

## Get Behind Me, Satan! I'm Baptized!

1<sup>st</sup> Sun. in Lent – 02/18/24 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Mark 1:9-15 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 9, “...Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”

v.12-13, “The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.”

### Introduction

✘ Martin Luther, who wrote that hymn (A Mighty Fortress) that we just sang, supposedly gave this advice to all Christians: When you experience temptation, say out loud, “Get behind me, Satan! I’m baptized!” Those words reflect the Bible’s clear teaching, both on Baptism and how we Christians must resist the devil.

➔ In 1 Peter 5:8-9, Peter tells us, “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.” Every day you and I face the evil one in a very real battle. So it is very fitting for us to have these words at the ready, “Get behind me, Satan! I’m baptized!”

✘ In fact, I’m confident Peter knew this phrase, or one just like it, because he heard Jesus use it with Peter himself. Remember, Peter had just made the good confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. But when Jesus told the disciples that this meant He would then be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed, and rise after three days, Peter said, “This shall never happen to you” (Mt. 16:22). It’s then that Jesus strongly rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (Mk. 8:33). So yes, Peter heard these words come from Jesus’ own lips when the devil used Peter to try and tempt Jesus from fulfilling His purpose of saving the world.

➔ And friends, the devil tempts you and me as well to set our minds on the things of man instead of God. He tempts us to sin, to despair, to doubt God’s love and mercy. It’s a battle we face all the time from that hidden, but very real enemy. It is why Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.”

✘ “Get Behind Me, Satan! I’m baptized!” It’s no mere mantra. It is a confession of faith; of trust in the life-saving work of Jesus who has defeated the devil once and for all. I pray that our reflection upon today’s Gospel Reading will lead you to that same bold confidence in Jesus every day.

### I. Driven to be tempted by Satan

✘ Here in Mark’s account of Jesus’ temptation, he emphasizes the very close connection between Jesus’ Baptism and His temptation. He says in verse 12 that after Jesus was Baptized, “The Spirit immediately hurled Jesus out into the wilderness,” where Satan tempted Him for 40 days. There are two key words in that sentence. In the original Greek the first one is “ekballō” (ἐκβάλλω) which means to “throw out” or “expel” something. And the second is “immediately” which directly connects Jesus’ baptism to His temptation.

✘ Here’s how it happened: At the age of 30, Jesus’ earthly ministry began as he was baptized by John in the Jordan River. It was a Baptism for sinners, which we’ll address in just a bit. When Jesus came out of the water, an amazing cosmic event took place. Verse 10 says that Jesus saw the heavens “torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove.” At the same time Jesus hears God the Father say, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased” (v. 11).

➔ So we see both the Father and Jesus together setting into motion Jesus’ Messianic work to save sinners. For that to happen, Jesus must connect intimately to our sinful condition. That’s

why He is baptized with the sinners' Baptism. As a confirmation of the Father's pleasure at this, He sends the Holy Spirit down upon Jesus to anoint Him for His holy, Messianic mission.

→ This baptism was the Triune God's huge inaugural ceremony for the public beginning of God's salvation plan. This was the fulfillment of the Messianic covenant, made long ago by Jeremiah and the other prophets!

✘ "Immediately" after this Baptism verse 12 says, the Spirit literally "hurls" or "casts" Jesus out into the wilderness. It paints the picture of pushing a boxer into the ring to fight with his adversary! Here in Mark's Gospel he omits all of the details of each temptation that we find in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke so that he can draw our attention to the important connection between Jesus' Baptism and temptation.

→ It drives home an important truth for us all to understand. Because Jesus' Baptism was the public fulfillment of God's covenant to save sinners through His promised Messiah and Son, then Jesus being hurled into the desert serves as God's official declaration of war against Satan and all of his forces of evil!

→ So, once war has been officially declared, what's that mean? It's going to happen; you're committed! In the United States, it takes a two-thirds vote of Congress to declare war against an enemy. In the battle against sin and evil, we have here a unanimous decision by the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – here at Jesus' Baptism. So it is a foregone conclusion; the evil enemy will now be attacked. That's why the Holy Spirit "immediately" "casts" Jesus "out" into the wilderness for a direct, offensive strike against the devil.

## II. Jesus' baptism & temptation "fulfilled"

✘ I know, to you and me and the world this seems initially like a strange battle plan. The Scriptural text simply says that Satan was tempting Jesus out in the wild for 40 days. I can imagine Peter, still growing in his faith, saying something like this, "Come on, God. Just knock this guy out! Stop playing around. He's no match for You!"

→ And yet Jesus endures Satan's temptations for 40 days. Why? because God's desire and plan is to save all sinners. That means Jesus must suffer temptation with and for all mankind. As the promised Messiah He takes the place of Israel, which fell into sin and unbelief. The Old Testament shows that the people of Israel gave in to temptation. They refused to believe that the Lord really could and would bring them into the Promised Land. For that they had to wander 40 years in the wilderness as a result. Now, after 40 days, Jesus never fell; never gave in to temptation. He trusted in God's provision where mankind had failed. Hebrews 4:15 teaches that Jesus "in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

✘ In Luke's account of Jesus' temptation we're told that even though Jesus beat the devil after 40 days, the devil "departed from Him until an opportune time" (Lk. 4:13). So Satan tried less obvious, trickier attacks. He came at Jesus, through His disciples, as we saw earlier through Peter. He taunted and heckled Jesus through the Jewish leaders and the crowd of onlookers at the cross. "Save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" they cried out (Mk 15:30). But these were still Satan's attacks; the devil's temptations; trying to get Jesus to abandon the mission to save sinful mankind.

