

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
 Lent I
 February 26, 2023
 rmceely+

Get thee hence Satan

The Church is sometimes supremely practical.

Here we are 4 days into our Lenten discipline

And the propers of the day

The Collect and Gospel in particular

All speak of temptation.

Haven't we all been tempted to break our Lenten discipline?
 The 91st psalm is the framework of the Holy Communion Service
 on this First Sunday in Lent.

It runs through

the introit, the gradual

the offertory sentence, and

the communion sentence

as well as the story of the Temptations of Christ.

Ever since the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Old
 Testament in third century BC,

The 91st Psalm has been attributed to David.

It is a psalm about danger and times of exposure

Or encirclement by the powers of evil.

Something David knew in his life.

So very appropriate on this day.

However, the danger and encirclement that we know

Is not military as in David's time

Rather, it is a battle waged by the devil for our souls

Harmful in this life but deadly in the next.

The devil's dangerous tactic is temptation
 The topic of the day.

Let's use the temptation of Christ, today's Gospel
 To see how the devil deploys temptation in our lives.

The attack is subtle.
 He knows the physical vulnerability of Our Lord at the end of his
 fast.

And so that is the point of the attack
 The place we are most vulnerable.

We must, each of us, beware of our vulnerability.
 Because that is where satan will attack; where temptation will
 be most effective.

In the battle for Jesus' soul
 Satan's weapon of choice
 is scripture.

In fact, an illusion to the 91st psalm
 Which he will use later.
 He says:

'Use your power,
 change this stone into bread'

God does not want you to starve,
 To become unable to carry out His mission
 He would want you to use your powers to save yourself so
 you may save mankind.

You can do it
 Change this stone into bread
 That you may live and serve God.'

Satan offers temptation, a corrupt means to achieve God's end.
 Subtle.
 Cunning
 Deceptive.

It worked in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve
 Condemning mankind to original sin
 But Jesus will not be fooled
 For us the means is every bit as important as the ends.

Jesus sees the trap, steps over it and cites Deuteronomy,
 The second telling of Moses
 The entire passage is this; Moses lecturing the children of
 Israel:

“And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger
 And fed thee with manna, . . .
 That He might make thee know
 that man doth not live by bread only
 but by every word that proceedeth
 out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live”.

Point taken:

Those who have chosen Lenten disciplines involving food
 And suffer hunger
 Are learning that we do not live by food alone
 But by every word of God.
 But isn't it tempting to think that God wants you to eat the food
 That tempting delicious morsel
 you have chosen as your fast?
 Satan even cites, or misquotes scripture to try to tempt you.

Satan is defeated.

But undaunted.

Next he tries to derail, deflect the power of the crucifixion and
 resurrection;

From a high place on the temple in Jerusalem
 Satan suggests a demonstration of God's plan
 ‘Jump, and the angels will save you
 Everyone will see the miracle and know that you are the Son
 of God, the Messiah,

You will instantly achieve God's plan
 A better
 Faster
 and far less painful means to His goal
 He will love you for it.
 You will be a hero'.
 It's classic Satan
 Trust me
 I am one of you
 Helping you and helping God
 To achieve what God wants
 The devil recites the 11th and 12th verse of the 91st Psalm:
 "He shall give his angels charge over thee,
 to keep thee in all thy ways.
 They shall bear thee up in their hands
 lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"
 'Leap, while all are looking
 Make the demonstration
 Show them who you are.'

 Jesus goes to Deuteronomy again;
 "It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."
 Do not set out a test of God.
 He does not work that way.
 There are no shortcuts fashioned by man to achieve the will of
 God.
 Sometimes it is the journey He puts before us
 That makes us who God wills us to be
 Sometimes that journey is hard.
 Point taken.

Satan tries one last time.
 He offers Jesus the world.
 Which the devil can deliver

Certainly today, we would have to say our world
 Is, by and large
 in the hands of the devil.
 Satan Offers Him that which God seeks
 That Jesus is King
 Jesus is the saviour
 He need only bow down and worship the devil
 And all will be achieved.

Another deception
 Satan again professes to be an ally
 In disguise he seems innocuous
 He suggests a way
 That seems to be aligned with the good,
 With God
 A better, faster and easier way
 To achieve what God wants

Another corruption of the means by which God has chosen to
 achieve His ends.

Jesus goes back to Deuteronomy:
 “Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God
 And Him only shalt thou serve”.

The epic battle was joined
 The combatants engaged
 Weapon drawn
 Forces unleashed
 But the forces of Good will always overcome the forces of evil.
 Last point taken.

Jesus warns:
 “Satan get thee hence”
 And the battle is won. For today.

Satan was again defeated.
But would be back
 To suffer his great defeat at Calvary
 At the cross
Where Jesus fulfilled the Mission
 Saved mankind
 And defeated evil

Lesson for us?
 Satan has no more power than
 We are willing to give him.

With God's help
 We will prevail
With God's help
 We will see eternal life
 Where there is no Satan
 Where there is no evil
We need only meet the temptation
 That will inexorably be put in our path

“Get thee hence Satan”