

## First Sunday in Lent (Invocabit\*) March 1, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.*

*An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

### Available on line at:

- ✦ [www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)
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### Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com)
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 12:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.
- ✦



<https://www.heartlight.org/spiritualwarfare/en/0204/>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 656/657 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 262**

**“A Mighty fortress is our God”**

**He's by our side upon the plain, With His good gifts and Spirit** "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" ... Martin Luther's (1483-1546) hymn on Psalm 46. This beloved hymn of many has been translated into more languages than any other and is sung by Christians throughout the world.

It is a fitting hymn for today's Gospel. Our Lord endured temptation for us to defeat our great enemy Satan. He is the Valiant One, the Lord of Sabaoth (Hebrew: "angel armies"), our Word, who fights for us on the plain of the battlefield of sin, death, and temptation of this earthly life.

Our Lord Jesus Christ defeats the devil with His Word, and sends His Spirit in His gifts of Preaching and the Sacraments. Although all else be taken from us, He sustains us and wins the victory.

It was likely written for the Diet of Speyer on April 20, 1529, when the German princes made their formal protest against the removal of their liberties. With this hymn Luther protested against any endeavor to obstruct the Gospel. Luther, a fine musician, also wrote the tune."

- <https://www.ielctch.org/about-sundays-music-invocabit-first-sunday-in-lent/>  
Rev. Gary W. Schultz serves as Kantor of Immanuel Terre Haute IN
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9uGNb8Zfic> Sung by the Congregation and Choir of First Plymouth Church, Lincoln Nebraska
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q04Ofdy0ERU> "We decided to shoot an impromptu video together at the Grand Canyon! ... Wildwood Strings is a youth violin ensemble based at Wildwood Lifestyle Center in Georgia."
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBhVuCcZ9GI> A Mighty Fortress filmed by Fountainview Academy as part of The Great Controversy in Rome, Italy.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
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**O.T.**— "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself "

**Psalm** — "I acknowledged my sin to you "

**Epistle** — "so death spread to all men<sup>[a]</sup> because all sinned"

**Gospel** — "**Be gone, Satan! For it is written...**"

**Genesis 3:1-21; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7**  
(Next week: Genesis 12:1-9; RCL, Genesis 12:1-4a)

*"We begin our Lenten journey with a close look at why we need to go on this trip in the first place. These very famous verses from the ancient book of Genesis point to two basic realities of our religious lives: God made us for a special task but we rejected that task and chose another of our own devising..."*

- <https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2011/03/back-to-the-beginning-as-lent-begins-john-holbert-03-07-2011> John C. Holbert professor of religion at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, and was Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology, ...retired... 2012”

## The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You<sup>[a]</sup> shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”<sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”<sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.<sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,<sup>[b]</sup> she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool<sup>[c]</sup> of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.<sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”<sup>[d]</sup><sup>10</sup> And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”<sup>11</sup> He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”<sup>12</sup> The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

<sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring<sup>[e]</sup> and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”

<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be contrary to<sup>l</sup> your husband,  
but he shall rule over you.”

<sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree  
of which I commanded you,  
‘You shall not eat of it,’  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.”

<sup>20</sup> The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.<sup>l</sup> <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

- a. [Genesis 3:1](#) In Hebrew *you* is plural in verses [1–5](#)
- b. [Genesis 3:6](#) Or *to give insight*
- c. [Genesis 3:8](#) Hebrew *wind*
- d. [Genesis 3:9](#) In Hebrew *you* is singular in verses [9](#) and [11](#)
- e. [Genesis 3:15](#) Hebrew *seed*; so throughout Genesis
- f. [Genesis 3:16](#) Or *shall be toward* (see [4:7](#))
- g. [Genesis 3:20](#) *Eve* sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* and resembles the word for *living*

*In this text from Genesis 3, we can learn a great deal about the devil both in his works and his ways. And why we as Christians should be concerned with the devil is also taught by God here.*

*On the first Sabbath Day, before the day is even over, the devil comes to corrupt the only other creatures with free will—man. The way he chooses to entice them is notable too—he possesses a serpent. Why a serpent? Precisely because it is crafty, stealthy, and shrewd: The serpent slips in where others are blocked, it stalks its food and lays in wait to strike, and it knows how to slip out of the scene before it is detected. All of these qualities fit the devil's ways, as we see in how he interacts with the woman. God uses a turn of these traits when it comes to punishing the devil, however. **“On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat***

