

First Sunday in Lent, February 26, 2023

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Better to shun the bait, than to struggle in the snare. —John Dryden

According to online sources, there once was an overweight businessman who decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favorite bakery.

One morning, however, he showed up at work with a gigantic coffee cake. Everyone in the office scolded him, but he simply smiled and explained: “This is a special coffee cake,” he said. “I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning, and there in the window was a host of goodies. I felt it was no accident, so I prayed, ‘Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let there be a parking spot open right out in front.’ And sure enough, the eighth time I drove around the block, there it was — just waiting for me!”

Someone said that although opportunity knocks only once, temptation beats the door down every day. That may be true, but this businessman was aiding and abetting in his own temptation, wasn’t he?

When we think of temptation, we usually think of those moments when we’re enticed to do something bad, unkind or even evil. But the Bible defines temptation as a “testing” or a trial of our faith rather than a moral seduction.

Take Jesus for example. When he was tempted to turn the stones at his feet into bread, who could blame him? *He had not eaten solid food for 40 days!* Eating bread after not eating for 40 days is not a bad thing — it is a *necessary* thing. The catch here is that the devil was up to tomfoolery. Although eating bread was not, in itself, something wrong, Jesus could not do it at the behest of the devil. Not doing something good, something no reasonable person could blame him for doing, was, in this case, a test of his faith. He would not do it.

Our faith gets tested, too. We also go through trials and testing, like the ancient patriarch Job, for example. All of the biblical heroes of the faith experienced testing and adversity. Yet they resisted the temptation to avoid it or run away from it.

Jesus didn’t run. He embraced the test and resisted the devil. And you know what happened, don’t you? The devil ran, just as the Bible predicts he will do every time: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord, be with me in my hour of trial. Amen.

*Blessings as you begin
this year's Lenten journey,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Matz*

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Leviticus 1-4
- Monday:** Leviticus 5-7
- Tuesday:** Leviticus 8-10
- Wednesday:** Leviticus 11-13
- Thursday:** Leviticus 14-16
- Friday:** Leviticus 17-19
- Saturday:** Psalms 22-24

Verse to Remember

*“The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.”*

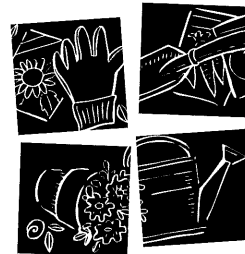
—Psalm 23:1

Think Spring!

S R E T A W L A R E N I M Y H
V N N D U O L C Y E O J T E C
R G O F T E E L S P I U U G W
H E Q W L M W E A H T C N M X
Y T G G E J N Z U F A I A T I
L R I V E R A M R O R T C L F
N P J K Q Y I O T P I E S E G
T L M N D D S O S Y P N T R I
M Z O M I T E E V E S A E A Q
D K S T L A T R R R R B A A W
W R Y I O I R K O D E W M D K
H F S Z C L A P Y C P S I C C
F L S O W X A H I L E Q E B N
B U Z V V V G K D C P A Z R W
T L Z E Y J I D E G R Q N R E

Soon, the winter snow will begin to melt if it hasn't already. Rain will fall and mud season will be in full swing! Find the following forms of water in the word search puzzle to the left:

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------|-------|
| cloud | reservoir | dew | river |
| fog | sleet | frost | snow |
| geyser | spring | glacier | steam |
| hail | vapor | humidity | ice |
| hydrate | iceberg | lake | ocean |
| perspiration | rain | | |
| artesian well | mineral waters | | |
| waterfall | | | |



Brain Stumpers:

1. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?
2. What can you catch but not throw?
3. What's black and white and red all over?

- Brain Stumpers:**
1. A towel
 2. A cold
 3. A newspaper