

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

March 9, 2025



## TEMPTED

*the power we don't acknowledge*

by Drew Downs

When Satan tries to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, he invites him to use power. Not power that Satan has to give or Jesus has a right to use, but power Jesus *could* use. Power that is within his ability. Power to control.

One of the most common struggles I hear from people is that they feel like their lives are “out of control.” This story reminds us of the relationship of control to power.

The desire to control one's life, its outcomes, or to control one's children or spouse, is about power. Power over them. To do what we want. This is the same temptation!

It isn't that Jesus is choosing the harder path. He is choosing the more generous path. A path of love for the autonomy of others. As he will teach a few chapters later, what is love if they have to love you? What is faith if we have total control?

# LENT

2025

## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

### **The Lenten Invitation**

"Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

"I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer."\*

With love,  
Drew+

\*From the Ash Wednesday liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

# LENT

2025

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Lent 1C*

March 9, 2025

### **Collect**

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

Luke 4:1-13

After his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written,

"Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

# LENT

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'He will command his angels concerning you,  
to protect you,'

and

'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

## Reflection

The Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness where Satan tempts him with three specific opportunities to express divine power. The first, over his environment, so that he might create something for himself to eat. The second, to control the people of the world, so that he might have social, political, national power. The third, to take control of God themselves in an act of selfish pride, instigating heavenly protection.

That Jesus doesn't bite at these tests is important. But just as important is for us to reckon with what these things all represent. These aren't just tests of Jesus's mettle. It isn't nothing or a time to see Jesus's inhuman capacity or his extraordinary grace, etc. These are three examples of the same temptation: Control. Power. And the will to dominate: the environment, other people, and God.

These aren't temptations for Jesus because they aren't his desires. He doesn't want to take the easy way. The easy way isn't the work or the point. Because the *Missio Dei* is a group project we all have to participate in willingly. The whole point is that it is good. We are seeing the ultimate example of the ends *never* justifying the means — because the means *are* the ends.

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ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
215 N. 7TH ST TERRE HAUTE IN 47807  
812.232.5165

STSTEPHENSTH.ORG

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