

July 13, 2014 -- "Stained Glass Window 2, Part 2: *Resisting Temptation and Accepting Blessing*" - Rev. Seth D. Jones ©

Old Testament Reading: *Deuteronomy 28:1-8, 11*
Gospel Reading: *Matthew 4:1-11*

❖ **Review**

➤ **Teaching -- Temple**

- Teaching = Asking questions and listening - Rabbinic model
- Temple is where learning takes place
 - In his baptism, Jesus becomes the temple
 - ◆ We share this with Jesus
 - ◆ *1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

➤ **Turning to God - Torah**

- Torah/The Law shows how we turn to God
- Torah/The Law also drive us to God in our inability to live up to the Law
 - Jesus - for us - becomes the Law
 - ◆ *Matthew 5:17*
 - ◆ *Luke 10:26 - How do you read it?*
 - The whole of the Law -
 - Love the Lord
 - Love your neighbor

❖ **TEMPTATION to the World**

- Jesus faces what we face and he relies on what he has learned (Teaching) and the Word of God (Torah/Law) to deal with the temptations of the world
 - ***So also should we! Good enough for J it is good enough for us***
- Temptation is the stage at which we can resist the influence of the forces of evil and the world.
 - Once we give in to temptation, however, is when we fall into sin
 - Satan tries to do this with Jesus, and with us, by making us believe the sin to actually be a good, a virtue -
 - ◆ per 3rd Temptation
 - Temptation encompasses three aspects
 - (obvious evil is easy - genocide, murders, drug dealers selling to kids)
 - Satan is truly interested when we turn to God and works where God works
 - ◆ By making evil appear good, sin appear to be justified for the higher good of self and others
 - ◆ Three aspects of temptation to evil
 - