

Luke 4:1-13  
"Championship Fight"  
First Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2019  
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.  
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

*[Intro]*

Ding! Ding! Ding!

In this corner, weighting in at 126 pounds and wearing red trunks we have the Featherweight Champion of the World, Satan!

In the other corner, weighing in at 215 pounds and wearing gold trunks we have the Heavyweight Champion of the World, Jesus!

The winner of this bout is who creation is to trust and worship.

Now, let us have a fair fight.

Does this sound fair? The Featherweight Champion versus the Heavyweight Champion?

Well, what if I told you that it was the Featherweight Champion who challenged the Heavyweight Champion to this fight?

You see, this Featherweight Champion believes he has a legitimate chance on defeating the Heavyweight Champion. Will this be a fair fight? Well, you know Satan has something up his sleeve, so to speak. Could it be brass knuckles? Could it be a low blow? He is prepared to win at any cost. In fact, the only way he could win is only by deceiving the rules. He can only cheat.

***[Round One: Seduction]***

Immediately after Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove and the voice of God the Father proclaimed about Jesus, ***“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”*** (Luke 3:22), at this moment Satan challenged the Son of God, Jesus, to a fight. This fight was over who has the power. This fight was over salvation or damnation. This fight is between Satan, the Great Deceiver, and Jesus, the Redeemer of the World.

For forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by Satan. Jesus took blow after blow from Satan. Jesus took lie after lie from Satan.

As true man, Jesus became hungry. After all, he had not eaten for 40 days. Who wouldn't be hungry?

So, Satan attempts to seduce Jesus with round one of the championship fight.

***“If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread”*** (Luke 4:3).

As true man, Jesus must eat bread. He must eat something or else he would surely die.

But Jesus responds to Satan: ***“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone’”*** (Luke 4:4).

In the case of Adam, the first man, he ate of the forbidden fruit when seduced by Satan. But, as for Jesus, the Second Adam, He did not succumb to the seduction.

Jesus lives by the Word of God. He is ***the*** man, the Son of God incarnate, who ***is*** the Word of God. Jesus is ***the*** bread of life from heaven who came to feed the people of Himself.

This first temptation of Satan aims to seduce Jesus into being content to repeat the miracle of manna in the wilderness, instead of offering up Himself as the Bread of Life.

Satan loses round one, but on to round two.

***[Round Two: True Worship]***

Then Satan took Jesus and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Satan said to Jesus, ***“To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours”*** (Luke 4:6-7).

To anyone else, this sounds like a great offer. But, this is coming from Satan.

Satan is promising Jesus that “authority” and “glory” will be His if the Son of God would only worship Satan. The problem is that Satan’s promises are hollow. Adam and Eve found that Satan cannot deliver on what he promises. The only “authority” Satan has is over a fallen world, estranged from God. To worship Satan would mean to lose the authority and glory of being a child of God.

Satan desires to be worshiped, even though he has no authority.

So Jesus responds, ***“It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve’”*** (Luke 4:8).

You see, “authority” and “glory” of man is to worship and serve the true God. To worship any other false god would be usurping God’s own authority and glory, and thereby losing all authority and glory.

Jesus picks up on the theme of worship and proclaims that ***true*** worship is to worship the Lord God. You see, true worship is not conditional. God freely gives out His grace and is then worshiped.

So, Satan loses round two, but on to round three.

***[Round Three: Prove it!]***

Then Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, ***“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone’”*** (Luke 4:9-11).

Now, having twice been bested by Scripture, Satan now appeals to it. He now has the audacity to teach the Son of God from Scripture. However, this is a cheap and deceitful imitation. Here Satan quotes from Psalm 91, but leaves out the phrase “*in all Your ways.*”

You see, Satan knows Scripture. He knows it so well that he can misuse and misapply Scripture to make it sound like God’s Word, even to the most devout Christian. Satan has never stopped doing this through centuries of false teachers who have led Christians away from salvation in Christ alone.

Again, Jesus bests Satan in round three when He says, “*It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test’*” (Luke 4:12).

Unlike Adam before Him, Jesus has not wavered with Satan’s temptations. Unlike Adam, Jesus responded to each temptation perfectly. Jesus won this bout for us – for you and for me.