*all the day of your life.” Just as Satan used the craftiness of the snake, now God uses the fact that the snake is a “creeping thing” to show that God will keep him in submission until the Lord’s ultimate victory: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:14-15)...*

- <https://blclebanon.org/2018/02/18/first-sunday-in-lent-invocabit-genesis-31-21-matthew-41-11/>  
Pastor Michael Miller     Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lebanon, Oregon

If someone said to you , “Is it legend, etiology, myth, saga, primeval story, theological narrative, or simply story?” how would you respond? The following document deals with those questions and takes an approach that requires some deep study and understanding of how God speaks to us though the Bible. <http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/14-2-Genesis/14-2-Fretheim.pdf> Terence Fretheim is the author of the Genesis commentary in the New Interpreter’s Bible.

The role of Eve starts many discussions for example: “Eve, malignant or maligned?...As a feminist scholar who has spent many years with the Hebrew text of Genesis in an attempt to produce a faithful word-for-word rendering in English, I wish to draw attention to several textual implications concerning Eve that might be worth consideration.” <http://www.crosscurrents.org/evetxt.htm> Mary Phil Korsak

### **Psalm 32:1-7; RCL, Psalm 32 (Psalm 121; RCL, the same reading)**

*Who knew? The ancient psalmist was a clinical therapist, saying in effect, “Don’t hold in your pain, or it will eat you alive!”*

*The author of Psalm 32 had discovered this modern truth long ago and acknowledged it to those around him: “While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (verse 3). His is a kind of teaching testimony, contrasting this deadly silence with the life-giving release of giving voice to honest confession. Note the deliberate move from “I kept silence...” (verse 3) to “I said...” (verse 5).*

*But what was the poet’s silence about? Luther, perhaps not surprisingly, saw it as pride: “I did not want to recognize or acknowledge my sin. I thought I was pious.”<sup>1</sup> Many commentators agree, though this is not the only possible reading. Might the psalmist here be echoing the terror of Psalm 77:2 (“My soul refuses to be comforted”) -- a cry shared by Jacob (Genesis 37:35) and Rachel (Jeremiah 31:15), both inconsolable over the death of their children? Could not all of them have said together, “I am so troubled that I cannot speak” (Psalm 77:4)?...*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1824](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1824)  
[Fred Gaiser](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn

### **Blessed Are the Forgiven     A Maskil<sup>a</sup> of David.**

**32** Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

<sup>3</sup> For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.

- <sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up<sup>[b]</sup> as by the heat of summer. **Selah**
- <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not cover my iniquity;  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"  
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. **Selah**
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore let everyone who is godly  
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;  
surely in the rush of great waters,  
they shall not reach him.
- <sup>7</sup> You are a hiding place for me;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. **Selah**
- <sup>8</sup> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
- <sup>9</sup> Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
or it will not stay near you.
- <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.
- <sup>11</sup> Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

- a. [Psalm 32:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 32:4](#) Hebrew *my vitality was changed*

## Listening to the Text

**1-2: Happiness is...** The heading associates the psalm with David. Careful readers have often suggested that it would fit well into the time after the affair with Bathsheba (see the heading to Psalm 51 as well as the lectionary).

These opening verses give voice to the experience of forgiveness of sin, expressed in a gathering of the four major Old Testament words for sin. Verse 1 speaks of *transgression*, from the Hebrew *pasa*. The sense is rebellion, like the rebellion of one treaty party against another (2 Kings 1:1) or of children against parents (Isaiah 1:2). According to this picture, happiness is a life no longer being lived in rebellion against God.

The word *sin* translates the Hebrew *hata* which has the sense of missing a target. The same Hebrew word appears in Judges 20:16 which tells of the seven hundred left-handed marksmen who could "sling a stone at a hair, and not *miss*." Happiness, according to this picture, is having one's life headed in the right direction, on course, no longer wrongly aimed off target.

