

2/21/2010

THE PSALM AND THE INVOCATION

Psalm 46

Lay Minister: 1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

People: 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains

fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

Lay Minister: 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where

the Most High dwells.

People: 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

Lay Minister: 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

People: 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Minister: 8 Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

People: 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and

shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

Lay Minister: 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will

be exalted in the earth."

People: 11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship in the name of the Lord, our refuge and strength, an ever

present help in trouble.

People: In the name of God the Father, and the in the name of God the Son, and in

the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Lord God, our strength, the battle of good and evil rages

within and around us, and our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your Word and, when we fal, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Deuteronomy 26:1-11

(God's people take heart in God's deliverance for His people of all time.)

1 When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, 2 take some of the first-fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name 3 and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our forefathers to give

us." 4 The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God. 5 Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. 6 But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor. 7 Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. 8 So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. 9 He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; 10 and now I bring the first-fruits of the soil that you, O LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. 11 And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 10:8b-13

(Those who trust in God will not be ashamed; those who call on Him are saved.)

8 . . . "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 4:1-13

(Jesus is tempted by the devil, resisting to live a holy life for us.)

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, **tell this stone to become bread.**"

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "**I will give you all their authority and splendor**, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: '**Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.**'"

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "**throw yourself down from here.** 10 For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune

time.

THE SERMON

“Resisting Temptation – Living for God”

Luke 4

INTRO - The book I am reading points out that in one way or another America has been at war since 1917. Not only did we jump into WWI in 1917, but that was also the year of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the beginning of Communism. We have been engaged in global conflicts, and the cold war lasted for over 50 years. It seems life for our country has been a constant battle, a constant struggle. The reason it seems that way, is that it is true.

- I. Many people feel life is a constant struggle. And there is a good reason. It is.
 - A. We are constantly under attack from our sinful nature, and from the devil himself.
 1. Let's just get something straight, many people don't feel the devil is real.
 2. God does not talk of the devil because he is imaginary.
 3. The devil is real. Sin in the world around us, and in our own life is real.
 4. God's people are in a constant struggle with temptation from without, and within.
 - B. Our lesson for today shows us the attacks of the Devil on Jesus at the beginning of His Ministry. It is an attack that came from two sides from inside and outside.
 1. First the devil tried to get Jesus to doubt God's love for him.
 - A. Twice Jesus is told, "If you are the Son of God."
 - B. Jesus not only is the eternal son of God, but in Jesus' baptism the Father had just told Jesus that Jesus was His son.
 - C. But the devil attacks Jesus by tempting Him to doubt his son-ship with the Father, and thus to doubt God's love.
 2. Secondly, having questioned God's love, the devil tempts Jesus to selfish action to take for himself what the devil has tried to take away.
 1. Jesus is told in verse 3, "Turn these stones into bread and break your vow. Be selfish, and satisfy your physical desires.
 2. Jesus is told in verse 6, "Worship me, and I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world and their riches." In other words, "be selfish, and take for yourself all the riches and power of life.
 3. Jesus is told in verse 9, "Throw yourself down from here." Be selfish, and make God take care of you, instead of you obeying him.
 4. Jesus is tempted with the world outside himself.
 3. I want you to think about this kind of temptation from both sides. When we go ice fishing today I hope the children catch many fish. I have learned that once the fish find the food, if you pull the bait away and put it back, they are more likely to bite. They jump at what is being taken away. That is what Satan is doing here to Jesus, pulling away God's love, and then tempting Him to take for himself what Satan seems to have taken away.
 - C. Don't Jesus is tempted and we are exempt. If Satan will tempt God's Son, let me assure you he does the same to you.
 1. Does life seem like a constant struggle? It is. You are under attack.
 2. Satan is tempting you to doubt God's love, to wonder if God loves you, even though He sent His Son.
 3. The devil is tempting you to be selfish and put yourself ahead of others, and even ahead God

II. Sometimes our battle is with something or someone stronger than we are. When we were in Hawaii we were told about the rip tides on Kauai. We were told many died last year, and 2 already this year. You can't defeat something that is stronger than you.

A. In the midst of this meditation on our enemy, I remind you that this year I am focusing on God's call to us as His children for Holy living. Jesus tells us what God wants in His responses to Satan. Verse 8 sums up God's will **'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'**"

1. Instead of doubting God we are to trust Him.
2. Because God is the ruler of all, who loves us we are to serve Him.

B. But, our enemy is stronger than we are.

1. No matter how hard we try, we cannot win this battle by our own wills.
2. As our hymnal says, we are lost and sinful people
3. Our enemy is too strong and we are too weak.

C. This battle with sin and Satan is not just a game, it is a real battle. Ultimately our sin hurts us greatly.

1. Our sin hurts our relationship with God, and separates us from our loving creator.
2. Our sin hurts our relationship with others, and increases the struggle of life.
3. Our sin takes away the joy of life, it's peace and love.
4. Our sin leads to death and hell.
5. Today's lesson is not just a parable. It is a picture of the real life battle that we face every day.

III. When little kids get in an argument, they often turn to someone stronger. They use their dad's as backup. "You can't do that to me, I'm going to tell my dad." That's because Dad is stronger.

A. Well our Dad is God the Father, and He sent someone who is stronger to fight for us.

1. You heard today's story. Jesus did not give in to temptation, even though we do.
2. Jesus took on Satan by taking our sin on the cross and paying our penalty. He died.
3. But then after taking the devil's greatest blow, Jesus rose. He is stronger than the devil and Jesus has defeated the enemy outside of ourselves.

B. While we can't defeat the devil, Jesus has. But, In Jesus God does something else. He assures us that we are God's beloved children.

1. If God the Father sent His own Son for us He loves us.
2. If Jesus died for sinners like us, Jesus loves us.
3. God's love is not something we have to wonder about. It is real.

C. So now, when Jesus calls us to **'Worship the Lord our God and serve him only.'**" we actually can do so, not because of the strength of our will, but because Jesus has won the victory and changed our hearts.

1. Because God loves us He gives us new hearts. While a perfect life is a losing battle for us, we WANT to serve God, because He sent His son for us.
2. And, when we have failed, we have the forgiveness of God. We can get up and start again.
3. By God's love He strengthens us to serve Him, rather than ourselves, with all that we are and have.
4. Because life is a battle God gives us His love in real ways. He gives us His word. He gives us His sacraments. God uses His gifts to give us faith and forgiveness, to fight our enemy within and without.

CONCLUSION - When life seems like a struggle, and it is, we can turn to the devil and do what children do. We can say, "I'll tell my Dad. My Dad will take care of Me." He already has, because He loves us. And He is with us every day, to face the battle within and without.