

Sermon for February 20, 2026 – Lent 1

Luke 4:1-13 (EHV)

Theme: “It is Written”

- 1) This was Jesus’ answer to win our righteousness.
- 2) This is our answer to live in Christ’s righteousness.

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days. He did not eat anything during those days. When they came to an end, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The Devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” <sup>5</sup> The Devil led him up to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup> The Devil told him, “I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, because it has been entrusted to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. <sup>7</sup> So, if you worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” <sup>9</sup> The Devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> because it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you. <sup>11</sup> And, they will lift you up with their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” <sup>12</sup> Jesus answered him, “It says: ‘You shall not test the Lord your God.’” <sup>13</sup> When the Devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time.*

Water is powerful. It doesn’t take a massive wave to knock a person off their feet and drag them away. A knee-high surge can do it.

Temptation works the same way. We’ve all experienced it, haven’t we? A seemingly small temptation that hits us like a tsunami, dragging us away from what is right and leaving us to drown in an ocean of shame and guilt.

How can we stand against such a powerful force?

Let us consider God’s answer to that question, under the theme:

**“It is written.”**

- 1) This was Jesus’ answer to win our righteousness.
- 2) This is our answer to live in Christ’s righteousness.

Part One: “It is written” was Jesus’ answer to win our righteousness.

Our sermon text takes us to the time immediately after Jesus’ baptism. There, at the Jordan River, God the Father declared Jesus to be His Son and publicly anointed Him with the Spirit to be our Saviour.

Luke writes:

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,*  
<sup>2</sup> *where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days.*

As a soldier deploys soon after receiving orders, so Jesus went straight from His baptism into battle. Led by the Spirit, He went into the wilderness to confront the devil – not for His own sake, but as our Champion, to win the righteousness we need to stand before God.

But what is righteousness? Simply put, righteousness is the state of “being right” with God: of being pure, sinless, and holy with no wrong in us at all.

Only God is righteous in Himself. He created Adam and Eve righteous. But, as we read in our first lesson,<sup>i</sup> they lost that righteousness when they listened to the serpent (Satan) and disobeyed God. From that moment on, their will was no longer in harmony with God’s. Self-serving, evil desires filled their hearts. And that corrupted will was passed down to every generation - including you and me.

The Bible says, *“There is no one who is righteous, not even one.”*<sup>ii</sup> Adam’s sin separated us from God and His righteousness. Left to ourselves, we would be lost forever in hell because God is holy and cannot tolerate sin.

But God didn’t want us lost in hell. So He put His gracious plan into motion: He sent His own Son into this fallen world to win for us the righteousness we need to stand before God.

Picture it this way: Our first parents’ sin left us spiritually cold and naked before God – exposed, ashamed, and vulnerable. But, in mercy, the LORD sent His Son to weave a rich garment of righteousness for us. Clothed in this garment through faith in Jesus, we are not only acceptable to God; we are beautiful in His sight.

How would Jesus weave this garment of righteousness for us? By keeping God’s law perfectly in our place – every command, every moment, without fail.

So Jesus came as our spiritual champion, ready to do battle with the devil’s temptations head-on. And Satan didn’t hold back. Don’t think that the three temptations in our text were the only ones Jesus faced. The devil tempted Jesus His entire life. So much so that the Bible says He was tempted in every way, just as we are, but was without sin.<sup>iii</sup>

Understand also that this account is not a “how-to” lesson in resisting temptation. No, it is the record of Jesus winning your righteousness.

And He did it all with one little Greek word: γέγραπται – “It is written.”

Luke continues:

[Jesus] *did not eat anything during those days. When they came to an end, he was hungry.* <sup>3</sup> *The Devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”*

Can you imagine the hunger pangs, lack of energy, and weakness Jesus felt throughout his body? His craving for nourishment must have been intense. The devil tried to use this unsatisfied craving to make Him doubt His Father’s will. “If you are the Son of God... Prove it. You shouldn’t have to suffer like this - waiting for God to feed you?”

But for Jesus to “prove” Himself this way would have been sin. It would have shown distrust of the Father’s declaration at His baptism and in God’s promises to provide all He needed.

Strengthened by the Word, <sup>4</sup>*Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’”*

The Bible clearly promises that God watches over His children, keeps them alive, and gives them every good thing. Outward experience screamed at Jesus to give up and doubt. But He clung firmly to what was written - and Satan had to try a new tactic.