The third word is *iniquity*, the Hebrew *awon* (verse 2; translated "guilt" in verse 5). The sense of this word is to be bent over, twisted or crooked. The word also occurs in Isaiah 24:1, speaking of the Lord *twisting* the earth and in Psalm 38:6 where a sick person says "I am utterly *bowed down* and prostrate..." According to this word, happiness is being no longer twisted or bent out of shape, but straightened out.

Finally, *deceit* translates the Hebrew word *remiyah*, which has the sense of being treacherous, or not reliable, like a weapon that backfires or cannot be depended on (Hosea 7:16 speaks of a "defective bow"). This word defines happiness as living in a manner that is honest and forthright.

In sum, according to this psalm, the person is happy who is not rebelling against God, whose life is on track, straightened out and marked by integrity.

The word *selah* most likely means a musical interlude; the word should not be read aloud.

**3-5 Confession is...** This section provides a before and after picture of the psalmist's life. *Before* confessing the wrongdoing of which the psalmist was guilty, that bottling up of guilt took a terrible physical toll. The symptoms here are psychosomatic, brought on by the person's own decision to keep the wrongdoing to himself or herself. Verse 4 indicates the psalmist's realization that a part of the problem was theological as well as psychological; things with God were not as they should be. Verse 5 points back to the joy that comes with confession and forgiveness (verses 1-2)..."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=736](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=736)  
[James Limburg](#) Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

### **Romans 5:12-19; RCL, the same reading (Romans 4:1-8, 13-17; RCL, Romans 1-5, 13-17)**

*"This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes..."*

- <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=luth&b=45&c=5> Martin Luther

*"Paul began this chapter with the ringing claim "having been justified." The circumstance that he and his hearers share is that of "having been justified," or this could also be translated "having been made righteous." He has qualified this with the words 'by faith' (Romans 5:1). The starting point, the ground of our being as believers, the basis of our identity, our most fundamental defining shape is that we have been justified by faith.*

*This remarkable state of affairs has a back story. Starting at 5:6, Paul tells the story that lies behind it all -- the story of Christ. In 5:6-11 Paul focuses on Christ's death and resurrection. In verse 12, he moves to an earlier stage of the story. Paul essentially says, "Once upon a time sin came into the world..."*

*Paul says that Sin entered through one man. He will go on to identify this man as Adam (verse 14). The result of Sin entering the world through Adam was death. Paul has been talking about how the death of Christ fixed everything. Here Paul is saying that what the death (and resurrection -- for Paul never separates Christ's death from Christ's resurrection) of Christ needed to fix was death..."*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2013](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2013) [L. Ann Jervis](#) Professor of New Testament, Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## **Peace with God Through Faith Verses 1-11**

## Death in Adam, Life in Christ

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men<sup>[a]</sup> because all sinned— <sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But 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. <sup>16</sup> And 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. <sup>17</sup> For if, 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.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass<sup>[b]</sup> led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness<sup>[c]</sup> leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For 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. <sup>20</sup> *Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,* <sup>21</sup> *so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- a. [Romans 5:12](#) The Greek word *anthropoi* refers here to both men and women; also twice in verse [18](#)
- b. [Romans 5:18](#) Or *the trespass of one*
- c. [Romans 5:18](#) Or *the act of righteousness of one*

Paul has a similar theme in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 and it was included in Handel's "Messiah".

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o\\_djBIF6-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o_djBIF6-o) Georg Friedrich Händel: Messiah 47. Since by man came death Monteverdi Choir English Baroque Soloists John Eliot Gardiner

"In our quest for human existence and meaning, we often forget where our desire to be on our own started and in Romans 5:12-19, one cannot help but hear Paul's interpretation of Genesis 3.

Of particular significance is the perennial question God raised with both Adam and Eve, when God said, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9b). Whether it is Easter, Christmas, baptism, or joining a church, the voice of God in this question should always be heard because in whatever human predicament, God calls on humanity to answer this question and also to experience the compassion of God in all of what we go through in life. In other words, it is not a question of hiding because God knows that human beings are gifted with hiding, but the message is that God wants us to be open, bring ourselves to accountability, and be assured of a God who is always following and looking after humanity.

