

# Preaching Copy: Luke 4:5-8 "Who Has the Authority?"

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent  
Sunday March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Text: Luke 4:5-8

<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

## Exegetical Statement (the text's context)

Jesus has been filled with the Spirit and has been declared by the voice of the Father in Heaven that He is the Beloved Son of whom the Father is well-pleased. That stated identity and the Father's declaration of obedient pleasure in His Son will be tested over the next 40 days. Jesus turns away from there and at the leading of the Holy Spirit heads into the deserted wilderness with the express purpose of taking on Satan in His humanity. He is continuously tempted throughout that time, Israel condensed into one, where Israel failed repeatedly Jesus would hold fast obediently to God's Word as given to Moses. At His weakest point physically He is tempted to repeat the sin of Adam and eat against God's will and make food more important than obedience just as Israel did. Jesus quotes from Moses' warning to Israel in his final sermon that God humbled them with hunger so they would know His Word and command are their source of life now and eternal life to come. Then the devil shows Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited world, claims he has the authority over them and can give them and their glory to whomever he chooses, like to Jesus, if he will bow down and worship him. Jesus responds citing Moses' farewell speech but points it directly at the devil. Jesus says "You (singular) shall worship the LORD your God, and only Him shall you serve." Jesus will not succumb to our temptation to worship created things, especially not the temptation that caused the fall of Lucifer. Then the devil takes Jesus to parapet wall surrounding the roof of the temple. This time the devil himself cites Scripture telling Jesus to prove He actually is the Son of God by jumping off, since if He is who He says He is the angels will come and protect Him from any injury. Jesus responds once again citing Moses' farewell sermon that God's people are to believe His promises by faith and not test Him beyond the proof He provides. With this time of testing completed according to the Father's will and design the Devil withdraws until a fitting opportunity presents itself during Jesus' passion

## Focus Statement:

Jesus came to earth to bring the reign and rule of God back to His creatures. He will not make a deal with the devil. Instead, He came to defeat the devil's hold over us by bringing he reign and rule of God back into our heart's minds through His salvation work. He showed perfect obedience in our place, and removed the record of our disobedience so take away his dominion over us

## Function Statement:

### Why it's important to know:

We buy into the devil's lie that he has authority over all the kingdoms of the world. We see the war that is going on in Ukraine and worry that the Lord is not in control or is limited in what He can do. But the devil is a usurper of God's perfect creation. When Adam and Eve sinned, they gave over their right of dominion to Satan

### What the hearer should do as a result:

See Jesus on the throne overall, and Him bringing His reign and rule to the hearts and minds of each person who hears the Gospel, with the goal of a personal relationship that lasts forever.

## Subject Sentence: Christ's kingdom is Him winning the world back

## **Introduction:**

Well, it's the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent, and that means our Gospel Lesson focuses on Jesus Temptation in the wilderness. It's a familiar subject since it's mentioned in all three synoptic Gospels which we rotate through in our lectionary readings. Mark has only a brief mention, but Matthew and Luke give us the detail of the three temptations. This time around as I read through Luke's account, these verses jumped out at me: **Luke 4:5-7** <sup>5</sup> **And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,** <sup>6</sup> **and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.** <sup>7</sup> **If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."** What grabbed me initially was the devil's claim that he has authority and control over all the kingdoms of the world. That can't be right; is it? Certainly, that's one of the devil's lies that he tells; isn't it?

But then I looked at what is going on in the Ukraine: the war machine killing innocent civilians, the horror of it all, Russia's statement that current sanctions are considered an act of war, and that establishing a no-fly zone would amount to active participation in the conflict in their eyes. Then there are the concerns we have with China, North Korea, the mess in Afghanistan, as well as COVID still rearing its ugly head here at home, and it does seem like the devil has control and authority, and that he is using it on a number of fronts. Who really is in control? Isn't God in control? And if its God, why doesn't He do something about all this evil rearing its head in the world? All this may make us wonder if maybe he can't, or won't do anything about it.

## **God's Dominion and Authority**

**Genesis 1:25** **Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."**

Where did authority for all things come from? From the LORD, our Trinitarian God who created all things in heaven and earth. He created mankind and gave to them dominion: the authority to manage all things on earth. Since mankind was created in God's image, we were uniquely able to exercise that authority in a God pleasing way, one that gave all honor and glory to Him. And Adam and Eve did, until they fell into sin and tarnished that image of God that was given to them. To this day we still have the call to manage God's creation, but we do so not as people shining forth God's perfect image, but instead we manage things for our own sinful selfish benefit. It's that sinful selfishness that lies behind Russia's desire to take over and control Ukraine. It's behind all the aggression that countries in the world assert on one another.

So, how does the devil figure into it? He does have the power to possess people, and that still does happen in this day and age. But that isn't necessary for him to move peoples and nations in the world to do his bidding. He hates God. The last thing he wants is for God's will to be done. The sinful hearts of mankind always choose the opposite of God's will. His authority and control over things in this world are enhanced by mankind's desire to please themselves and for each person to do as they want instead of what God wants. All the devil has to do is send a demon to perch on a world leader's shoulder and whisper his half-truths and seductive lies in their ear.

Does that make God powerless? Remember that this dominion mankind has been given is not really ownership. We are to manage what belongs to someone else, and everything still belongs to our Creator God. He is still at work to sustain this broken world. And He has the power to intercede when He wants to change the course of human history according to His plans and purposes.

