

## Sermon Transcript for March 6, 2022

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

So today we're talking about Jesus in the wilderness. And I have to say that there is one of the most understated comments in the entire world as far as I'm concerned at the very beginning of this passage. It says that Jesus was fasting for 40 days and for 40 nights, and He was hungry. Not even an exclamation point or anything, He was hungry. Yes, of course. I'm hungry if I skip breakfast. I'm hungry by lunch. 40 days and 40 nights, and He was hungry? He was starved. He was ready to eat almost anything that was set before Him. Or at least that's what you would think. And yet here we have Satan coming. After the 40 days, 40 nights, He's been weakened physically, mentally, emotionally, and now Satan comes in an opportune time. Now, first off, the question is what in the world was He doing for 40 days and 40 nights? Why was He out there? What's the point?

The point of the 40 days and 40 nights, again, when you deal with Jesus, and especially when you're talking about Him in the wilderness and His time on the cross, you have to remember the Old Testament. You cannot fully understand what's going on with these 40 days until you understand what was going on in the Exodus. Now the Israelites, who were supposed to be the people of God, they were supposed to be the children of God. They were called the sons of God. And they were to be a light to the nations. They were placed in Israel to be a crossroads, that was a place of commerce, and all the traveling roads went through Israel so that Israel would influence the entire world. Everybody had to pass through Israel at some point.

Well, they did not quite do that well. In fact, they failed pretty miserably in it. So even though they were supposed to be the sons of Israel, we needed something better. You know, as the Old Testament promises, the descendant of Eve would bruise the head of the serpent, or of Satan, and that Satan would bruise his heel. Well, the children of Israel, they failed to do that very well. In fact, they pretty much joined with Satan, along with Adam and Eve. "Oh, this looks good for food and it's able to make us wise and equal to God. Let's do it. Even if God has said, 'No,' we're going to follow it anyway."

And we're not going to go into the blame too much into, with Adam and Eve, although I do want to point out, Adam did not actually blame the woman. He didn't point fingers at the woman. He said, "This woman that You gave me." See Adam wasn't blaming Eve and pointing the finger at Eve. He was pointing the finger at God and saying, "God, you messed up. You didn't get it right. You didn't create this proper situation." That's pretty bold, I must say. And the Israelites followed the path of Adam as well, pointing to God and blaming Him half the time. Or if they weren't blaming Him, they were grumbling and complaining. One or the other. But anyway, they were in the wilderness, and they were supposed to go into the promised land. They were supposed to conquer it in the name of God, allow God to go forth and to follow after Him and He would lead them to victory.

Instead, they heard the spies' report and they said, "I don't think so." And they doubted the Word of God. They did not believe God's Word. You see this theme coming out throughout all these words. They did not believe the Word of God. Same thing with Eve. What were Satan's words? "Did God really say don't eat of any tree in the garden?" Now, obviously He didn't say any tree. But Satan planted that little seed of doubt and Eve listened to the serpent, listened to Satan. And Adam's not off the hook anywhere either, because he was

sitting there right next to her. He just didn't do anything. He just watched the situation unfold and says, "Huh, I wonder what's going to happen?" And then Eve ate the fruit and he said, "Well, she ate it. It looks good. I'll do it too." No thought. No process. No, "Hmm, I wonder what the Word of God actually said? Should we be doing this?" Nah, he just followed along. So both of them are pretty much at fault there. We're not going to push blame on any one or the other.

So the Israelites, they doubt the Word of God. And so God sends them out into the wilderness 40 days. With the spies in Israel? Well, 40 years in the wilderness until this generation is wiped out. We're starting over again. But even that did not create a faithful people, because they were not the true children of God or the true child of God, should I say, the true offspring of Adam and Eve, the true son of Abraham. That was Jesus. Jesus was the one who would fulfill what the Israelites were incapable of doing. And we see that in these 40 days in the wilderness. He is completing the path that the Israelites took. Their 40 years is represented by His 40 days. And He in essence is kind of wiping the sand clean of the presence of the Israelites and putting Himself and putting His imprint there, that He is the one who is going to fulfill what the Israelites and all others could not. He steps in our place.

And we hear that throughout the entire Old Testament when we see Jesus coming back, including His sacrifice on the cross, His shedding of blood. You see in the Hebrews, it talks about us having a great high priest, a high priest that sympathizes with us, who understands us, who walks in our place, who has been tempted in every way that we have been tempted. And so He kind of erases the presence of Israel and He puts Himself as the true Israel, as the Son of God, so that He might fulfill what the people were unable to do.

But not only is He a high priest and what does a high priest do? A high priest offers sacrifice. A high priest offers the blood of the lamb for the sakes of the people. He goes into the Holy of Holies once a year to offer the sacrifice of redemption so that the sins of humanity, of Israel, of Israel might be covered for a year. And yet this is not just a high priest. This is the great high priest. And not only is He the priest, but He is the sacrifice as well. He puts himself in the place of the priest. He puts himself in the place of Israel. And He puts himself in the place of the sacrifice because none of that can be done as well and perfectly as it is done by Jesus Christ.

