and still remained a rebellious and stiff-necked people, our Lord + Jesus remains obedient to the heavenly Father and fasts for forty days and He was hungry. In His weakness, just like it is with us, the devil comes to tempt Him. The devil comes to tempt us when we are at our weakest. He also comes to our Lord when He is at His weakest. But our Lord + Jesus is armed with the greatest of weapons. We also possess this weapon, even though in our weakness we rarely put it into use. We neglect our weapon. We let it gather dust and rust. This weapon that both we and our Lord possess, even in our weakest moments, is the Word of God.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. This is why at all times, and especially in these penitential seasons, we sharpen and polish our weapon, so that we might resist temptation, just like our Lord + Jesus does here in today’s Gospel reading. We live by the Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord God. If we do not have His Word, we cannot hope to resist the temptations of the devil. Our Lord + Jesus, however, cannot fall into temptation, because He has a full knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. He has complete trust in the Word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord God. And make note, my dear friends, that there is a difference between falling into temptation, and being tempted. One can be tempted and not fall into temptation. Such is the case with our Lord + Jesus today. Such is NOT the case with you and me on a daily basis. We are tempted and fall time and time again.

This is why we should place our trust in our ability to resist temptation, but instead trust in the ability of our Lord + Jesus to fulfill perfectly the Lord’s Commandments by not falling into temptation. This is what proceeds from the mouth of the Lord God—the Word that He speaks—that our Lord + Jesus is the only One Who perfectly fulfilled the Law of God. He is the only One Who resisted the temptations of the devil. He was tempted in all points, but without sin (Heb. 4:15). He suffers as we suffer, but without sin. He can sympathize with us because He has lived as one of us, has suffered as one of us, has been tempted like one of us. But unlike one of us, He is without sin. He knows our every weakness, how we fall into temptation, and are surrounded by our enemies and often defeated because He lived as one of us.

This is why He has given His angels charge over us to guard us from our enemies. This is why He has placed His holy Word into our hands, and ear, and hearts, so that we can be defended from our enemies by the tools and weapons that He has given us, the same tools and weapons that He used to defeat the devil in the wilderness when he came to tempt our Lord + Jesus.

We daily tempt our Lord God by seeing how far we can break His Commandments without facing any other consequence than the torment of our own conscience. We push the limits of His mercy and compassion—His willingness to forgive us—all because of our own sinful desires and enticements. We too often serve our own bellies. We make ourselves out to be our own god, way too often. This is why we fall into temptation. We want to obey the desires of our own corrupt hearts. We fail to heed the teaching of our Lord + Jesus in today’s Gospel pericope. “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.”

Even though we often make ourselves our own god, our Lord + Jesus perfectly worships the Only True Lord and God. The false allurements that cry out to us to make them our god, fall deaf on our Lord's ears. For Him there is only One True God. There is only One God worthy of worship and devotion. The Lord God Who made Heaven and Earth. The Lord God Who redeemed us by the Lord + Jesus' death on the tree of the holy cross. The Lord God Who sanctifies us through the work of the Holy Ghost; through the work of the means of grace, is the only Lord God Who is to be worshiped. All other false gods our Lord + Jesus rejected, and clung in faith to the One True Triune Lord God.

He has perfectly resisted the temptation of the devil. He did what we are unable to do. He was tempted in all points, but without sin. We are tempted in all points, and sin often. This is why, my dear friends, we are to cling in faith only to Him. For in Him alone is all help and salvation. Through His temptation, suffering and death we have deliverance from the wiles of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Through His death on the tree of the holy cross, we will be satisfied with long life—an eternally long life—with Him and all the other faithful saints in Heaven. Through His holy Word He enlightens us with faith in Him, so that we cling solely to Him. Through the Word that proceeds from His mouth, we are given a weapon to help us in our time of temptation. Through His Word we are led by His Spirit—the Holy Ghost—through this wilderness of the world. He leads us through this life to take us all into His eternal heavenly realm where we will all finally be free from the temptations and sins of this life. May the Lord God grant this unto us all quickly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the mystery of our Savior's fasting and temptation, to arm us with the same mind that was in Him toward all evil and sin; and give us grace to keep our bodies in such holy discipline that our minds may be always ready to resist Satan and obey the motions of the Thy Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*