

# INVOCABIT

March 10 2019 / D.M. Kerns

Old Test: Gen. 3:1-21

Epistle: 2 Cor. 6:1-10

Gospel: Matt. 4:1-11

## ***Standing...***

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

With the arrival of Lent,

we're given to consider our sin and our need for a Savior.

In the weeks to come we will read and hear about

Jesus' betrayal,

His arrest and torment...

as He is beaten and nailed to a cross.

Let us consider our sin that caused all of this to happen.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

## ***Sitting...***

After the creation of the world,

after the fall of the evil angels,

there was the tempter, the devil, that ancient serpent,

in the Garden of Eden with our first parents.

Adam and Eve, in Paradise, had everything best for them,

perfect health, perfect unity, perfect peace.

What's more, Adam and Eve are holy—they have no sin nature.

Their thoughts line up perfectly with the Holy Spirit's thoughts.

So, in order for them to be tempted,

some evil from the outside has to sneak in and lead him astray.

Enter the Liar with his lies, who suggests to them,

"God doesn't really love you, nor is He really that good."

Because, if God really did love you and He really is that good,

He'd certainly give you more than what you've got."

Beloved, this is the Devil's specialty—  
 to stir discontentment with what God has given.  
 He does it with you and he does it with me—and we believe him.  
 So too, Adam and Eve believe the devil's words.  
 They eat the fruit forbidden by God,  
 and as a result—it's a like a sinkhole opens up beneath their feet,  
 and everything falls into  
 sin, darkness and death.

When God created everything He said it was good, but not anymore.  
 Adam and Eve have ruined it.  
 God was right to be angry with them, and they were right to be afraid.  
 But instead of destroying them for believing the Devil's lies,  
 God gives them a promise...  
 A promise of One who'd come in the flesh,  
 with the strength of God Almighty.  
 And even though He would be hurt in the process  
 He would destroy the Devil and all his works.

We are the children of Adam and Eve,  
 for we inherit from them, not just the physical genes  
 that make up our bodies, but also the spiritual genes  
 that make up our souls.  
 This is why none of us, by nature, fear, love or trust in God.  
 On the contrary, by nature,  
 we are unhappy with God,  
 discontent with what He provides,  
 doubt God's goodness and  
 are distrustful of His Word.

It's called Original Sin, and only God's Word can reveal it about us.

But this is why we typically march away from God and from what's right,  
 set up false gods to worship, including the god of "self."  
 It's all we know as sinful human beings,  
 a life where sin is our constant companion,  
 where false beliefs come naturally,  
 where despair is just a heartbeat away, and  
 where great shame and vice call out to us from within.

It's why we don't necessarily need the devil around to tempt us—  
 for we face temptation constantly.  
 It's all everybody knows,  
 that is, until Jesus comes along.

The fact of Jesus' virgin-birth,  
 combined with the fact of His conception by the working of the Holy Spirit,  
 meant that Jesus was fully human—like us,  
 but without the corruption to His nature.  
 He was like Adam of old—when Adam was first created,  
 and why Jesus is referred to as the Second Adam.  
 For Jesus was sent into our human flesh  
 in order to fix what Adam broke,  
 in order to succeed where Adam failed.  
 Tempted from the outside,  
 just as Adam and Eve were.

Now, before going toe to toe with the Devil,  
 John, Jesus' cousin, was baptizing people in the Jordan River,  
 baptizing those sorrowful over their sin—cleansing their consciences.

Jesus doesn't need this—  
 for He never did anything wrong,  
 He never said or thought anything sinful.  
 Jesus didn't need cleansing.  
 He didn't need forgiveness—and John knew this,  
 yet Jesus compels him.  
 And when He does, the heavens break open,  
 the Holy Spirit descends into Jesus  
 and a voice from heaven says,  
 "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

At this point, Jesus is publicly anointed as the Messiah;  
 identified as being the One that God promised to Adam and Eve—  
 the One who would overthrow the Devil and bring salvation for the entire world.

So, right after His baptism, Jesus is led out—or as St. Mark puts it, driven out!  
 —into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit "to be tempted."  
 And get this—don't divorce the two:  
 the words God the Father spoke to Jesus in His baptism,

are precisely what the Devil attacks.  
 God the Father says, "This is My Beloved Son..."  
 And the Devil says to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God..."  
 Attempting to bring doubt to the word of God and His promises.

How many times have we fallen into this trap? I shudder to think...  
 Yet, if Jesus succumbs to any of these temptations,  
 if He falls for any of these lies,  
 humanity is lost forever.

Enter the Liar, who says, to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God..."  
 tempting Him to turn stones into bread.  
 "Jesus, you deserve better than this! Satisfy Your hunger!"  
 But Jesus had the words and promises of God to sustain Him.  
 He was content with that, so He responds,  
 "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone,  
 but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"   
 Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3.

The Devil then says to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God jump off the top of the Temple."  
 "Leap into the arms of the angels. You know they'll catch You..."  
 using Psalm 91 to convince Jesus it will be okay.  
 "Just jump—prove that the Word of God is true."  
 Jesus' response? Another verse from Deuteronomy,  
 "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God'"   
 (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Without beating around the bush, the Devil then, says to Jesus,  
 "If you are the Son of God, I'll give you every kingdom of the world,  
 if only You will bow your head and pay me homage."  
 This road you're on...of suffering and death—Jesus, you deserve so much better.  
 The Devil offers Jesus an alternate path,  
 an easy path, a painless one, one without the cross.  
 Jesus' response? Again, from Deuteronomy...  
 "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD  
 your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (6:13-14)  
 And away the Devil went,  
 until He found a willing means via Judas.

Jesus did not use His divine might or His divine strength against the Devil,  
He used exactly what you have: the Word of God.  
And beloved, the word of God is just as powerful against the Devil in your mouth  
as it was in Jesus'.  
This is why you are constantly encouraged to come to Bible class—  
to come to Sound Words Academy...  
it's why you're encouraged to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest  
God's Word.

However, let's not miss the greater point being made here.  
It's not that Jesus is merely our role model—  
in that if we just brush up on the book of Deuteronomy,  
we too can go head-to-head against the Devil.

Jesus suffers these temptations in the stead and the place of the people of Israel.  
For it was Israel who was led through the parted Baptismal waters of the Red Sea,  
and into the wilderness for 40 years—being tempted.  
It was Israel that cried out in their hunger for bread and meat and water.  
It was Israel that put God to the test at the waters of Meribah.  
It was Israel, who when they entered the Promised Land decided they'd  
much rather have the glory of the kingdoms around them,  
than worship the one true God.  
And here we have Jesus undoing what Israel always did.  
Jesus succeeding where Israel always failed.  
Here we have Jesus,  
trusting the Word of God and His promises.

So, remember beloved, in each of these temptations, Jesus is standing in your place,  
resisting the Devil for you—  
conquering him and all of his evil temptations for you—  
because He knows you can't do it.

Out in the wilderness, your Jesus stood where Adam and Eve fell.  
The Second Adam succeeded, where the first Adam failed.  
And now, you are now free.  
You are forgiven.  
The Devil doesn't have you.  
Jesus does.  
For you are baptized, with your sins washed away.

Where Adam and Eve fall,  
Jesus stands,  
and you...stand with Him.

In the Holy Name of Jesus.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.