He does sympathize with us. He does know what it means to be tempted, and yet He is without sin. And so we can draw close to the throne of God. We can draw near to God in confidence because He has stepped in our place as well. He has replaced our guilt with His perfection. He has replaced our rebellion with His perfect obedience. He has replaced our sin with His holiness. And so He has become the true Israel, and we can put our confidence and our hope in Him. So that's what He is doing in the wilderness. He's replacing the Israelites. The 40 days represents the 40 years, only He did this without sin.

And then Satan comes and tries to pervert the Word of God. But how does Jesus confront Satan's words? The same way that Adam and Eve ought to have and failed. And let's face it the same thing that we should do, and often fail. When we are faced with temptations and trials, a lot of times we try and muscle it through it, try and figure out how to do the right thing, and work hard. But what Jesus says is the first thing we do is go to the Word of God. Now, eventually we get to the Word of God and we pray. But usually it's after our efforts have failed and we'd gotten ourselves into a little bit more trouble, and then we realize, "Oh, maybe I should go to God." But Jesus says, "Go to God first. Rely upon the Word." So when Satan tempts him to turn the

stones into bread, He says, "It is written. Man should not live by bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God."

We are sustained daily with the daily bread of life, with what we eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And Jesus Christ says that the Word of God is the same sustaining force, even more so than the bread. So if we break bread every day, several times a day, what does this say about our dwelling in the Word? Our focusing upon the Word? Our reading the Word? If it's to be so much a part of our daily routine that it's as if we were eating three meals a day, the Word of God needs to be rich and in front of us at all times so that we can know what it has to say.

Eve, in theory, knew what the Word of God said, but she added to it. Satan asked his question and she says, "No, we can eat of all the trees of the garden, but that one tree in the middle, we cannot eat, nor can we touch it." Now does it make logical sense? If I don't touch the fruit, I'm not going to eat the fruit. That makes logical sense. The problem is this is not what the Word of God said. We need to be careful not to follow our own logical conclusions. Because God's wisdom is foolishness to man and our wisdom is foolishness to God. We need to go first and ensure that the Word of God is truly saying what we think it's saying. Because only then will it nourish us and sustain us through the trials of this world. Because even as we sung In A Mighty Fortress, Satan is with craft and dreadful mite. He arms himself to fight. On earth he has no equal. That is true today. Satan has no equal on earth.

I cannot fight the temptations and trials of this world by myself. But, as it says a little later on, one little Word subdues him and that is Christ. When I rely upon the Word of God, as Jesus Christ did, every Word that comes from the mouth of God, then I can be sustained for daily living. Then I can be sustained for life, because Christ has put himself in our place. And He has done that from the very beginning. God has consistently covered our sins, protected us and guarded us from our nakedness and our rebellion against God. Notice in chapter three. Yes, God gives curses to the people, childbearing and working the earth and it's going to be struggle and trial. There's going to be conflict and strife between husband and wife. All of these things are going to be there because of our sin. He offers a Word of promise, the bruised head and the bruised heel. This is a promise of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus Christ. But I want to focus on one section at the end of Genesis that you may not have seen

The very last verse. "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." Where did these garments of skins come from? Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, nice big leaves. Hopefully they provide a bit of coverage, but they weren't permanent. They didn't last. But God clothed them with skins to make garments from. Skins of animals. Probably of sheep, one would think. And where did these skins come from? God's sacrifice, shed the blood that He created to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. And then as high priest, He sheds His own blood, not His creation because His creation could only cover the nakedness. It couldn't deal with the spiritual sin. That required the covering of garments of the blood of the Lamb. Now, we are clothed in the righteousness of God. Though our sins were as scarlet, they are washed as white as snow in the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb, not this lamb, but the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world.

See ever since we rebelled, ever since we ate the fruit, God has been covering us, covering our nakedness, covering our sin, providing for a means by which we can cry to Him in hope. Because He is our great high priest. He does understand the struggles that we face. And He has overcome them all for His sake. And so

therefore we can draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. We know that we can receive mercy and find grace and help in time of need. And let's face it, this is a time of need if there is any. This world is crazy and it's getting worse by the hour.

Of course it's always been that way since the fall. And we ought not to be surprised that it will continue to be that way. But we have grace and mercy from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has covered us with His blood so that our sins are not just covered as the nakedness of Adam and Eve, but our sins are actually taken away.

As God describes it by the grace of God that our sins are cast into the sea of forgetfulness. God doesn't cover our sins, He forgets them. Because all He sees, He doesn't see our footprints, He doesn't see the footprints of the Israelites in the sand. He only sees Christ. And in our baptisms, we were adopted into the family. And so when He sees us, He sees a child of God, saved by grace, through the power of Jesus Christ. And He forgets that we are sinners and all He sees is the righteousness of God.

May His grace and His mercy and His peace be and abide with you always, now and forever more, unto life everlasting. Amen.