

The First Sunday in Lent
 Year of the Lord 2019
 Luke 4

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
 “Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
 Thee!”**

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

³**The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”**

⁴And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” ⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ ¹¹and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

¹²And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

In the Name of Jesus:

Children of God! Forget about GUILT! Forget about FEAR! Yes, the Son of God, Mary’s Baby, has saved us from all of those. But this day the readings lead me to thank and praise the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for taking off of my shoulders, off of ALL of us, the tyranny that is called ‘fairness,’ or ‘deserving,’ or ‘justice.’ Whatever it is, that thing, that has us YEARNING for a police car when the next man is trying to drive us into the ditch; and yet has us panicking that the police car—or anyone ELSE!—may have seen our own distracted driving...

‘If you are the Son of God...’. THAT sown doubt; THAT BURDEN of proof laid on us; the Son of God, Mary’s Boy, removed from all the children of God, at the end of His forty day fast, when He was hungry; and yet not hungry or distracted or DEFENSIVE...AT...ALL!

And so, dear sons and daughters of God: ‘Y’all shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall y’all serve!’

M...E...A...N...I...N...G: just about the most disappointing thing you can ever do for all your remaining days here/and/nOW, is to defend yourself, explain yourself, PROVE yourself the dwelling place of the Spirit of Jesus! To any other son of God; OR...to God! And, of course: don’t waste yer time defending yourself to the chief prosecutor and disturber of the Gospel, no matter what you call him! The simplest meaning of the word ‘devil’ is ‘twister of things.’

Luther called ‘guilt’ ‘The STENCH of the devil!’ As soon as you are preoccupied and your prayers are thrown off the rails of certainty and joy and hope and praise, just because you are so aware that you are what you are, a sinner!....Sniff a bit, and you will know who is in the area: Old Nick! His stench is strong!

Let Paul today define ‘The HANDIWORK of the devil’—Satan’s MAIN WORK he hopes to WORK in us: defensiveness, explaining yourself, the desperation of having to set things right with heaven, earth or even hell!

[Let me insert here: if YOU are not in the crosshairs of the disapproval of many surrounding you—as I am always—then maybe YOU are the one aiming and firing disapproval of others! You could repent of THAT, I suppose! People like ME will take it!]

Yes, dear children, I know! If what Pastor Paul is saying is the Trustworthiness of the Gospel...then our WHOLE DAY has been REALLY FREED UP! ‘Ummm...if I leave out having to justify

myself to everyone I meet, to God, to my own conscience, to that pesky, testy demon...[ORR...if I take every encounter with sinners and their sins the leading of the Spirit, rather than another eruption of hell on earth!!!!].....then what is left for me to DO today?!

Well...Jesus, the Son of God, fasted and prayed. If that was worth HIS day, it couldn't harm OURS, now could it?!

By the way, Dr. Martin Luther explained the work that is prayer in three portions: reading the Gospel, basking in the Gospel, then, 'Here come da debil!' Hearing the Word of Christ, the Word of the Gospel, worship in the Spirit, then the temptation BEFITTING...EVERY...CHILD...OF...GOD!

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, [insertion here: from HIS Baptism among sinners confessing their sins!] returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

NOWwww...we're FREE! What Mr Fancy-Pants Satan calls HIS MOST SERIOUS AND DANGEROUS ATTACK ON US— 'Oh, YOU are Heavenly royalty, right?! Then EXPLAIN all the emptiness about in YOU?! Stomach, self-esteem; how much YOU are plastered into the eyes of men, and are receiving the APPLAUSE of MEN echoing in your ears! Where's the PROOF?!

What the DEVIL wants us to think is HIS KINGDOM winning something, anything—is actually, ye baptized saints!—the Holy Place to which you have been led by the Spirit Who lives by living in YOU!

He would fast again for a day or so; and have every sign of heaven's approval taken away from Him; and receive, instead of applause and men's cheers, the jeers and blows and spit of the best and the worst of this world. But, through it all, the worst of the worst of days, the Holy Spirit Who made His home in Jesus, was there to inspire THIS WORD:

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ¹

Child of God: HE did and said and died all of THAT,
FOR...YOU!

For YOU have been baptized also, filled with the Spirit of Jesus!
YOU have torn open the curtain, the veil that separated God from you!
And you have been SOOOOOO...given God as YOUR Father, YOUR attentive Father, the Father Who has installed YOU as King, Queen of His People—where YOU are, HE...ARE!!!—

God has been SOOOO.....made YOUR Father by the work of Jesus, then by the work of the Spirit of Jesus: Baptism, Supper, Absolution, the Gospel, your Church, your fellow believers—it goes ON and ON....!

God is SOOOO.....certainly YOUR dear Father, that you are without a doubt already in His hands; even when there is NO evidence for YOU to present to satisfy ANYONE'S judgment: Law, Moses, conscience, TV, opinion poll, religious devil, or demon-filled church.

'EVEN' when you have no evidence, proof, defense.

'Oh, pastor! What a weak word!' EVEN?!!!

I agree!

'ESPECIALLY' when YOU have NO EVIDENCE to submit, no PROOF to satisfy yourself or anyone else, even the commandments of Holy God....

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 23:44–47). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

And all you have is the promise made you at your Baptism; or when your fellow, weak Christian brother absolved you; or you ate and drank again the Body and Blood of the King, of the Son of God....

Then YOU are innocent, harmless, blameless! And the Ear of Heaven belongs to you; and as HE holds YOU, YOU can tell Him—and He will smile!, your dear Father—tell HIM that YOU are placing YOURSELF....

‘Into His hands.’

Yes! Please let my sarcastic streak please you today!

Yet, you PLACE YOURSELF into His hands!

Also, make sure that you PLACE YOUR LUNGS inside His oxygen! How are you going to BREATHE...unless YOU go find your lungs, bring them to a place where there is AIR, and then pump them full and empty, full and empty. That BREATHING THING is up to you and me, right?!

And make sure you PLACE YOUR EYES into a place where the sun shines. Go search for your eyes that you are in charge of; and then pop them into your skull; and then go search and search until you find the Sun; and then MASTER the sunlight with your eyes. That SEEING THING is up to you and me, right?!

If the DISPENSABLE things like breathing and seeing—work we can actually live without, in the Kingdom of THIS KING!—if these simplest of works are HIS gift to us...

Then, my dear fellow children of God, all the weight has been lifted from us! And we can sing God is our Father because HE has pledged it; pledged His Beating Heart, now come in our flesh!

And the WORK the Savior calls us to, is simply to bask in the Gospel proclamation! That the Innocent One, the Holy One, has made Himself one of the sinners, though He is not; but HE...IS...sez HE!

And we can pray...and live, and breathe, and see, and pursue good, and repent of evil...CERTAIN more than anything else, that the very Breath of God, the Spirit unlike any other, has been pleased to make His home, forever, with you; with you; and even, despite ALL PROOF TO THE CONTRAY: God is happy to dwell with me.

And, dear children of God, if WITH you and me, it is now OUR happy task—I just said that, OUR task! HA!—

WE have now been installed on our thrones of glory, and freed up to tell all the nations: YOU, and you, and you, and you, are children of God too in the Name of Jesus. Amen.