

## Lent #1

3-6--2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

### Celebrate (Introduction)

“These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God’s grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God’s love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Opening Hymn:** [“Bless Now, O God, the Journey”](#)

**Psalmody:** Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,  
<sup>2</sup> will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust.”

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,<sup>[a]</sup>  
the Most High your habitation,  
<sup>10</sup> no evil shall befall you,  
no scourge come near your tent.

<sup>11</sup> For he will give his angels charge of you  
to guard you in all your ways.

<sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder,  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

<sup>14</sup> Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.

<sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble,

I will rescue him and honor him.

<sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him,  
and show him my salvation.”

**Hymn of Praise:** [“O Christ, Our Hope”](#)

**Prayer of the Day**

“O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land, Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.. Amen.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Deuteronomy 26:1-11](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Romans 10:8b 13](#)

**The Gospel:** [Luke 4:1-13](#)

**Hymn:** [“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”](#)

**The Message:** ([Video](#))

Today we revisited the familiar story of Jesus’ forty day journey in the wilderness with Satan trying to tempt Him. Forty days – why was it not a month or six or seven weeks? Why forty days? The same question could be asked about the forty days and nights of tumultuous rain in the story of Noah and the ark? Or when Moses was on the mountaintop for forty days receiving the law and the Ten Commandments? Of course what follows was the Israelites forty years in the wilderness before going into the Promised Land. Jonah warned Nineveh for forty days before its fall. All in all forty is mentioned some 146 times in the Bible. Just a side note 40 weeks is the normal time span for a human pregnancy.

So what is it about the significance of forty? First many scholars believe that it was merely a word which meant “many” like we may use the words dozens or umpteen and doesn’t mean a specific number of days or years. But while this may be the case others have said that it always had a specific meaning of a time of judgment and testing, while others say there is evidence that it means a time of probation and trial. Still others find it to mean a time of hardship and trouble. Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions all place an importance to the word forty as well as various other numbers.

Regardless, it follows that Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness were not just an ordinary retreat but had all the makings of the tradition elements of the Jewish traditional thinking. Jesus was in a time period in which He was being tested by the temptations and the lure of evil or Satan. He was confronted with the normal human temptations of power, fame, and earthly glory which of course would have destroyed his very core of being and message. To yield to even one of the temptations would have been a stepping stone leading to giving in to the next and then the next and so on. Soon his life would have been controlled by the very opposite of the Good News which he came to live and reveal to us. To give into these temptations would have meant that he would become the very messenger of Satan.

The testing and temptations came at a most vulnerable time for Jesus. He was in a state of fasting which would have left him in an ever increasing state of hunger. During that time of

forty days He must have often wished to have cheated with the whole reason for fasting being corrupted. Fasting is supposed to be that time which the mind concentrates solely on the matters of the spirit and not of bodily needs.. It is the time for cleansing of the mind and body. Therefore, at the end of the perhaps symbolic forty days Jesus physically was very vulnerable to the words of Satan. "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered with this most meaningful and true statement. "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" In other words the physical part of life is not the whole story of life for there is the spiritual side also.

With each temptation which Satan presented Jesus responded in the light of His first answer. There is more to life than the physical things in life which man has chosen to be important but in the long run turn out to be devastating. If this was a time of hardship and trouble, a time of testing, or even a time of probation, Jesus left that wilderness in being victorious over those forty days. Although victorious in the wilderness at that time, in many ways His forty days would continue. He would have to continually face the testing of the authorities throughout His remaining years. He would end up in the Garden of Gethsemane being tested and tempted again and then standing before Pilate in order to face judgment. Finally, being crucified which seemed to end His long forty days. But like His experience in the wilderness. He ultimately overcame all the testing, trials, hardship, and troubles which life - His Forty Days- had presented, when He overcame death with His being resurrection from the dead. This would be His moment of glory which would in fact become mankind's hope to endure all those forty day lifetime experiences.

There is little doubt that sometime or another, everybody, in one way or another, will have or have had, their forty days in life during which they are tested through times of troubles and hardships. During these times we don't think our circumstances will never end. Their just never seems to be that light at the end of the tunnel. Through it all we may have to endure suffering which almost blinds us to any positive outcome. Through it all we must be reminded that forty days is not endless for through hope we find the endurance and fortitude to break into the light of a new day. This is the message of hope which we discover through the life, message, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This is the hope which we have regardless of how bleak our situation may be.

