

“I Am Baptized” – Pr Jim Sprengle – First Sunday in Lent February 18, 2024

- I. **Mark 1:9-15** – previously read
- II. **Temptation is a very real part of our lives.**
 - a. Some Lutherans choose to give up something for Lent as a way to “fast” from something they enjoy and think about God instead.
 - b. I heard about a guy named Sam who decided to give up doughnuts for Lent, because he had the habit of buying a box and bringing it into work every day.
 - i. He thought it would help if he told everyone that he was not having any doughnuts until after Lent because he would be accountable to others that way.
 - ii. The day after telling all these coworkers his plan, he walks into the office with a box of doughnuts!
 - iii. All his coworkers started asking him, “What’s with the doughnuts, Sam? I thought you gave them up for Lent.”
 - iv. So, Sam tells them, “I did, but I want you to know I wouldn’t have gotten these doughnuts if it weren’t for God. You see, I was driving into work, and I knew I’d have to go right past the bakery. I just couldn’t get those doughnuts out of my mind, so I decided to pray to God for help. ‘God,’ I said, ‘if you want me to have a box of hot, delicious doughnuts, give me a parking place right in front of the bakery.’ Sure enough, I found one on my eighth trip around the block.”
 - c. Isn’t that how it goes for us and our temptations?
 - i. As soon as we know that something is off limits, we spend our time driving around the block looking for an opening to jump right back in.
 - ii. Peter uses a quote from Proverbs (26:11) to argue against false teachers... but it also relates to our topic today: The dog returns to its own vomit, and the washed pig returns to wallow in the mud. (2 Peter 2:22)
 - d. As we covered this topic of temptation and sin in our Romans Bible study, Paul wrote about his struggles in chapter 7.
 - i. He wrote about the confusion and frustration with not wanting to sin but doing it anyway.
 - ii. As soon as we are not supposed to do something, it seems like that’s all we can think about!
 - e. Also, in our reading in James today, he tells us the progression – temptation comes with our desires, and these desires give birth to sinful actions...and when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. (James 1:15)

- f. In Luther's Small Catechism, in the explanation of the Lord's Prayer and the Sixth Petition – "and lead us not into temptation"... it says that temptations come from satan, the world, and our sinful flesh.
 - i. Certainly, we can face the temptations and lies that satan brings.
 - ii. The world is full of temptations that will catch our attention.
 - iii. Yet, the most difficult problem is our own sinful flesh... in other words, we are predisposed to fall for the temptations around us.
- g. Here are just some of the temptations that we struggle with:
 - i. Worrying, unhealthy diets and overeating, too much time on social media, being lazy, gossiping, lust, money, jealousy, gambling, pornography, and mood-altering substances.
 - ii. Any one of these can lead to sin... and as James says, sin leads to death.

III. **Yet, our Lenten journey begins with the one who overcame sin.**

- a. In our Gospel lesson, Jesus was baptized by the John the Baptist, even though He had no sins or need of forgiveness.
 - i. Instead, Jesus took upon Himself our need for baptism... to be one of us...
 - ii. And then from there, after the Father's approval, Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit and tossed out into the wilderness.
- b. So Jesus spends forty days being tempted directly by satan – and Mark's Gospel here doesn't go into any detail like the other ones... just simply that Jesus was tempted by the devil.
- c. It is no coincidence that Jesus went through baptism on our behalf... and then went into the wilderness to be tempted on our behalf as well.
 - i. The connection for us is that Jesus is our forerunner – the one who goes before us perfectly, to show us what it means to be authentically human... to be a perfect person... and He began with baptism.
- d. In defeating satan, or never falling into sin over the temptations that came His way, Jesus could be the Lamb of God that John the Baptist called Him earlier (John 1:29) – meaning a sacrificial lamb without spot or blemish...
 - i. In fact, Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."
 - ii. You see, even after this forty days and Jesus' victory over satan at that point, the devil wasn't done trying to get Jesus to fall... trying to get Jesus to turn away from His Father's will to suffer and die.
- e. Jesus never once turned back... never once sinned...
 - i. The trials and tribulation Jesus faced – even the baptism that He took upon Himself were all for you.
 - ii. The love He shows for you, and me, and all people is beyond our understanding – because He faced everything satan could throw at Him – but stayed the course until He won the victory.

- f. Many people wonder about the part in the Apostles' Creed that says, "[Jesus] descended into hell" after He was buried.
 - i. This was not so Jesus could suffer more, or go through more tribulation to pay for our sins... no, Jesus made the announcement from the cross just before He died... "It is finished." (John 19:30)
 - 1. The sacrifice was complete; it was finished, and no more suffering or death was needed to atone for our sins.
 - 2. So the descent into hell? It was a victory march... as Paul says in Colossians 2, [Jesus] disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities... and He shamed them publicly by His victory over them on the cross. (Colossians 2:15; see also 1 Peter 3:19-20)
 - 3. Jesus was doing His victory lap!
 - 4. Jesus had defeated sin, death, and the devil... so that they have no real power over anyone who has faith in Him.

IV. **This victory is now ours through faith.**

- a. I know it may seem strange to claim a victory when we are still under attack... Like 1 Peter 5 says, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)
 - i. However, for all of us who have faith in Jesus... He is like a toothless lion who cannot take us away from our Lord.
 - ii. Jesus made sure of that when He won the battle... and handed over the spoils to us – the forgiveness of sins and life eternal.
- b. Do you want to know one of the best ways to avoid temptation?
 - i. Remember that you are baptized!
 - ii. Think of Jesus as He was filled with the Spirit after taking on our baptism... ready for the spiritual warfare that would come.
 - iii. We also have a baptism that fills us with the Holy Spirit, forgives our sins, and puts God's own name on us for the spiritual battles we will endure.
- c. Whenever you are attacked by the roaring lion, or any other temptation that might come your way, just say the words, "I am baptized."
 - i. That is a confession... a profession of faith that says God has claimed me as His child and redeemed me from sin, death, and the devil.
 - ii. When I remember my baptism every single day, I am claiming the victory over satan, just as Jesus did when He died on the cross and rose from the dead on Easter morning.
- d. Yes, the temptations and the struggles will continue during our lifetimes, but we are never defeated because Jesus calls us His own.
 - i. So, when you face temptation, remember this verse from "God's Own Child I Gladly Say It", our baptism hymn today... "Satan, hear this proclamation: I am baptized into Christ! Drop your ugly accusation, I

am not so soon enticed. Now that to the font I've traveled, All your
might has come unraveled... And, against your tyranny... God, my
Lord, unites with me!"

ii. Amen.