

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Tempted or Tested?

Even When Something Is Drastically Wrong, God Provides

February 21, 2021

AS WE GATHER



Today we hear of God testing Abraham and of Satan tempting Jesus. James reminds us that God tempts no one. So, how can we know whether God is testing us or Satan is tempting us? James reminds us that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (James 1:17). As we go through life, striving to live out our calling as God’s people, we will hit obstacles and face tests to our faith and to how we live that faith. God can work through these tests to draw us closer to Him. On the other hand, Satan wants to lure and entice us away from the path God would have us walk. “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back” (Hebrews 11:17–19). The writer to the Hebrews makes such a beautiful statement about something that must have been literally gut-wrenching for Abraham. Losing a loved one is hard. Losing a child is incredibly hard. But being asked to sacrifice your one and only son? It seems unfathomable. Yet, this presents a poignant truth for us—when everything looks so wrong, God provides by keeping His promises for us and by being with us.

✂ PREPARATION ✂

PRAYERS OF PREPARATION:

Loving Lord, at the beginning of this Lenten season, we are met with the challenge of handing over every bit of our lives that do not come from You. To rid ourselves of what clutters our lives, and all that distracts us from the simple truth of Your love for us. Your prophets have called us to change the way we worship—to make internal sacrifices instead of external ones. To seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with You each and every one of our days. If we don’t give anything up for Lent, then let us at least give up this: that we might live cease living in ways that disconnect us from You, for every one of our steps is like a circle around Your temple. Perhaps this Lent, we can give up our way and give ourselves to Your way for us. So, lead and guide us on this Lenten way. May we

walk with Jesus toward the hill just outside of Jerusalem. May we like Him take up our cross and follow, spending each moment of our lives living responsively to You, just as Christ Himself did. For that is the faithful way. Amen.

• **HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATED:**

As a Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) church, we believe and confess that through the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper we receive the true body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine. As we commune with faith and repentance, we receive the forgiveness of sins and power to amend our sinful lives. If you confess the same belief, we invite you to our fellowship of the Lord’s Supper.

WELCOME:

WELCOME TO WORSHIP at Bethel Lutheran Church! We are glad that you have come to the Lord's house today to be fed and strengthened by God's holy Word. As darkness gives way to light and winter sleep to fresh beginnings, we come today to be reminded of God's love for us. Like the green shoots of renewed life, stirring beneath the soil, we welcome an awakening of God's word in our lives. In this time of reflection and repentance, we affirm our identity, we claim our security, as children of God. Let us worship together. Welcome!

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Mark 14:38; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 Corinthians 10:12–13*

Pastor: Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

People: **Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**

Pastor: Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

People: **God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Romans 6:20, 22–23, adapted; Mark 1:15*

Pastor: God's Word reminds us that when we were slaves to sin, we were free in regard to righteousness.

People: **But now that we have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit we get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.**

Pastor: For the wages of sin is death,

People: **but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God, who has brought us out of slavery and promises to lead us to the promised land of heaven.

A moment for silent confession.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, we know we are blessed when we remain steadfast under trial, yet we fall prey to the devil's schemes and give in to temptation. We are lured and enticed by our own evil desires—desires that contradict your good and gracious will.

People: **For Jesus' sake, forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Pastor: As Jesus began His ministry, He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." As you have repented of your sins, believe these words as if Jesus was standing here speaking them to you: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

✠ **WORD** ✠

KYRIE *James 1:18; Psalm 102:1, adapted*

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

People: **Christ, have mercy.**

Pastor: Lord, have mercy.

People: **Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.**

Pastor: O LORD, hear our prayer.

People: **And let our cry come to You!**

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

You promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and then you asked him to sacrifice his only son. You provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice.

People: **Open our eyes to how You provide for us, especially in tough times when everything looks so wrong.**

Pastor: Empower us to hold tightly to the promises that are “yes” for us through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Genesis 22:1–18* (God tested Abraham.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

GRADUAL *Hebrews 12:2*

Leader: O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

EPISTLE *James 1:12–18* (The path temptation treads)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Ephesians 6:11*

Leader: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 1:9–15* (Jesus is baptized and sent to be tempted.)

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

SERMON

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

(Gathering of Tithes & Offering)

CATECHISM *The Sixth Petition and Explanation*

Leader: And lead us not into temptation. What does this mean?

People: **God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *Psalm 25:4–6, adapted*

Leader: Friends in Christ, I urge you to lift up your souls to our God in whom we trust, as Christ, our Lord, promises to hear us.

Lord Jesus, You are the Lord of the Church.

People: Bless the work of our congregation and all who bear Your name.

Leader: Remember Your mercy, O LORD,
People: and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Leader: Lord Jesus, the government is on Your shoulders.
People: Watch over all in this world. Guide the world's leaders with Your wisdom, as well as our elected officials—our president, our governor, and our local authorities—that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.

Leader: Remember Your mercy, O LORD,
People: and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Leader: Lord Jesus, You are our Teacher.
People: Make us to know Your ways, O LORD; teach us Your paths. Lead us in Your truth and teach us, for You are the God of our salvation; for You we wait all the day long.

Leader: Remember Your mercy, O LORD,
People: and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Leader: Lord Jesus, You are the God of our salvation.
People: Guide us, Lord, in living lives that bear witness to Your truth. Lead us to connect with those who are wandering or who do not know You.

Leader: Remember Your mercy, O LORD,
People: and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Leader: Lord Jesus, You are the Great Physician.
People: Bind up the brokenhearted, give sight to the blind, make the lame to walk and the deaf to hear.

Leader: We name before You those who are struggling in body, mind, and spirit and ask You to heal them: [*names*].
Remember Your mercy, O LORD,
People: and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Leader: Into Your hands, Lord Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your great mercy to hear and answer us.
People: Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who overcame the assaults of the devil and gave His life as a ransom for many that with cleansed hearts we might be prepared joyfully to celebrate the paschal feast in sincerity and truth. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

SANCTUS "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" [TLH 246 Sts. 4]

4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20;
1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS “Just as I Am, without One Plea”

(Soft Music Plays “Just As I Am”, as we received the Lord’s Supper)
[*TLH 388*]

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank You for pouring out Your body and blood and serving it to us in this Meal in bread and wine. In Your mercy, strengthen and lead us as we face temptations and testing in this life on our way to the life to come, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.

The almighty and merciful Lord—the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless and preserve you.

People: Amen.

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

Black History Moment



Eugene Ballard

Born in Georgia, Eugene Ballard fled the United States at a young age after seeing significant racial violence. He spent time in Scotland and England before landing in France. World War I broke out when Ballard was 19-years-old. He joined the French Foreign Legion and was injured in ground combat. While recovering, he met a French air service officer and with his help began training as a gunner at a military air station before switching to train as a pilot.

Eight months later, in 1916, Bullard had his pilot's license and shortly after became the first African American combat aviator. He was known as the “black swallow of death” for his courage during his 20 flying combat missions. When the US entered the war, Bullard and others applied to transfer to US forces, but because of his race, Bullard's application was denied. It is believed that the US military pressured France to ground him from flight because of the US policy against black pilots. He was removed from flight duty.

Bullard also served French forces in World War II. For his service, he received numerous French war medals including the Knight of the Legion of Honor, Military Medal, War Cross with bronze star, Volunteer Combatant Cross, Combatant's Cross, Medal for Military Wounded, World War I Medal, Victory Medal, Voluntary Enlistment Medal, Battle of Verdun Medal, Battle of the Somme Medal, World War II Medal, Voluntary Service to Free France, and American Volunteer with French Army Medal.