

First Sunday in Lent
Sermon Text: Luke 4:1-13
Related text: Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm 91:9-13
Date preached: February 17, 2013

Temptations are very real. Every minute of each day we are susceptible to the tricks and deceits of the devil. Falling into such temptations can lead us into trials and tribulations that take months or years to overcome. There are times when it is easy to see the connection between our failures and our struggles that arise as a result. There are times we don't even know the reasons why it is we suffer hardship.

Then there are those times when we experience troubling times for doing the right thing. The Israelites while serving as slaves in Egypt were in many ways in a routine, albeit a hard one.

When Moses had led them out into the wilderness, the one suffering they knew was gone. It was the right thing. God had answered their cries of suffering. Yet in venturing into the unknown they grew to know new fears. They doubted God's ability and they lashed out verbally against Moses and Aaron, for they were convinced that they would die.

Many are the time in their journey that they looked for or expected an easy way out of their wandering.

That is always the temptation. The easy way out is not always the faithful way.

Through their journey, God remained faithful to His promise. God brought his people out of hardship and oppression. It was not an easy journey. It was not by our timetable a quick move, yet in God's time it was but the blink of an eye.

So what are the implications for us? Do we see ourselves wondering around confused and uncertain about our future? Do we see ourselves as a people fearing that maybe God has abandoned us? Do we see ourselves in concert with the text from Deuteronomy, that indeed the Lord has brought us to the Promised Land?

One way of looking at ourselves is to focus not on the wilderness itself, but instead focus on the truth that God has made us a part of the Kingdom. As God's chosen people there is a security that he alone can give.

“Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your habitation, There shall no evil happen to you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.” This is not to say that the journey is easy. Therein is our problem.

The Devil offers us the easy way out. We tend to think that in the midst of our hardships, there is no way out. For us, that is true. We are in bondage to sin. We cannot free ourselves. We exchange any hardship that is a result of being faithful, which the Devil cannot stand, with our own worse hardships which leads us away from God.

We are blessed however, to have the one true God who does not give up on his people. God is persistent in his faithfulness to us. There are no lengths to which God will not go for his people.

God goes so far as to enter this world himself. In the person of Jesus Christ our Lord we find one who knows temptation. We discover in Jesus, one who knows what it is like to suffer for doing the right thing.

He too could have taken the easy way out. In this reading alone from the 4th chapter of Luke there are three opportunities to take the easy path out. Yet, Christ remains grounded in the Word of God.

Even beyond the moment in the wilderness, the tempter persisted. “And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.” Such a time would come in the

garden of Gethsemane as he prays, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” There Christ remains faithful. He continues to remain faithful on the cross as there are taunts for him to come off the cross.

In being faithful even unto death, in enduring the hardship that is a direct result of our sinful nature, Christ saved us. As God raised him up from the depths of hell, the doors are opened.

They are opened for those who confess Jesus is Lord. Stated clearly in Romans 10:9, “...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

God’s Word is provided for us, to give us footing in the face of temptation. Prayer, the reading of Scripture on our own and together in Sunday school classes and Bible studies serve to keep us rooted in Christ. Here we are strengthened in our struggles for being faithful.

God’s Word is the story of His constant delivery of his people. And from those true events, we see His ability to deliver us, For the Lord is our refuge. Amen