

The First Sunday in Lent – Year C
Deuteronomy 26: 1-11
Romans 10: 8B – 13
Luke 4: 1-13

The Rev. Lyn Zill Briggs
Church of the Resurrection
Centerville UT
17 February 2013

The 40 day season of Lent which we began on Ash Wednesday is actually a journey of 46 days. We take Sundays off to celebrate Jesus resurrection; Sundays, even during Lent, are often called Little Easters. We move through time but we also make our way toward understanding.. The season of Epiphany which just ended was also a journey. The lessons we heard worked together for us to understand Jesus identity as a gift to all peoples as a beautiful baby, as revealed to the disciples as a worker of signs at a wedding reception in Cana, and finally as revealed to his closest intimates in all his glory as Son of God on the mount of transfiguration.

Today is the first Sunday of our Lenten journey. And we see Jesus' struggling to deeper insight about what God has called him to. At his baptism. Jesus was proclaimed God's beloved, and anointed for ministry. Immediately afterwards, the Spirit leads him into the wilderness. And he's left to figure out exactly what that might mean.

The time in the wilderness serves a lot of purposes. Not only does it clarify Jesus work for Jesus himself, but the early church was able to identify Jesus with the heritage of Israel and the fulfillment of scripture.

The passage from Deuteronomy tells us that the children of Israel had to figure that out as well. They were continually being reminded who they were. Much of what we do each Sunday morning in the liturgy is remembering who we are, what God has done, and what God has promised to do for us.

We re-member our ancestors in faith. And invite them stand with us as we receive Communion each week. Even Jesus had ancestors in faith. Jesus was raised on their stories and has learned from them, now he is called upon to integrate them into his ministry. Jesus may be in the desert by himself, but he is surrounded by the ancestors of his faith and supported by his knowledge of God's word.

Having been confronted with three tempting scenarios, Jesus finds strength in scripture: the treasure of collective memory and wisdom of God's boundless goodness and trustworthiness . Jesus never was *really* alone in that desert because he knew scripture and it became the living word of God to him. It's words gave voice to his faith.

Without being grounded in scripture, we are tempted to believe that "it" is all up to us; that we can be faithful all by ourselves; that God somehow doesn't understand us and that nothing will ever be right. The study of God's word is not simply an academic exercise. We invite God's words to settle into our hearts and become part of who we are and what we do. We study the word of God so that God can transform us and move us into deeper relationship with the Holy

As a group of faithful people, recalling together the stories of God's promises and bringing them forward into our lives gives fresh purpose for our future ministry together as the Body of Christ in this place.

For the past year here at Resurrection we have been remembering the histories of people who've gone before us. In the months to come we'll be bringing to life the memory of those who called forth this community of faithful people and decided to be a congregation. All have left imprints on our lives and work.

Their stories brought to life, from the scriptures as well as from our recent past, keep our story fresh. The temptations are fresh too. No temptation is *ever* new. Just as the prophet says in Ecclesiastes, there is nothing new under the sun.

The temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness were not one time, discreet temptations, but temptations which accompanied him throughout his time on earth. Putting one's needs before anything else. The very real struggle to trust God in all things. The temptation to take the easy way and not God's way.

Think about Adam and Eve in the garden. Their *real* temptation had nothing to do with that tasty looking fruit on the tree. Their real temptation, to which they both succumbed, was to mistrust God. They allowed that mistrust to be a barrier between them and God. That led to a broken relationship with God which is the very definition of sin, and something all human beings have in common.

The most difficult temptations are the most subtle ones. Because the things we might be talked into aren't evil in themselves. Such as turning stones into bread after 40 days without food. Nothing wrong with hard work and self-reliance. Nothing wrong with comfort.

I can truthfully say I can resist the BIG temptations. For instance, as I walk around my neighborhood, I've always been able to resist breaking into a neighbor's home and carry off her valuables. I have *a/ways* resisted the temptation to tag a freeway overpass with graffiti. And I've never seriously considering murdering anyone. (Emphasis on "seriously".) You laugh, but all those things are true. Those are not the temptations that are going to get me in trouble, or damage my relationship with God.

Here are some of the temptations I face:

It is always tempting for me as your vicar, to **only** tell you that you are loved by God and to make sure you feel good when you leave this place. And not tell you what God requires of you. I'm more comfortable in this pulpit when I can make you laugh and then you'll like me. That is tempting.

It is tempting to me to take the easy road and not stir things up. To make sure that everyone is happy rather than challenged. I am tempted to think if I just work harder I can get it all done. And then I forget to take time to pray, and let things rest in God's time.

For those I ask your forgiveness.

Jesus, too, was tempted to 1) meet his own needs 2) dazzle people with what he could accomplish and 3) take the easy way. None of those are evil things. But if any of these things interfere with our being who God called us to be or doing what God called us to do, they will be sin for us. That is, they will be a barrier to growth and mission.

