



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Deacon Terry Ellerman
March 10, 2019 First Sunday in Lent

Reading I Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 91: 1-15

Reading II Romans 10:8-13

Gospel Luke 4:1-13

Homily

How many of you have said something, or done something, that you shouldn't have done? How many of you have done it more than once? Today we are looking at sin, and looking at temptation. If we go back in history, we go back to Adam and Eve. Remember Adam and Eve were in the garden, and the garden was almost like Heaven. They had everything they wanted, and they could eat anything they wanted except for one particular tree which was in the middle of the garden. And God had told them not to eat from that tree.

And one day Eve went by and there on that tree was a beautiful and big apple. She could look at it, and touch it, but she was not supposed to eat it. But on this particular day she went to the tree and by the tree was a serpent in disguise of the devil. He said, "Eve, look at this apple. Isn't it beautiful? Smell it. And it is will taste good too."

And Eve said, "I can't eat that apple because God said if I do I will die."

And the serpent said, "Oh, no. That's not right. The matter of fact is that the reason God does not want you to eat this apple is because if you eat it, you will have as much knowledge as he does."

"No, I can't eat that," Eve responded.

"Don't you want to have as much knowledge as God?" the serpent asked her. "Smell it, look at it."

Guess what? She ate it and what happened? Sin was brought into the world.

How many of you like to fish? And when you fish you have to have what? You have to have a rod and some string. And you need bait. It could be live bait, or it could be a "lure."

You put it in the water, the fish swims by and what happens? The fish see this lure going through the water and says, "Oh, my goodness. That looks good." And what happens? The fish bites it, the hook gets in his mouth and hopefully the man fishing catches the fish.

What this is—is a lure. And in a person’s life, a lure is something that each of us wants. Just like for Adam and Eve—this apple was a lure, wasn’t it? It was a lure by which the Devil got Eve and Adam to do something they shouldn’t do. Doesn’t that happen to us sometimes? Isn’t sin somewhat attractive to us? Is that why we are tempted to do something, and the lure looks good until you see there is a hook. If there is a hook that is not a good thing, at least not for us.

So in our Gospel today we see Jesus. Jesus was just baptized in the Jordan River, and the Spirit leads him into the desert for forty days and forty nights. Forty days is a very symbolic number and a testing time of trial. And while he is there for forty days he has nothing to eat. When he wakes up, he is hungry. How many of us have been hungry? We’d be hungry in two hours, right?

And the Devil says to him, “Take this stone. If you are the Son of God, take this stone and make it bread and you can eat.” And what did Jesus say, “No. Man doesn’t live by bread alone.” Why did he say this? He saw the lure in the hook of the bread. The Devil took him to a high place and showed him all the land below and said, “All this could be yours if you but bow down to me. All you have to do is bow down and it is yours.” How many of you would like to be a king or a queen, be the lord of power? But what did Jesus say, “No. I can only worship God.” He saw the hook. And finally he took him to the top of the temple in Jerusalem and said, “Jump down and the angels will come and get you.” And Jesus said, “No. I cannot put God to the test.”

The hook. All of us are tempted everyday, in different ways and for different reasons. We all know people who are addicted. They are addicted because they did something, or started something, and got hooked: to alcohol, or drugs, or sex, or pornography, or whatever. Is there temptation in our world? Every day. The Devil is always there tempting us every day, and when he is tempting us—he is tempting us with apples, he is tempting us with things that we like, things that we want, things that look good. But do we look deep enough to see the hook in the simpleness of what we might do?

Jesus resisted temptation. Jesus was a hundred per cent human, and a hundred per cent divine. Just like us, he was tempted. But did he take the hook and take the bait? No. During these 40 days let us ask ourselves “What are the alluring things we have in our life? What are the things in our life that are alluring that we should not do? And what can we do differently to change it?” It is not always easy. How did Jesus do it? He did it through prayer.

During lent we are to prayer more. We are to fast. We are to give alms—the three pillars that help us avoid sin and become closer to God and closer to each other. If we have something that we are doing that is sinful—how do we solve it? We solve it through prayer but we also solve it through each other. Anyone who has been through the 10-step program, or anyone who is there as an observer or sponsor, one of the main elements is what? God, and a sponsor and someone to help us to do better and live better, knowing that sometimes

we just cannot do it on our own. We need help from God, and we need help from each other.

So we ask ourselves today, “What are the temptations in our lives?” In our second reading from Paul to the Romans it says, “If we say that in our heart we know that Jesus is Lord, and that God has raised Him from the dead—then we will be saved.”

Jesus gave us the Sacraments—the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist so we continue to receive grace so we can live a good life. Life isn’t easy. There are lots of temptations, there are lots of battles, and there are lures in our life that can suck us into things that are not good for us—physically, spiritually or mentally.

So, today as we begin the first Sunday in Lent—Jesus was tempted, and so are we. We are tempted every day. Let us use prayer, alms giving, fasting and the Eucharist to help us meet and work through those temptations.

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