

Sunday Sermon: March 10, 2019

Sermon Text: Luke 4:1-13

Sermon Theme: Uncovering the Devil's Lies: I Have Something Better For You

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, ² 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.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 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. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

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. ¹⁰ For it is written:

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

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

¹² Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

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

By now we have all heard the phrase "fake news". Fake news is the phrase that describes what happened when a story is reported in such a way that that it doesn't represent the facts anymore.

The term fake news was coined in late 2016 or early 2017. But that was the not the beginning of fake news. It has been around for much longer, it was just called something different. For years fake news was called yellow journalism. The definition of yellow journalism was an outlet that did not do their work of researching legitimate news stories. Instead they focused on big headlines and scandalous references to catch the reader's eye.

Unfortunately, we all fall for fake news because of the big headlines and scandalous references. We have all grabbed the magazine or newspaper because of the headlines, but then the story doesn't live up to that headline. There are shows on TV that no longer call themselves news casts, rather they are political opinion entertainment. You have probably clicked on the splashy headline on the internet and found out the story isn't about that at all.

Fake news is real. It is alive, but it is not new. The devil has used fake news forever. He has tried to use lies hidden in truths in order to turn us away from the true God and to these half-truths or lies.

During these five Sunday services that lead up to Holy Week each of our Gospel readings has a time when Jesus was challenged in one way or another. This was really the devil trying to turn Jesus away from the road that led to Calvary. As we look at these challenges we will also uncover the fake news, the lie that the devil is trying to use. We will also see that God's Word really answers each one of the challenges the devil makes.

This morning as we look at Jesus being tempted by the devil we will see the first lie that the devil uses: I have something better for you.

Jesus had just had the kick-off to his ministry, his baptism. Heaven opened, the Holy Spirit descended, the voice from heaven spoke. These were all amazing signs that the Messiah was here.

The first steps of Jesus' ministry did not lead him immediately to the Mt. of Transfiguration for a display of glory, to preaching and teaching the 12 disciples sitting at his feet, or to healing the crowds of people following him. Instead, Jesus was led into the desert into a situation that would have left any of us open to temptation. We read, **Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert.**

There in the desert Jesus fasts for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during these 40 days and at the end of them, he was hungry. I have heard of many people that have gone on food restricting diets for 30 or 40 days

and they complain about missing the food that they want to eat. It is something they post and talk about all the time. I can't imagine what kind of hunger this would have been and I can't imagine what I would do for some food.

The devil tempts Jesus the first time with the promise of food. **If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.** Jesus you are weak and struggling, make these stones bread, and then you will not be hungry or struggling anymore.

The devil tempts Jesus a second time by showing him the kingdoms of the world. **I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me. It will be all yours.** Jesus, look at all the power I have. Don't you want to be known, don't you want to rule over everything. I will give it to you, if you just bow down to me and honor me.

The devil tempts Jesus a third time with a question of faith and trust. **For he will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.** Jesus, God promises to watch over you. See if what your God says is true. Jump from the top of the temple and see what happens.

In each one of these temptations the devil uses his twisted lie: I have something better for you. In the first temptation, the truth was that Jesus would be stronger and feel better if he ate. The lie was that it was better for Jesus to abuse his power to be strong and eat than it was for him to be hungry and to struggle.

In the second temptation, the truth was, the devil has a lot of power. He directs many earthly things for his evil purposes. The lie was that it was better for Jesus to be the king of the earth than it was for him to be the Savior.

There was truth in the third temptation as well. The truth is that God does promise to guard and protect us in this life. The lie was that it is better for Jesus to test that protection to see if God was really watching over him.

Really the *I have something better for you* temptation is as old as time. It was the same temptation that the devil used against Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. I have something better for you that God hasn't given you. It's something that God doesn't want you to have. Eat this fruit and you will know what God knows.

How many times has the devil used this same temptation with us and how many times have we fallen into it? The devil says, "I have something better for you than what God has given to you. Just follow me and I will show you. Your life would be better if you just took a few dollars, no one will notice. Your life would be better if you cheat on your spouse. Your life would be better if you lie about what you did. Your life would be better if you stopped trusting in God and started trusting in yourself. Your life would be better if you had all of Sunday to do what you want."

Yet, this is all fake news, a twisted truth that in the end will hurt us rather than help us.

Many times fake news remains fake news unless someone that we trust shows us just how wrong it is. Jesus saw through these twisted temptations. He shows us how wrong each of the devil's lies is. In the first temptation Jesus answered, "**Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**" Jesus saw through this temptation and understood that faith was more important than food. He understood that if God wanted him to have food at that moment he would provide it, just as he had done for the Israelites in the desert and for Elijah during the famine.

In the second temptation, Jesus answered, "**Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.**" Jesus understood even with all the power in the world, following and worshipping the devil would lead to death and destruction.

In the final temptation, Jesus answered, "**Do not put the Lord your God to the test.**" Jesus understood that true faith believes that God is always watching over us and keeping us. True faith does not need to put God to the test to see what will happen.

Jesus shows us that the only way to stand up to these temptations is to be strong in the Word. Through faith in God, we have the tools that we need to see through the devil's fine sounding lies. Just as Jesus did, we have the ability to fight back with the Word of God that shows just how twisted the temptation is and just how fake it can be.

When the devil tempts us to make ends meet by stealing a little or cheating to get something, the Word of God is there that says, **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** When the devil tempts with a sin that we won't get caught for, or that no one would tell

us is wrong like drunkenness, pornography, or little white lies, The Word of God tells us the world doesn't matter, we are to live in a different way, **“Christ's love compels us, he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.”** When we are tempted to think that we could do it better our own way we hear, **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”**

Sadly, we are not ready with the Word of God as we should be. When the devil strikes we are often more attuned to believing his lies than thinking about the truths that God has given to us. When we sin, the devil is there with another twisted lie, “Your life is over, hell awaits.”

Without a Savior, any and every sin that we commit is another ticket that sends us to hell. Yet, God has given us the answer to sin in Jesus. Jesus was tempted and never sinned, he was perfect. Jesus lived that life perfectly so that he could take our sins to himself and replace those sins with his own perfection.

When we repent of our sin, Jesus is there with the comforting words, you are forgiven. I have taken that sin away and all the other sins that you have committed.

Sometimes fake news stands until the truth is heard loud and clear. The devil's twisted lie is that he has something better to offer us than what God gives. The truth that combats this lie is that there is nothing better than the love that God has already shown to us in Jesus. He has taken away our sins and makes sure that as we walk the road to heaven that we have all that we need.

While the devil wants us to believe that he has something better for us, there is nothing better than the eternity that our Savior has already given to us.