While our human predicament cannot rescue us, just as with Adam and Eve, Paul uses the original human failure as a pathway to envision ways through which God worked in Jesus Christ to bring us back to reconciliation. It's through the death and resurrection of Jesus that God's grace becomes the space open to all who seek to live in relationship with God and one another. For the apostle Paul, authentic relationships are only possible through grace..."

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4389](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4389) Israel Kamudzandu  
Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, Saint Paul, School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo.

**Matthew 4:1-11; RCL, the same reading**  
(John 3:1-17, RCL, the same reading or Matthew 17:1-9)

*"Temptation, seduction, betrayal..."*

*Taglines of a new Hollywood blockbuster? No, just an overview of the biblical readings appointed for the first Sunday in Lent! From the Genesis story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, through Paul's exploration of how Jesus functions as a "second Adam," to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, these readings cut to the chase of what it is to be human.*

### **Matthew's Portrayal**

*Although four of the five Sundays in Lent in the year of Matthew are inexplicably made up of passages from John's gospel, Lent 1 draws us to Matthew's vivid portrayal of Jesus' temptation that sets the stage for much of what is to come in this gospel as well as the season of Lent.*

*While the temptation of Jesus is referenced in Mark briefly, the scene is considerably fleshed out in Luke and Matthew, suggesting a common source that each redacted to suit larger narrative purposes. Matthew, for instance, portrays Jesus as fasting as a righteous Jew should. He also has a different ordering of the Tempter's trials, placing the temptation to worship Satan as the culminating episode in the scene, one that calls for Jesus not just to reject the specific temptation, but the Tempter himself.*

*Taken together, the three rejected temptations not only demonstrate that Jesus is righteous according to the law but also prove his identity as God's divine and beloved son. Indeed, Satan's temptations get immediately to the core question of Jesus' identity, calling into question his relationship with God by beginning with the provocative, "If you are the Son of God..." This relationship, announced just verses early at his baptism, is now confirmed through Jesus' unswerving trust in God..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=902](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=902)  
[David Lose](#) Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

**“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 4th Chapter”**

## **The Temptation of Jesus**

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup> But he answered, **“It is written,**

***“Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”***

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you,’

and

“On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, ***“Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*** <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, ***“Be gone, Satan! For it is written,***

***“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”***

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

### **Jesus Begins His Ministry Verses 12-17**

### **Jesus Calls the First Disciples Verses 18 - 22**

### **Jesus Ministers to Great Crowds Verses 23 - 25**

***“This is the Gospel of the Lord”*** *“Praise to You, O Christ”*

“Set between the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his public life, the account of the temptations occupies a key place in the gospels. Jesus is brought by the Spirit of God into the desert and, after he fasts for forty days (a number that recalls the trials in the past life of God’s people), the tempter comes and confronts him. There are almost no descriptive features of this malevolent figure to stimulate our imagination, but instead several names to express the significance of the act: “Tempter” (cause to fall), “Satan” (accuse), “devil” (divide). It is the struggle that Jesus experiences, and not evil in itself, that is the subject of the story.

The tempter puts Jesus to the test in three areas, and attempts each time to deform his relationship with God the Father and with human beings. First of all, he invites Jesus to cope with his hunger all by himself, by turning stones into bread (v. 3). Then he asks him to manipulate God by throwing himself from the pinnacle of the temple so that God can save him (v. 6). Finally, he invites him to enter into the game of domination by offering him power over earthly kingdoms in exchange for his homage (v. 8-9). The reader feels the suspense: if Jesus gives in, he will no longer be the Jesus that we know. But each time the tempter puts him to the

test, Jesus responds directly and clearly, simply quoting Scripture passages with which all believers in Israel were familiar.

We could forget that during his life on earth, Jesus had to affirm over and over again the basic orientations of his existence, and to do so through a commitment that asked for everything from him. His ministry was based not on an obligation but on a choice, in other words on love. By his temptations Jesus is thus even closer to us, when we are tested in the basic choices of our life.”

- [http://www.taize.fr/en\\_article167.html?date=2007-03-01](http://www.taize.fr/en_article167.html?date=2007-03-01) Copyright © Ateliers et Presses de Taizé

Enjoy hearing this story from the point of view of Satan: “The Devil Debriefs: Reflections on the Temptation of Jesus”... “Satan gets shown up in this little episode. The Tempter trips up. Lucifer loses out. The Devil gets duped. The Adversary gets something I can't mention in this column handed to him on a platter. Whatever label you want to slap on this debacle, I imagine that the Devil went back to his lair and engaged in a serious self-deprecation session followed by some determined de-briefing. Here is how I imagine it went . . .”

