

- God came down
 - Took upon human flesh
 - Son of God, Jesus
- Jesus came down the mountain
 - On a level plain with the people
 - Experience what the people experience
- God in Jesus aligns himself with humanity
 - In order to do that he must experience all we experience
 - That includes temptation
 - Adam and Eve in garden
 - Israelites in wilderness
 - Temptation to not trust God with them
 - Put God to the test to provide for their needs
 - Judas
 - Give into greed and betray Jesus
 - Peter
 - Self-preservation deny Jesus 3x
- 3 gospels have this story of Jesus' temptation
 - Luke, Matthew and Mark
 - All 3 place it in the same spot
 - At the beginning of Jesus' ministry
 - Immediately following his baptism
 - Spirit descend upon him
 - Voice tells him, "You are my Son."
- The story of Jesus' baptism was the beginning to the season of Epiphany shortly after Christmas
 - Revealing who Jesus is, "You are my son."
 - There's been great debate as to why Jesus had to be baptized
 - He is the son of God after all
 - He is fully God – God come down and take on human flesh
 - The one who knew no sin. Innocent yet died, took upon sin so that we might live, be reconciled to God

- We may never know
 - Yet appears to me at least his further identification with humanity
 - We must not forget Jesus' humanity
 - To be human means to experience humanity
 - Thus he was baptized
 - Thus, he was tempted in the wilderness
 - He was given building blocks of baptism
 - His identity upheld and sustained him
 - The Spirit poured out upon him, he was not alone
 - Notice the Spirit leads him into the wilderness
 - The Spirit doesn't do the tempting
 - The Spirit does the accompanying
- Jesus alone in the wilderness (i.e., desert)
 - 3 times is he tempted by the devil
 - This is how his ministry begins
 - It is how it will end
 - Alone on a cross
 - Tempted 3 times – not by the devil – but by human voices
 - Chapter 23 (Luke)
 - V.35 “He saved others; let him save himself”
 - V.37 “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself”
 - V.39 “Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”
 - Perhaps, fitting the 3 gospel writers all begin in this fashion
 - Yet again a portrait of who Jesus is
 - A prophecy of what is to come
 - A God who knows what it is to be human

- Easy to see why this passage is chosen for the first Sunday in Lent
 - 40-day journey to the cross
 - Focus on baptism
 - Time of instruction leading up to baptism on Easter
 - We will face our own temptations during this 40 days just as Jesus did
 - In this text Jesus gives us building blocks in our battle with temptation
 - Just as God gave Israel a set of building blocks as they entered into the promised land
 - 3 times does Jesus refute the devil's sinister ways with words from Israel's book of instruction, Deuteronomy
 - A book that drew the people nearer to their God
 - Chapter 6
 - ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷ Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹ and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
 - Jesus building blocks
 - Deuteronomy 8:3
 - "One does not live by bread alone"
 - That verse ends, "but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord"

- Deuteronomy 6:13
 - “Worship the Lord your God and serve only him”
- Deuteronomy 6:16
 - “Do not put the Lord your God to the test”
- These building blocks, words of God, fended off the devil’s lies
- You are the Son of God certainly still fresh in Jesus’ mind reminded him who he was and what he was sent to do
- Filled with the Holy Spirit building block that sustained him
- God’s grace
 - We have building blocks that keep us near the cross
 - Building blocks in our own battle to not give into the devil’s trickery
 - We have the word of God to lean into
 - God’s words written in the Bible
 - Written upon our hearts and minds
 - Word of flesh - Jesus
 - We have the Holy Spirit that strengthens and comforts
 - We have the waters of baptism that refresh and remind us whose we are
 - We have the promise
 - When we falter
 - Put our trust elsewhere, fail to worship only God, give into greed, selfish desires and self-preservation
 - We have the promise We are forgiven
 - We are not alone
 - Spirit accompanies us
 - Jesus is with us
 - 40 days, 40 years, every second, minute, day, month and year of our baptismal journey
 - He is with us

- He went ahead of us into the wilderness
 - He met temptation head on
 - He won the fight
 - He experienced all that we experience
 - He came down
 - Aligns himself with humanity
- Where are you hungering and thirsting right now?
 - What is tempting you in your 40-day journey?
 - What wilderness do you currently find yourself in?
 - Remember your building blocks
 - Trust in those building blocks
 - Lean on the solid foundation of those building blocks
 - Hear yet again the baptismal promise
 - You are mine
 - You my beloved
 - With you I am well pleased
 - Receive the Holy Spirit poured out upon you
 - Be filled with the power of the Spirit