



1st Sunday of Lent

Luke: 4:1-13

Jesus is the healer of the poor.

Jesus is baptized, and then taken away into the desert by the Holy Spirit. He is preparing for his Ministry. He is taking time away from the daily distractions to connect with God and prepare himself to fulfill his role as Teacher, Leader, and Servant. And while he is in the desert, he faces the devil.

Satan does not recognize how different Jesus is from everyone else: Satan thinks he can tempt Jesus. But Jesus did not come to fight the devil: he was already God, he was already stronger than the devil and did not need to prove it. He rebuffs Satan's offers, recognizing that as the Son of God, his role and his ministry are far greater than what Satan can envision.

Do we sometimes underestimate God? Do we think that we can bargain with Him ('Please let me get a good grade, and I will be nicer to my little sister')? Do we think we can limit God's power with our own image of love ('Not even God will forgive what I've just done', or 'What I've done is so bad, God won't even ask me to repent')?

That's not who Jesus is. Jesus calls us to truth, sees through our lack of preparation for the test and loves us anyway. He doesn't bargain and he doesn't placate or reward us for small improvements. And he knows if our Lenten offering is perfunctory, to impress someone, a minimum of effort, or an earnest effort to grow closer to him.

Use this week to focus on your prayer. It's important to ask God for the things we need, but we also need to say Thank You for his love and presence, for the people he has allowed us to know and love, and for providing us with what we need.

Make this week about how Jesus hears our prayers, sees through our bargaining and expects us to do better with his help. This can be the link to the fig tree. If we don't ask for help when we need it, how are we supposed to do better?

Discussion questions:

- **What will our family do to grow closer to God this Lent?**
- **How can we support each other in our Lenten Journey?**

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