

## A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

### "Resistance as a form of Hope" 3/1/23

*Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.'" (Mt 4:10)*

After His baptism, Jesus was taken into the wilderness, to be tested. He fasted for 40 days. Then He was tempted by Satan to turn from God, from God's will and from God's way. To combat the wiles of the devil, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy. Whenever God's people heard the Law, they remembered their time in exile, when idolatry, injustice, and unfaithfulness had led to destruction. They remembered God's deliverance of those who were not led astray, and as they reflected, they realized - resistance is a form of hope.

Satan begins Christ's temptation by addressing Jesus' feeling of human hunger. He offers Jesus the opportunity to show His power by turning a stone into bread. Proving we don't have to trust God for our needs.

We do not live by bread alone; it is not the answer to our true needs. Do we choose to believe God's words for our lives, or do we turn to the easy way and trust in the devil's slippery promises? Do we trust idols or the living God?

Satan tries to manipulate Jesus' pride, to force Him to show off. All Christ had done or would do was done for the glory of God, never for self. He even warned people not to talk of the acts they'd witnessed, this would bring forth consequences they were not yet equipped to handle.

There was a time and a place for everything, now was not the time to draw attention to Himself. He would not go to the top of the temple and, in the view of all, throw Himself off. Even though the angles could catch Him, this was not what He'd come for. It was not accolades He sought. His ego was just fine, thank you very much. God was not to be put to a test.

Christ's assurance in Himself and His purpose is then tested as Satan shows Him the earthly kingdoms and offers Him free reign, if only Jesus will fall down and worship him. This earthly reign, as visualized by the Roman Empire, wasn't even tempting to Christ.

Who wants to rule this unjust, cruel, unforgiving kingdom? Christ's eyes and His heart were on the Kingdom which is to come, the one which will be on earth as it is in heaven. So, no thank you, He declares. For "it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him with single-heartedness.'"

With that, Satan had nothing and he left. And the angels appeared to minister to Jesus.

When Jesus, who was hungry, was tempted, He tells Satan, God only can satisfy His needs. When offered fame, He remained humble. When offered the world, He choose to worship God. And God cared for Him.

Somedays we do feel life is too hard. Somedays we'd give anything for just a little bit more than we have. Then - the sun breaks into our darkness and we remember - Jesus was tempted in all ways as are we. We remember we are the children of a living and loving God.

As we journey through the wilderness of Lent, we are wise to hold on the assurance that resistance is a form of hope.

Remember, our laments are surrounded by God's promise of hope as we journey through this wilderness which leads us to Easter morning. As we wander the unknown, let us abound in hope, for God's love and forgiveness washes over our guilt and our shame and set us free.

### **Please pray with me:**

Lord of the Journey, thank You for giving to us hope so we may endure our wanderings through the wilderness. Help us to lay down those things in our lives which are unneeded baggage and to pick up new ways to serve You and love others. Your presence and Your love strengthens us to seek the path where hope abounds.

**Amen.**