### *[Our Christian Life]*

Once Satan realized that he was getting nowhere with these temptations against the Son of God, he departed until an opportune time.

You see, Satan seeks opportunities to tempt us into following him, rather than the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Martin Luther writes of this in his Large Catechism.

“Such is life that one stands today and falls tomorrow,” Luther wrote. “Therefore, even though at present we are upright and stand before God with a good conscience, we must ask once again that He will not allow us to fall and collapse under attacks and temptations.”<sup>1</sup>

As Christians, we face temptations every second of our day. We face temptations from the flesh, from the world, and of course, from Satan.

Our flesh lures us into unchastity, laziness, gluttony, drunkenness, greed, sexual sins, deceit and deception.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 453.

The world drives us to anger and impatience. We long for luxury, honor, fame and power.

Then comes Satan, who baits and badgers us on all sides. Satan's purpose is for us to scorn and despise both the Word of God and the Works of God and to tear us away from faith, hope, and love, and draw us into unbelief and false security. Satan wants us to deny God and to see sin as good.

Every Christian is attacked by our flesh, the world, and Satan. As long as we live in this sinful world, we are attacked, hunted and harassed on all sides, we are constrained to cry out and pray every hour that God may not allow us to become faint and weary and to fall back into sin, shame and unbelief.

Because of Jesus alone, God gives Christians power and strength to resist these attacks, even though the attack is not removed or ended. For no one can escape temptations and seductions as long as we live in the flesh and have Satan prowling around us.

We will suffer these attacks, but realize that we are not alone.

To experience attacks is quite different than consenting to the attack. Some people may have more frequent and severe attacks than others.

- Some people are attacked chiefly by the flesh: ***We want what we want now.***
- Some people are attacked chiefly by the world: ***We want to be honored.***
- Some people are attacked chiefly by Satan: ***Did God really say?***

Or, it could be a mix of attacks.

But, no one can be harmed by merely experiencing an attack. We are only harmed if we consent to these attacks and then give free rein to our flesh, the world and to Satan.

So, Christians must be armed with God's Word and expect every day to be under continuous attack. We are to live our lives knowing that Satan's flaming darts are flying right toward us, but it is by grace through faith in Jesus that He is fending them off.

If we attempt to help ourselves by our own thoughts and resources outside of Christ, we only make the matter worse and give Satan a wider opening.

Remember, Satan has a serpent's head, so if he finds an opening into which he can slither, his whole body will follow. It is only Jesus who can resist Satan's power and drive him back.

***[If Jesus Lost?]***

So, what if Jesus lost this championship fight?

If Jesus succumbed to any of Satan's temptations, we would have been lost in our sins. This would have reversed the order of the kingdom, placing glory before suffering.

***[Jesus Won for Us!]***

However, Jesus showed that suffering must precede glory.

Satan departed after round three of this championship fight, but he promised to return at an opportune time.

Satan returned again when he deceived Judas Iscariot into turning Jesus over to the Jewish authorities on that Maundy Thursday. Here again, Jesus was faced with the temptation to abandon His vocation as Christ, the Son of God.

Instead, Jesus remained true to His Word even when He forgoes the protection of the Father and angelic armies as He was beaten, whipped, spit upon and pierced with nails through His bones upon the wooden cross.

Jesus was not rescued from the cross, but died a shameful death on that Good Friday. At that moment, Satan believed he had won the championship fight.

But, God works all things to His purpose. Three days later, Jesus gave a knock-out blow to the powers of our flesh, the world, and Satan when He rose from the dead three days later, as He said He would.

Through His resurrection from the dead, Jesus has proclaimed victory for all time to all who believe and trust in Him as Savior and Lord! Through our baptism into Christ, we receive Christ's victory – forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation! We are renewed in Christ's victory each time our sins are forgiven in Word and Sacrament!

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, ***“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”*** (Romans 10:9).

Through Jesus, “the valiant One,” we have conquered the fight! Satan “can harm us none, He's judged; the deed is done; One little word can fell him.” “Our victory has been won; The Kingdom ours remaineth.” This is most certainly true. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