During Lent, during our discernment about the future, we are called to embrace an intentional life of commitment and faithfulness. It's not necessarily the most comfortable way and I guarantee it won't be the easiest way.

The Spirit didn't drop Jesus off in the wilderness, but led Jesus **to** the wilderness and **through** the wilderness. Being chosen and anointed wasn't Jesus' final preparation for ministry. He had to learn to trust God in the wilderness and so must we.

It was in the wilderness where Israel was birthed as a people. The wilderness is the place that prophets speak from. It is a place of discernment. A place where things become clear.

The Church of the Resurrection is certainly in wilderness. Not an empty, frightening, dry place but a place of discernment. As we look back on our first 50 years, and re-member what people before us did to bring about this congregation, we now have to connect that memory and make it fresh. After 50

years, defining who are we and how can we carry forward the purpose of those who went before us into the next 50 years of ministry, is holy work. But it is not going to be easy work.

We might forget whose we are and be tempted to let our needs replace our mission. We might be tempted to let our love of comfort distract us from what is really important to us, and take a short cut to discipleship. We might let our insecurities and fears manifest themselves in mistrust of others and of God. How do I know this? Because these are the same temptations faced by Israel. The same temptations faced by Jesus. The same which are always with me.

Struggles with temptations and struggles of discernment are certainly part of any ministry which is moving forward. Let us trust that the Spirit will be leading us through them.

May we be good stewards of the struggles we share. May we learn and grow from them. May the Spirit to move us through them to a place where ministry will flourish. Amen.

All of his responses to Satan were foundational for his faithfulness to God. I'm asking you to Not focus on the temptations but on Jesus responses to them today

Jesus learned in the wilderness. that there is more in life than having his needs met. Or being at the center of attention at the seat of power, and that knowing God and trusting God is worth everything.

The Prayers of the People That we may turn to God for guidance and direction as we strive to serve one another and the Church with the gifts God has entrusted to our care. Open our hearts, Lord,

To serve you with joy. That we may more easily choose to serve rather than to be served, to give rather than to take, to contribute rather than to consume. Open our hearts, Lord,

To serve you with joy.

That we may learn to more deeply trust God to provide us with all that we need. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That we may learn to see the difference between the simple things we need and the many things we want. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That we may say “Yes” to what God calls us to do, always remembering that God has done great things for us. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That, through our good stewardship, we may build up God’s kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That we may recognize the many blessings the poor and needy bring to us even as we seek to share our blessings with them. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That we may come to more fully realize that everything we have is a gift from God and we are called to generously share these gifts with all who are in need. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

That we may learn to see ourselves as God’s beloved children who have been called to work in God’s kingdom and spread God’s love throughout the world. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

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That we may find more time to pray, to give thanks for all of God’s blessings and ask for guidance in best using the gifts entrusted to our care. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy. That as we look upon the world, we may see the unseen, love the unlovable, and bind up the brokenhearted wherever we find them. Open our hearts, Lord, To serve you with joy.

Bishop Loving God, we come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all that we are and all that we have is gift from you. Speak your words into the depths of our souls, that we may hear you clearly. We offer to you this day

all the facets of our lives, whether it be at home, at work, or at school – to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy. Give us the wisdom and insight to understand your will for us and the fervor to carry out our good intentions. We offer our gifts of time, talent and possessions to you as a true act of faith, to reflect our love for you and our neighbors. Help us to reach out to others as you our God have reached out to us. We ask these things in the name of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The people remain standing for The Peace Bishop The peace of Christ be always with you. People And also with you. The Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

hoLy Communion

The Offertory Bishop Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord. Today's offering will be given to the Carl Knirk Memorial Scholarship Fund. Carl, a joyful saint of God, served as the Canon for Planned Giving and Stewardship in the Diocese of Olympia and was a long-standing member of the board of Directors for TENS. The fund will provide scholarships, at the recommendation of the Bishop, to assist people with the expenses associated with participating in disaster emergency response mission trips or to attend training workshops sponsored by TENS. Please make checks payable to TENS, indicating the Carl Knirk Memorial Scholarship Fund in the memo section. As the Offertory Anthem is sung, write your stewardship intentions on the sheet provided and place them in the offeringplate. Offertory Anthem: The Gift Jonathan & Deborah Hutchison From field and from vineyard, the fruits of the earth Are as sacraments given a wondrous new birth. So too are we changed in body and soul. O we are broken, and then we're made whole. By mystery summoned, by mystery fed. We partake of the holy in wine and in bread; And a marvelous gift we do now derive – Where once we were lifeless, we are now alive. Ever present Spirit. O, Ancient of Days. O Word made Flesh, we stand here amazed By this gift freely given, this gift undeserved. Show us all how to serve you as we have been served.

Send us out to the hungry bearing your bread. Let us carry the wine of new life to the dead; Gift-sharers, gift-bearers, to a world filled with pain. Bring us all home together to rejoice in your name.