**Luke 4:1-13 (ESV)**

1. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness **2** for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. **3** The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” **4** And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ ” **5**  And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, **6** 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. **7** If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” **8** And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’ ” **9**  And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, **10** for it is written, “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ **11** and
“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ” **12** And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” **13** And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

**“Jesus With Us In The Wilderness”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. During this season of Lent, we take a hard look at life. Part of life for us is in this land we live called America. Those first settlers looked at the new world as “A city on a hill,” “the new Israel,” and above other things “The Promised Land.” If only these assertions could have left sin, death, and the Devil on the other side of the ocean. However, as with the founders who drafted documents to keep our country free from what they agreed was the corruption of man. We as Lutherans confess even more boldly in this promising land that we still live in a sinful world.

 Lent is an expression of life at the present. There are hardships and struggles following us all our days. We know this to be true because of baptism into the saving Name of God. Our Lutheran Fathers said, “Christ was given to us to bear both sin and penalty and to destroy the rule of the devil, sin, and death; so we cannot know his blessings unless we recognize our evil” (Tappert 106:50). It means the Promised Land in that perfect garden given to our first parents fell apart by the Devil deception. It means the Promised Land God gave to Israel as a nation came apart by failure to trust His Word. It means this world is far more a wilderness than any kind of Promised Land lasting long in the hands of sinners. Thank God during Lent, as with our life, Jesus is in the wilderness able to save.

1. **We must confess none lasts long in this wilderness.**
2. The Devil knows we have a fallen flesh.
* This craving desires to quench the sinful nature “command this stone to become bread.” (Distrust brings greed, lust, power, selfishness)
* Broke others like Moses (rock), David (murder), and Peter (deny).
* Luther writes, “Even if at the present I am chaste, patient, kind, and firm in faith, the devil is likely in this very hour to send such a shaft into my heart that I can scarcely stand, for he is a an enemy who never stops or becomes weary, when one attack ceases, new ones always arise.(Tappert 435:109) NO PERFECT PICTURE!
1. The Devil knows we want glory in this world.
* This is to forsake God in exchange for a lie, “worship me, it will all be yours.”
* Idols easily deceive as happened to Israel compromising worship for glory that would fail. (Money, strength/success, position, knowledge)
* St. Paul declares, “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.” (Ephesians 4:17-18)
1. The Devil knows we turn against God to our ways.
* This is to misuse our will as if we were gods “Throw yourself down from here for it is written…”
* Since the Garden, pride rules the day. (Devil’s questions, hatred, and despising of God)
* It means for us to put the Scripture to the tests and twists them before God.

*What hope do the baptized have in this world of sin, death, and the Devil? “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.”*

1. **We must confess to see Christ is in the wilderness with us.**
2. Christ comes hungering to speak the Word all the way to the cross.
* “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ ”
* To sustain life materially is not the same as the Word of life able to forgive sinners. (Works vs. faith)
* Jesus is able to feed the hungry declaring, “Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” (John 6:27)
1. Christ comes glorying over how He humbly offers himself by the cross.
* “It is written, “‘you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’ ”
* Worship is not Law or man centered, but Gospel or God centered where Jesus serves us out of love. (No idol can give salvation for it only enslaves)
* “God gives freely by his grace and is then worshiped.” (Just 174)
1. Christ comes willing to carry His cross without complaint.
* “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
* “Whys” of life have their answer with the obedient will of Christ as the sacrifice for a sinful world. (Follows the Father’s Will)
* “If you are the son of God come down from the cross!” He cannot do that because He cares too much to give you His true body and blood until His glorious Day.

It is a jungle out there, but Christ is in the wilderness with us. His body, the Church dwells on earth by the Word and Sacraments. His presence is to deliver from all sin, death, and the devil not merely to sustain life, but to save it. His gift is the hope to know Lent or life at the present must give over to Easter where He will bring the true Promised Land. Our life in the wilderness rests upon the God who goes to the cross. “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 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.” Amen.