

Sermon notes March 6, 2022 (First Sunday of Lent)
Focus Where are you in the desert?

[Lectionary Readings](#)

Lent is a time set aside for reflection and examination. It's a time to "give up" something. So, you simplify your days to have the bandwidth to pray. In addition, Lent is a good time to take on something, a new way to love God and serve others. The temptation story gives us a good jumping off point for Lenten practice.

Jesus' desert temptation is at core a promise of belovedness. It's a promise tested by the devil and proves resilient. Jesus carries the same promise made over him at baptism (this is my beloved).

Jesus is sustained with every word that comes from God. This allows him to be unwavering even in stress and hunger. Jesus goes to the desert knowing he's loved, and he leaves the desert knowing that he is loved. The devil wanted him to forget all that. The devil wanted Jesus to act for him, dance for him, and hand over his God-given authority.

Where are you in the story?

I think I say this every year, and it's worth repeating. It's very unhelpful for us to think that we are being like Jesus when we give up chocolate. It is a distraction to feel good about a sacrifice.

A very real temptation for us is to lose our belovedness. If we believe and act like we are not loved completely by God, then all sorts of misery await. Your core belief about yourself is far more important than setting up a swearing jar during Lent. We have supreme value just because we are made by God.

Practices clarifying our and other's non-negotiable value are the main thrust of Lent. The devil was not trying to get Jesus to do something sinful, but to get him to lie to himself. The devil's ultimate victory would be to get Jesus to forget who he is as God's beloved.

You can speak kindly, knowing you don't need to justify or defend yourself to anyone. You are the bearer of God's image.

Do not put the Lord your God to the test.

You can get out of the way to let the Holy Spirit nourish you.

*One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*

You can make decisions based on God's love.

Worship the Lord your God and serve only God.

You can't pray a prayer that will make you more beloved by God than you already are. You can't abstain your way to righteousness. You can speak holy words. You can know *whose* you are.

Todd