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Sermon for March 6, 2022

Text: Luke 4:1-13

Theme: The Battle Is On

Grace, mercy, and peace are yours from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **Luke 4:1-13**

**Lk 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, <sup>Lk 4:2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.**

**Lk 4:3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”**

**Lk 4:4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’”**

**Lk 4:5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>Lk 4:6</sup> And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. <sup>Lk 4:7</sup> So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”**

**Lk 4:8 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”**

**Lk 4:9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.**

**Lk 4:10 For it is written:**

**“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;**

**Lk 4:11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”**

**Lk 4:12 Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”**

**Lk 4:13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, our Lord,

Here’s a classroom game. This scenario may have even played out a few weeks ago. It’s Valentine’s Day and a bunch of grade school boys are playing a game with their treat of candy hearts. Some of the hearts reveal more emotions than others. The game is to impress the girl that all of them have a crush on. There’s a test of bravado mixed with the fear of being laughed at. Some messages are bold. Others are simple. For example, this box of hearts here – Friends – that’s an easy gift. A midrange compliment – “You’re cute.” And then comes the bold statement – “Love”. The battle will reveal who that cute girl somewhat has a crush us. It’s a simple valentine’s game that is somewhat of a battle.

Well, today we have a battle with more at stake than a childhood game with candy hearts. It’s a battle for the salvation of mankind. It’s a battle between Jesus and the devil that wasn’t just one day where hearts and little cards are given away. It was a battle for forty days where the devil attempted to do with Jesus what he did with Adam in the Garden of Eden. So for this first Sunday in Lent, we see THE BATTLE IS ON. We’ll use some phrases on the hearts given to us by our Savior. The first one to remember is I. It is written...II. Your mine! III. Victory!

I. It is written...

Jesus is out in the wilderness. This immediately happened after His baptism in the Jordan. You'll notice that Jesus engages in battle against the devil right away. He's out in the desert and you notice the tempting that went on wasn't just three temptations but forty days worth of temptations. We just have three specific ones recorded for us. The first has to do with food. (Any coincidences going back to the Garden of Eden? Hopefully this scenario stirs some flashbacks to Genesis 3 for you. If it doesn't, the hope of this sermon today is that you'll see some similarities but a very different outcome.) Jesus hasn't eaten in forty days. Here comes the devil's assault. He tempts Jesus by stating that he ought to feed himself with turning some stones into bread.

What is Jesus' response? He says the first important part, **"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"** Matthew gives us more stating how Jesus adds but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." It is written – an important phrase for us when the devil comes trying to woo us away from the Lord. Think of how he does it? With Jesus, he notices the lack of food and the hunger it caused. The devil tries the same with us. "It won't hurt anyone. You're doing this to help yourself. It's an act of love..." The human need becomes greater than what God says. And we fall for it. Adam and Eve fell for it. His temptation was that it was good and pleasing to the eye. His temptation was to ignore the command of God. And they fell. Just like you and I do. But not Jesus. He lets the devil know that despite His hunger, he will rely on the Word of God to sustain Him. The Word of God is more important. The Word of God – which Adam and Eve ignored – would not be ignored by Christ.

The devil doesn't stop. The next temptation listed here is the offer of the devil to give Jesus something he doesn't really own. It's a unique temptation. While the devil on his chain wreaks havoc in the world, he still has to submit to the Lord. But he tries. We hear the next temptation. **Lk 4:5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. Lk 4:6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. Lk 4:7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours."** What lies! He goes after pride. He goes after the desire to be in charge. Yet our Savior would not fall. Our Savior would stay the course. Our Savior would do battle and respond with "It is written" once again. We hear Jesus' answer, **Lk 4:8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"** How well do we do? Think of the little glorified things where our pride gets to us. "I did it. I earned it. It's mine!" with no glory given to God. Not so with Jesus. He would never worship the devil. Why – He came to save! That's what Jesus did. Jesus came to fulfill every "It is written" about him as the promised Messiah.

Now we hear the devil's third temptation. Notice with this one that he picks up on the "It is written" to twist to his own way. **Lk 4:9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here.**

**Lk 4:10 For it is written:**

**" 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;**

**Lk 4:11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"**

He pairs that with his attempt at creating doubt. If you are the Son of God. Then he backs it up with an "It is written." The devil does the same today. "Does God really say?" Or this twist

on it, “God doesn’t really mean that...” Think of your list. How many sins have you’ve been convinced of are really ok. I have the freedom to speak so a little mockery and malicious talk doesn’t hurt. I can lie a little on my taxes. I can go a little farther with my date than I should. I can do this or that – everyone else is ok with it. And then we can say, “How will I make the Bible fit my sin.” Notice how we fall. Notice how Jesus doesn’t. We hear his answer. <sup>Lk 4:12</sup> **Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”** He uses Scripture. The “It is written is so important for this battle.”

## II. You’re mine!

This battle was important. This battle was done for you and me. The battle that utilized “It is written” was done so that our Savior could give us a heart that says, “You’re mine!” You see this battle in wilderness is one we fail every single day. It’s a battle that failed for Adam and Eve in the Garden. You’ll notice how the devil tempts. He puts something there and they gladly oblige. Because of our sin, he made a claim on us. “They’re evil. They’re sinners. They fail to do what you command God. Hence they are mine!”

But then Jesus steps in. He is set to fulfill where the Lord stepped in for Adam and Eve. We see how Jesus did that during this Lenten journey to Holy Week and Easter. He says no. I’ve purchased and won them. I’ve fought you off and I did by saying no to your temptations for them. I’ve sacrificed myself – defeating you – by dying on the cross. Because of that, they are mine! What comfort! What joy in that our Savior battled on our behalf. How fitting that we celebrate 40 days in this season of Lent. We know the outcome at the end of this time. Jesus wins! And because he wins, he says to us “victory is yours.”

## III. Victory is yours.

That leads to one more heart. It simply says victory. Notice how Jesus set off for work immediately after being baptized. He went against the one whose only intent is destruction. The battle was on. Jesus beat the devil for us. He wouldn’t succumb to his temptations. He would be tempted in every way but would not give in. He stood His ground on our behalf. Then what comes – his ministry, his passion, and his resurrection.

Through that he gives us victory. The devil comes after us – we sang it – though devils all the world should fill all eager to devour us. We know the answer – We tremble not, we fear no ill. They shall not overpower us. Why? Because Jesus gives us the victory. Talk about a Valentine card of love!

Whether you got candy hearts or not, rejoice in knowing you have someone who made you his. He equips you with it is written. He tells you that you are his. And he reminds you that you have the victory through him. As we walk with Jesus through this Lenten journey we see how the events of the text show that THE BATTLE IS ON but we rejoice in knowing the end destination of Easter where we can say THE BATTLE IS WON! Amen.

**And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds on Christ Jesus. Amen.**