

Sunday, March 9, 2025 – First Sunday in Lent

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Deuteronomy 1: 1 – These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan.

1-2 - When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.

3-5 - You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God:

5-10 - "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me."

10-11 – You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

1 Timothy 6: 7 – We brought nothing into the world so that we can take nothing out of it.

Cf. Hawaii – Everything – every plant, every animal, every bit of material, everything – came from someplace else.

Psalm: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

11-12 - For God will give the angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways. Upon their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Second Reading: Romans 10:8b-13

9 - If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

1-2 - Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

*The devil attacked Jesus at a point of weakness – at a time of great vulnerability.
The devil also knows your points of weakness – your times of greatest vulnerability.*

3-4 - The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

The devil attacked Jesus at His sense of self-identity.

He wanted to get Jesus to question whether He truly was the Son of God.

The devil will also try to get you to question whether you are a child of God.

The devil is jealous of your identity as a child of God, so he will attack you there.

He will attack your self-identity, your self-image, your self-confidence.

5-8 - Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

The devil had no more right to lay claim to all the kingdoms of the world than I would have the right to try to sell you the Brooklyn Bridge.

The devil could claim that right only as a usurper – a thief.

The devil was also tempting Jesus to choose the easy, less painful way, and to avoid the way of the cross.

When has the devil tempted you to choose the easy, less painful way?

What was the result? Would the easy, less painful way have worked?

9-11 – Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Again, the devil attacks Jesus by trying to get Him to question His identity as the Son of God.

Here we see that the devil knows the Bible, though he will misquote and misuse the Bible.

If the devil knows the Bible, then I had better know the Bible too, so that I will not be led astray.

12 - Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13 - When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

When was that "opportune time"? I believe in the Garden of Gethsemane, where again the devil tried to tempt Jesus to go the easier, less painful way and avoid the way of the cross.

Luke 22: 41-44 – Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.

Mark 1: 12-13 – And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Hebrews 4: 15-16 – We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.