- <https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2011/03/devil-debriefs-alyce-mckenzie-03-07-2011> Alyce McKenzie Professor of Preaching and Worship at Perkins School of Theology, United Methodist Church



- Agnus Day appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

“Many of us have seen the bumper sticker, “Lead Me Not into Temptation: I Can Find It Myself.”

Cheeky humor aside, we know that God never actively leads us to sin and probably does not actively lead us to temptation (though this need not rule out God’s ability to test our faith). God is not the author of sin and is, therefore, not eager to trip us up where sin is concerned... When we pray in the Lord’s Prayer “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,” we do so knowing up front that God is in the business of delivering us from evil and so is not luring us to sin.

Well and good. Except then you get to Matthew 4:1 where we read that no less than the very Spirit of God **led** Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Jesus was led into temptation. By the Spirit...

But this contains hope for us, too. No, God does not lead **us** into temptation. Instead he delivers us from evil. But one of the main reasons we can be sure of this is precisely because on our behalf Jesus *was* led into temptation so as to ensure that we would never face just this ourselves...”

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-1a/?type=old\\_testament\\_lectionary](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/lent-1a/?type=old_testament_lectionary) Scott Hoezee

### **Keeping a Holy Lent by Dr. Gregory J. Wismar**

“Each year on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, the liturgy of the Church calls us to begin “a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection,” when “our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.”...

Each of the seasons of the church year is observed and celebrated, but Lent, and only Lent, is “kept.” The holy season of Lent invites us to be “keepers” —the people of God who keep the fast, keep the silence, and keep the focus throughout this singular season.

#### **‘Keeping the Fast’**

The custom of keeping the fast in Lent has been part of the holy observance of the season from its very beginnings... (It brings) the 40 days of Lent with the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness in prayer and fasting, with the inference that for those who would follow Jesus, Lent is a parallel experience...

In its observance, however, the style of fasting was never to eclipse the *purpose* of fasting: a spiritual discipline with a positive purpose... In the Small Catechism and elsewhere, Martin Luther commends the practice of fasting as “fine outward training.”

#### **‘Keeping the Silence’**

Another spiritual dynamic of Lent is that it is a time to *keep the silence* in reflection and devotion. The language of Lent is purposefully quieted. The word *alleluia* is not used as an expression of praise in Lent. Our vocal and instrumental music is reflective and subdued. Purple, the liturgical color customarily appointed for Lent, is the “quietest” of the colors used throughout the church year and is associated with penitence and sorrow.

In many churches, the crosses, crucifixes, and other religious artwork is “veiled”—covered with a transparent cloth throughout the 40 days to mute their brilliance and to add a solemn tone to the worship space...

#### **‘Keeping the Focus’**

The days and weeks of Lent call us to *keep the focus* of our lives of faith on Jesus, our Lord, and to learn more of Him and His loving plan of salvation for us...In the early centuries of the Church, the season before Easter was used to teach the faith to people who desired to convert to Christianity and asked to be baptized. The process of catechesis included a time when the candidates for Baptism were questioned about their understanding of what they had been taught regarding the basics of the faith...

At certain times during Lent, the greatest treasures of the faith were shared with the candidates for Baptism, including the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. The Gospel account of the suffering and death of Jesus to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind was told simply and directly as being of the greatest importance, as it still is.

The observance of a holy Lent has a sacred purpose and can be of great benefit. As we keep the fast, keep the silence, and keep the focus of Lent, it becomes a fuller and more meaningful season.

➤ <https://blogs.lcms.org/2008/keeping-a-holy-lent-2-2008/>

\* The Sundays in Lent carry Latin names in German **Lutheranism**, derived from the beginning of the Sunday's **introit**. The first is called Invocavit, the second Reminiscere, the third Oculi, the fourth **Laetare**, the fifth Judica, the sixth **Palm Sunday**. Invocavit is based on Psalm 93.