

The First Sunday in Lent 2020
Matthew 4

O love, how deep, how broad, how high/
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals' sake.

He sent no angel to our race,
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame,
And to this world Himself He came.

For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptation sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.

Matthew 4:1–11 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."* ...

In the Name of Jesus.

Well, there One for OUR side! One; and yet more...

Jesus sure got the devil all flummoxed! Us'n MEN...HAD been such easy targets! Women too—Eve took and ate and died; but Adam...Ugh!

I love Saint Matthew's progression of temptations. Saints Mark and Luke have a bit different wording and arrangement. But Matthew tells us of the devil moving from the game Us'n MEN...ALL...play: If...I...played...Gawd...how smooth things....Ugh!

Stones to bread; show-off high dive—

But the poor tempter is so bebothered and kerbobbled by THIS...ONE...MAN...that he is finally reduced to the most pathetic—can we have, as the one band urges us, ‘sympathy for the devil?’

WORSHIP MEEEE!!!!

And now we now what’s the burr under HIS saddle! He’s just upset about the rules! 1. There is a God. 2. It AIN’T you! 3. Any problems, refer to rules 1 & 2.

If them there rules apply to our god—SMALL ‘g’—in this world, the one WE have chosen as source of life and direction; it Christ gets old Nick’s knickers in a twist by not bowing with EVERYBODY else...

My dear ones: you...you...you...

Y’ALL Exasperate our old pal, the talking snake—by following the rules too! What Saint Paul calls the ‘law of Christ’ and the ‘law of faith’ and oodles of other happy things!

Hack-off God’s ape, God’s monkey...by...putting NO...EFFORT...INTO...resisting...him.....

Hear this voice again! The serpent has only ONE TRICK, one game going...it’s no game. YOU take god-ish-ness IN...HAND...!

Reach for it! Rise up to Him! Put yourself in HIS place!

Now, let’s get back to the rules...of FAITH! Of Christ! Of the Gospel! (Gospel rules! Talking like that’s gotta get on Satan’s nerves!)

One: There is a Christ; there is One over Whom our mean master has no authority.

Two: HE is now one of US! So...WE...need never be what HE is! (Unless He wants that, calls us that, reckons us THAT!)

Three: Along comes temptation; refer to rules one and two.

Saint Matthew records the Lord railing against men...

Who...

Figgered...

That....

If ANYONE was displeasing demons, it was DEM!

They'd forgot all the rules...

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter

yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹

Ugh... That whole CHAPTER is nothing but that woe.

My dear ones, it is Lent. Lent leads to Easter: the joy of the BAPTIZED! That by HIS authority...all you need is water to fall on your head and you are right as RAIN with heaven! So writes Saint Paul:

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

18Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19For 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.

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(OOOH! Saint PAUL knows how to 'irrigate' the devil, the scribes, the Pharisees...and the inside critter inside each of OUR insides, who...INSISTS...ON...REACHING...FOR...GOD!)_

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 23:1–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

So, here come their FRUSTRATION! Saint Paul tells us what the song the choir of unholy angels teaches men to sing:

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

Gotcha THERE, don't we PAUL! JESUS! HOLY SPIRIT! LUTHER!

² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ²

Your poor pastor is not playing a game here. There is nothing more joyful than this message of Christ-ONE-OF-US-YET-NOT-ONE-OF-US-AT-ALL!

Uuuhhh...

Go ahead and recognize temptation; then...I hate even to say these words...! Because I don't make you a magnet for Jesus' words of WOE! This world has ENOUGH unbearable religious folk!

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 5:20–6:11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Recognize how you are tempted. And then...Lord, have mercy on me for saying these words---RESIST the temptation—Pardon me, Lord!—Have mercy!

I guess there's no way around it. WE wanna jumble up the rules and BE what only HE can BE.

The pledge made to you at YOUR baptism into Christ is filled with the grace and peace of HIS Baptism!

HE is Son of God, King, Heaven's 'go-to'...reckon yourselves as the same—because...of...Him!

And if the Spirit of Jesus can bear with us dousing our love for God, extinguishing the flame of love for one another...

Our prayer, our hope, our confidence, as we eat His Body and drink His Blood is this:

All our EFFORTS at THIS stupid task—resisting temptation....

Heaven wants us to figure, reckon, HEAR, that God forgives us all THOSE WORKS TOO in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Wait! O...I know you know that the Bible—even the NEW Testament urges us to RESIST the devil; that he'll even FLEE from us, as we do!

Good and evil were OUT OF OUR HANDS IN THE GARDEN!

Would the One Who takes our place now place good and evil BACK WITHIN OUR REACH, OUR attraction, OUR DOING?....

You resist the devil, when you resist the one dressed in white, the holy devil, who lies to all men and says that safety with the unseen Creator lies in created hands that we see, creatures of a moment.

No no! Resist the devil and you will cheese him off!

By living by the rules of the Gospel!

One: Jesus is one of us and not at all one of us.

Two: No NEED for us to turn into what WE CANNOT BE....

Rule Three: Holy Evil one, all you can do is tempt me. I refer you to rules one and two in the Name of Jesus.