

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lay Minister: Let us pray.

People: **O Christ Jesus, Lord Most High, there is no refuge for us except in You. You are our strength. In You we find protection and safety. In times of temptation, when we are overwhelmed by our weakness, give us strength through Your Word and comfort in the forgiveness of our sins through Your perfect life and innocent sacrifice. We pray through through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON **Genesis 3:1-21**

(God tells of the Fall into sin, and the consequences for all the world.)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me-- she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'"

16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree

about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. 21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 5:12-19

(Adam's trespass is countered by Jesus' act of righteousness.)

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

THE SERMON 'Struggling through the World – with Jesus' Matthew 4

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 4:1-11

(Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness.)

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

INTRO - In the history of our country there are two attacks on our people that are considered the most underhanded, diabolical, and evil even. When people think of underhanded attacks on our country and our people, they think of the recent attack in 2001, where the planes flew into the World Trade Towers, and they think of the attack in 1941 on Pearl Harbor. The thing that makes these attacks so bad, is there was no warning, or seemingly no warning. We were not at war. There was no announcement of attacks. Thousands of people were killed, to a great degree because they were not expecting an attack and did not know they had to protect and defend themselves. These two 'surprise' attacks are considered the worst!

I. Did you know today's Gospel lesson is about an attack on you???

A. Yes, this is the story of the devil, the liar, the accuser, tempting Jesus to sin in the wilderness.

1. The devil tempted Jesus to deny the vows of fasting he had made, and to turn stones into bread. This would have broken his promises at the moment.
2. The devil tempted Jesus to test God's love, by throwing himself from the temple. This would have doubted God and put God to the test, not Jesus.
3. The devil offered Jesus everything in the world, for a simple act of worship. This would have been idolotry.

B. But this temptation of Jesus was just as much an attack on you.

1. If Jesus had given in to Satan's temptations, then the world would be lost.
 - a. The Savior and Messiah would have failed.
 - b. The hope of mankind would have sinned, and His suffering and death would be to pay for His own sins, not ours.
2. Think about it, even before you were born, when you did not know it was happening, when you could not protect nor defend yourself, Satan was attacking you too, and trying to take away God's love, to take away God's forgiveness, to take away your eternal life.
3. How does it feel to be attacked, and have no opportunity to defend yourself?

C. However, when we were attacked by surprise by the devil, the devil did not win.

1. Jesus resisted the temptations.
2. Jesus acted in faith, in righteousness.
3. Jesus defeated Satan, and His righteousness is counted by God as our righteousness. Praise the Lord!
4. You see, when Satan pull a surprise attack on us, that we didn't even know about, Jesus took care of us, and he defeated the devil and His attacks.

II. I will confess to you, I worry at times. I worry about family concerns. I worry about family finances. I worry about church concerns, and church attendance, and church finances. Do you know what. Worrying is a sin because it is not trusting God to work. Even if the worst happened in any situation in my life, God could use that for my eternal good, and His glory. I

know that, so why do I worry?

A. We continue to face attacks by the devil today.

1. Some of those attacks might be temptations to sin. Perhaps a temptation to use God's name in vain, or a temptation to forget the Sabbath Day, or a temptation to act hatefully and hold a grudge against someone, or a temptation to lust, or greed.
2. Some of those attacks come, not so much from temptation, but from troubles, and the worry and doubt of God, perhaps in an illness, or loss of a job, or a bad test score.
3. Some of those attacks can come when there are problems in God's church, which, unfortunately, there have always been. We can wonder about the troubles and be tempted not to continue with God's work.

B. So here is my question; If Jesus took care of us when we didn't even know we were being attacked, why do we worry when we know we are being assaulted, when we also know His promises to be with us, to forgive us, to love us, to save us? Why do we doubt and worry?

C. I know one reason I doubt and worry, is because I'm looking at my weakness instead of God's strength.

1. When there is a disagreement at church, I often go without sleep. I think of ways to reason, to solve it.
2. But I know my failings, and I worry.
3. God is in control. He uses our efforts, but He is the one who solves these problems.

III. Last week many watched the Super Bowl game. Everyone expected the Patriots to win. They were undefeated and had the best passing game in the history of the League. But, sometimes when you know how someone will attack, you then know how to defend. The Giants's strength was their defensive line. They harassed the quarterback all day in the game, and the passing game did not work as well. The Giants won.

A. Satan has revealed his attack in our lesson. Twice he asks Jesus, 'If you are the Son of God,' trying to create doubt. He does the same to us.

B. Let me assure you of two things. First, Jesus was not only victorious over the devil when tempted in the wilderness after his baptism.

1. Jesus lived a whole life of faith and love and obedience.
2. Jesus suffered for your sins and mine, and overcame the punishment we deserve.
3. Jesus rose again, and Satan is defeated forever. Jesus has won our war!

C. Secondly, when Satan tempts you to doubt God, to doubt you are His child, to doubt God will help and deliver you, let me remind you of these verses from Romans 8:31-32.

1. **31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?**
2. God loves you so much He sent Jesus.
3. If Jesus defeated Satan, there is no problem you have that He won't take care of for you as well.
4. In fact, when you face temptation, you can do so knowing God loves

you as His child, Jesus is victorious over any problem, and in His love, God is there to forgive us when we believe in Jesus.

CONCLUSION - What is bothering you right now? To a certain degree, that worry is because there is sin in the world, that worry is an attack on you as a child of God.

Guess what, you ARE God's child. Jesus HAS overcome Satan. **If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?**