Today, we find ourselves as a society, nation, and world in the midst of our forty day experience. Not only are we still feeling the dwindling effects of the pandemic but the terrifying reality of a war which not only is seeing cruel and purposeful killing of innocent people, but the threat to a nation and people of losing their freedom. The evil which is being displayed is a reminder that certainly Satan is alive and well and his influence is being lived out within those who are blinded to any compassion or love for others. Unfortunately the Ukraine is not only the case of experiencing the devastation of war. Wars are lingering on in Africa and the continuing threat of war Middle East most of which are scarcely reported but which have innocent human lives being killed or suffering the pains of just surviving.

The outcome of our forty days is going to be the result of the world being tested. Our resolve to be unified with the wisdom, courage, and conviction to overcome and be victorious over the powers of evil, death, and destruction, must continually be renewed. The forty days will end and the hope which we must continually live for is that the power of love will prevail. This will be so only if we stand up and not be content to yield to the temptation not to live the sacrifice which maybe demanded of us which. Each one of us is a vital part of the world's hope for the future.

It is most relevant that in reality we now enter the forty days of Lent for we are in the midst of a wilderness journey which will determine the future for many years to come. For centuries Christianity has set these days apart even in the midst of some of most horrific acts of mankind. Throughout these many centuries it seems as though different observances have been emphasized. During the Middle Ages repentance and penance was emphasized to the point of monks physically abusing their bodies as a signal of paying penance. The body covered with sack cloth and ashes were signs of repentance at one time The lingering observance of the Ash Wednesday imposition of ashes is the outcome of that observance.. During other times fasting of some form has been prevalent. But whatever the observance it all seems to have begun out of the desires to prepare oneself for the news of the empty tomb and be able to celebrate the hope of "He is risen."

This has meant that underlying whatever observance we may take there is the fact that Lent is that time to reach deep down into our lives to come to an honest realization of who we really are. This then is a time when we try to become honest with ourselves by discarding those traps that we may have fallen into which may seem to have enhanced our egos or misguided thinking but have only led us nowhere. It is the time to renew our lives in the hope which God's merciful love can and does give. It is time to renew our lives in order to face all obstacles and sacrifices which we may have to make so that this love may live not only in our lives but in the life of the world in which we live. We are in our forty day's journey into the wilderness of our lives and it is up to us to be able to come forth victorious and to be able to come to joyously celebrate "He is risen!"

**Anthem:** ["Song of Peace" Agne G.](#)

**Offering\*:** ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

### **The Prayer**

Eternal Father, we find ourselves in a situation in which our answers seem to be inadequate to stop the horrendous killing of innocent lives and massive destruction. Our human knowledge can be clouded and distorted by our limitations and mindsets. Open our minds and the minds of leaders throughout the world to find that wisdom to end this senseless and evil circumstance in which we find ourselves. Lead us away from actions which will only escalate and broaden

that which is now a contained war. But show us the way to de-escalate and stop the war which now exists. During this Lenten season may we discover “the peace which surpasses all understanding.”

Ever present and loving Father, we are now not only experiencing our weakness in continuing to resort to warfare other parts of the world, but now also in the Ukraine. This war threatens to widen which could present massive death and destruction throughout the world. Enter the hearts and minds of leaders and people everywhere with your loving and compassionate wisdom. We especially pray for all those who are experiencing the pain and suffering which war invokes upon the most innocent lives. Open our lives to see that although we may not agree with someone, they are still one of your children and are to be treated as such. Never let us waiver from living the witness to your example of mercy. Give us the strength and wisdom to forge a path to peace.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Eugene Ash, Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, Leo Dickel, Dotty Gibson, Nancy Griebel, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, David Kieffer, Pam Lambert, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, the McNamara family, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Brenda Penyak, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Esther and Buck Trautwein,, Pastor Jack,  
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine upon you;  
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters  
Live on knowing God's love,  
The joy of living this life of love,  
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.  
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

**Closing Hymn:** [“Blest be The Tie That Binds”](#)

#### **Announcements**

Lenten Soup & Bread Supper and Discussion – March 10, 6:00 PM  
Please note that Masks are required while in the church building.

\*Offering to be sent to

Robert Brackbill  
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane0  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church  
9122 Sybert Drive  
Columbia Hills  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)