We read:

<sup>5</sup>*The Devil led him up to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.* <sup>6</sup>*The Devil told him, “I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, because it has been entrusted to me, and I can give it to anyone I want.* <sup>7</sup>*So, if you worship me, it will all be yours.”*

Who among us wouldn’t feel the pull of this temptation? Power, glory, comfort, influence. Aren’t the cravings for money, success, and control driving our world? Many have abandoned Christ for far less than what Satan dangled before Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>*Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”*

Everything belongs to the LORD, including our worship and praise. To bow to Satan, even once, would be to deny God. Notice: Jesus does not argue about how much power Satan actually has. He simply quotes God’s Word and believes it. Again, Satan must change his strategy.

Luke writes:

<sup>9</sup> *The Devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here,* <sup>10</sup> *because it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you.* <sup>11</sup> *And, they will lift you up with their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”*

This is an especially dangerous temptation. Satan sets up a false choice and backs it up with a Bible passage he ripped out of context. If Jesus refused to jump, it might look like He didn’t trust God’s promise. If He jumped, then He would be guilty of putting God to the test, trusting something God never actually promised.

But Jesus' faith was in God's pure Word, not some twisted version of it. Therefore, <sup>12</sup>*Jesus answered him, "It says: 'You shall not test the Lord your God.'"*

And with that, the devil had to retreat.

<sup>13</sup>*When the Devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time.*

"It is written." With that answer, Jesus defeated every temptation in the wilderness – and throughout His life. He remained righteous by trusting God's Word. And because Jesus remained righteous, you are counted righteous in God's sight.

How so? Because God promises to credit Jesus' perfect record to everyone who turns from sin and trusts in Him.<sup>iv</sup> His victory over temptation is your victory. The flood of Satan's accusations cannot drown you, because you stand on the solid rock of Christ.<sup>v</sup> On that high ground, Satan's condemnations cannot reach you.

Part Two: This is our answer to live in Christ's righteousness.

But the devil is not content to see you safe in Christ. He wants you back – dragged away from Jesus and destroyed. So, just as he continually tempted Jesus, he continues to tempt us in countless ways.

For example, if you struggle to make ends meet, Satan may whisper: "Feeding your family is more important than worship. Take that job, even if it regularly keeps you away from God's Word. Why suffer when you don't have to?"

When that happens, answer with Jesus, "*It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'*"

Then believe what those words say. God knows your needs. He promises to provide for you, as Jesus says: "*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*"<sup>vi</sup>

If the devil tempts you to chase after the things of this world - promising you a more fulfilled life if you bow down to the idols of money, power, or sinful pleasures – answer with Jesus: "*It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'*"

Again, the devil may come back with Scripture passages taken out of context, twisting their meaning to get you to believe something God never intended, tempting you with thoughts like:

"Because God forgives sin, you don't have to take God's law seriously."

"Since God invites you to pray for anything, it's okay for you to pray selfishly."

When that happens, respond with Jesus, “*God’s Word says...*” and then recall God’s clear Word in its proper context. Why? Because the devil can’t stand against the Christ who stands with every believer. God’s Word is an impenetrable fortress for all who trust in Jesus.

Yes, “It is written” is your fortress and high mountain against the flood of temptation. Jesus’ perfect keeping of the law has made you righteous by faith. He keeps you in that righteousness through His Word. So remain in His Word, and the devil will have to flee from you in frustration, just as he fled from Jesus.

But someone might ask, “What if I forget what God’s Word says? What if I give in and sin?”

None of us will be perfect in this life. We all fall. We all sin.

But that’s precisely why Christ came: to live the perfect life we failed to live, and to die the death our sins deserved – rising again to prove their forgiveness. He did all this so that, through faith, you might be covered with His righteousness and receive everlasting life.

Listen to the comfort God gives through the Apostle John:

*My children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate before the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.<sup>vii</sup>*

So when you fall, do not run from God in shame. Run to Christ in repentant faith. God counts His perfect obedience as your perfect obedience. He forgives your sin and clothes you in His righteousness – loving you as much as He loves His Son.

“It is written.” With this statement, Jesus overcame temptation to win the righteousness you need to stand before God. And through this same written Word, the Holy Spirit holds you in that righteousness.

So take every opportunity to read, study, and meditate on God’s Word. There, in what is written, you find refuge when the tidal waves of temptation come crashing against you. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Cf. Genesis 3:1-15

<sup>ii</sup> Cf. Romans 3:10

<sup>iii</sup> Cf. Hebrews 4:15

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. Romans 3:22

<sup>v</sup> Cf. Romans 8:1-3

<sup>vi</sup> Matthew 6:33 EHV

<sup>vii</sup> 1 John 2:1-2 EHV