→ The devil's final, last-ditch attack was at the cross – the war to end all spiritual wars. It's there that Jesus' Baptism reached its ultimate fulfillment (cf Mk 10:39). When Jesus says, "It is finished" and breathes His last (Jn. 19:30), the battle is over; the war is won! He descends into hell, as Paul tells us in Colossians 2:15, to "disarm [Satan and his evil angels] and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them" through the cross. Three days later Jesus' resurrection announced to the world God's victory over sin, death, and, yes, the devil!

✘ But still the devil wants you and me and all people to think that he's still got a chance at winning this war against God and His truth. In his book *Grace upon Grace*, the premiere Lutheran theologian, John Kleinig describes the devil as a "hidden enemy" for us Christians as we await Jesus' final return on The Last Day. He compares the attack on us to the sneak attacks endured by U.S. soldiers in the Vietnam War. He writes,

They were often confused and frustrated because there was no clear line of battle. The soldiers never knew who their enemies were and where they were located. Enemies would appear as if from nowhere, emerging from secret tunnels and disappearing in them once they lost their cover. This meant that the U.S. soldiers could rarely take the offensive; mostly they discovered the enemy only when they came under attack. That's how it is with us. There are no clear lines of battle that join us with our allies and separate us from our enemy. The enemy is hidden from us. The attack comes from inside us, our conscience. (John Kleinig, *Grace upon Grace* [St. Louis: Concordia, 2008], 224)

➔ But Jesus...He took His enemy head on. His baptism and the Father's declaration as His beloved Son drew Satan out of hiding. Jesus fought the devil directly in the wilderness and successfully endured his temptations; remaining holy and without even one sin. His death on the cross to pay for the guilt of sin has now left our enemy without any real power. Christ's death and resurrection means the devil's greatest weapons – guilt, desire and death have no power over us. Jesus has gifted us with a clean conscience and armed us against the devil's sneak attacks.

### III. When tempted be Spirit-driven to your baptism

✘ "Get behind me, Satan! I'm baptized!" – that is now our cry of victory! It declares our confidence that Jesus has, in fact, defeated the devil. How and why are we so confident? because our Baptism promises and grants Jesus' victory to us! Just as Jesus' baptism led "immediately" to Satan's defeat, so your Baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection, as Paul says in Romans 6:3-4, makes Jesus' victory over Satan yours right now.

➔ This is why telling Satan to get lost because you are baptized, is such a good strategy. It's why we sing hymns like our closing hymn today, "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It". Here's an advanced reminder of what stanza three of that hymn declares:

*Satan, hear this proclamation:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
Drop your ugly accusation,  
I am not so soon enticed.  
Now that to the font I've traveled,  
All your might has come unraveled,  
And, against your tyranny,  
God, my Lord, unites with me!" (LSB 594:3)*

✘ Dear Christian, you – we all need to sing that and declare that out loud every day, because the devil, although he is defeated, is still on the prowl.

➔ Once an enemy is defeated in war, the leaders of the losing country are supposed to meet with the winners to admit defeat and receive the terms of peace. But you see, the devil, as John 8:44 says, is the "father of lies." So what does he do until the Last Day? He acts as if he isn't defeated – even though God has declared it so in His perfect Word. In God's wisdom, which is far above our understanding, (Is. 55:9) He allows this charade to continue for now – Satan still prowling around and seeking after more human souls to devour with his temptations, accusations, and lies.

→ But now you know that he's out there; you know he's defeated and powerless against Jesus. So when he tempts you to question Jesus' saving work on the cross to pay for all of your sin, say it, "Get behind me, Satan! I'm baptized!"

→ When the devil tempts you to despair; to think life is hopeless - when he tempts you to give in to your sinful nature, shout it out, "Get behind me, Satan! I'm baptized!"

→ When you do fall and he throws your guilt in front of you, trying to get you to think that God no longer loves you, proclaim it, "Get behind me, Satan! I'm baptized!"

## **Conclusion**

✘ When Satan comes after you friends, trying to attack you in his false bravado, you attack Him back with the powerful name and work of Jesus in your heart, mind and soul and you boast in Jesus and Jesus alone, "Get behind me, Satan! I am baptized in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit!"

→ And as you declare it and share it, rejoice that a time is coming when you will no longer need that strategy. For Jesus has promised to physically come from heaven a second time. And when that happens, the devil will no longer be able to prowl. As Revelation 20:14 assures us, he will be cast from the earth and "thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:14) forevermore.

✘ Until that day, you and I still need not despair nor worry. Jesus has armed us in thought, word and spirit to face that Liar's temptations; to look to the assurance of Jesus' victory in our Baptism and say it boldly, "Get behind me, Satan! I am baptized!" Amen.