**Deuteronomy 26:6-9** <sup>6</sup> **And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor.** <sup>7</sup> **Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.** <sup>8</sup> **And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders.** <sup>9</sup> **And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.**

Think back to our Old Testament Lesson. The devil had Pharaoh's ear making him think that his power and the false gods of Egypt were more than a match for Israel and its God. The devil pumped up his ego, encouraging him to go back on his promise to let God's people go after each plague was removed. But God's mighty hand was far stronger than any authority Pharaoh or the devil could muster. God arranged for His people to leave Egypt, not sneaking out in the middle of the night like slaves on the run, but walking out with the blessing of the Egyptians who were more than happy to give to them valuables as an encouragement to leave.

And God led them through the desert, overcoming the desires of their sinful heart as provoked by the devil, keeping them in faith toward Him until they reached the border of the Promised Land where Moses spoke these words today. And what was the LORD about to give them? A land flowing with milk and honey, plenty of food to eat, crops to grow, vineyards already planted, cities already built. He was giving them a land inhabited by other nations. It was inhabited by them but didn't belong to them. It belonged to the LORD, and He could give it to whomever He desired. And these nations lost their right to live there when they refused to turn and believe in the One True LORD God.

While Russia and the other evil countries have weapons far more powerful than Egypt had, not even they can stand against God as He works out His will. Artillery, tanks, thermobaric vacuum bombs, not even nuclear weapons can stand against, deter, or thwart the God whose power and might are far above it all.

## The Devil's Offer And Jesus' Response

**Luke 4:5-7** <sup>5</sup> **And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,** <sup>6</sup> **and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.**

So, since God still owns all things, controls all things, and can exert His will over all people, including unbelievers, how much of a temptation was this? By delivering all authority over to Jesus that might seem as if the devil would've ceased all his influence on mankind's pursuit of destruction and evil. You could make an argument that if the devil immediately conceded all things to Jesus, then He and His disciples would never have had to suffer and die as they worked to bring the reign and rule of God to bear on the world. One quick move and it all belongs to Jesus, and that evil in the world now would never have happened.

The problem here is it's the devil talking, the father of lies. He may have usurped authority over these kingdoms, but it doesn't really belong to him, and it's not his to confer upon anyone else. And he is not the one we should ever trust the promises he makes.

**Luke 4:7-8** <sup>7</sup> **If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."** <sup>8</sup> **And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."**

And then there is this statement by the devil in verse 7: "***If You, the Son of God, will worship me, a being that you created, then it will all be yours.***" Here we see the sinful, evil, arrogant pride of the devil on full display, the fallen created being demanding worship and obedience from its Creator. It was this sinful desire and pride that caused the devil's downfall in the first place as he desired the worship of God's most precious creation, mankind, but was not given it. Therefore, he tempted them to join him in sinful rebellion, and Adam and Eve obliged. And you and I, when we sin, join with them.

Adam and Eve may have fallen for the devil's lies and enticements, but not the Son of God. He knew to whom belonged all worship and praise. Throughout His time of temptation in the wilderness He worshiped His Father by remaining completely obedient to the Father's will, plan, and desires. Jesus came to serve His Heavenly Father by being our champion over the sinful desires of our heart and the enticements to sin that come from the devil. He came from the Jordan into the wilderness to beat the devil at his own game and did it by the power of God's Word at the mighty hand of the Holy Spirit. By defeating every temptation, He earned for us eternal life.

But what about our lack of obedience throughout our life? What about our inability to say no to the temptations of our sinful heart as spurred on by the enticing voices of the devil and his demons? Jesus could fight off sin by quoting Scripture, but there are times when we know what God's word says, but we don't do it. We may say the right thing, but our actions don't match our words. And then there are those situations we face when we can't find the right verse to throw out there to cancel out temptation. What worked for Jesus won't always work for you and me because we are not Him.

That is the reason why Jesus had to bring His reign and rule to bear upon the world the hard way. It's why He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer and die to remove from us all those times we fail to obey. And He rose again to prove to the whole world that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins. Now the devil has no foothold on you and me. Yes, we listen to our sinful hearts and the devil's tempting speech and sin, but Christ has already taken care of that and every other sin. All of our sinful failures are washed onto Him in our baptism, and He took them all to the grave with Him. The devil has no authority over you anymore.

**Romans 10:8b-9<sup>8b</sup> "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

That's the reign and rule of Christ overcoming the authority and rule of the devil. That's the reign and rule of Christ being delivered to each and every person through the Gospel Message that is near to you right now, in your ear through the words that I preach, in your mouth through the Sacrament of the Altar, and in your heart where the Holy Spirit has set up that reign and rule by faith and keeps it alive despite all the work of the devil. And He assures you that when you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, your salvation is assured and secured.

The devil wants to trick and poison people into following him into everlasting hell because he hates us and wants us to suffer with him forever. But Jesus wants a personal and intimate relationship with you, now in this life through His reign and rule in your heart, and with Him forever in eternal life. And that's what He desires for all people, even those who are committed to evil plans and purposes today

## **Conclusion**

Looking at all the problems in our world today, and there certainly are many, it's easy to buy into the devil's lies that he is in control, and the situation is hopeless, and there is nothing God can or will do. God is at work right now through Jesus Christ and His Church. He is at work changing hearts and minds on both sides of the conflict and is doing that through that same word that is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart. He is at work even in those who don't believe. He is at work even in the devil's most dastardly plans. Our LORD doesn't always explain why the horrors of our age must come about. Jesus did tell us there would be wars and rumors of wars, that the hearts of man would turn cold, that there would be disease and natural disasters. But Jesus showed us in His life on earth the absolute power and authority He has over the devil and all the evil in the world. He defeated its power over you and me on the cross. And all that He allows to happen will serve His desire that all who are called to faith will stand in faith with Him on the Last Day, cleansed of sin, and ready to enjoy an eternity free from all that haunts us in this world. Amen.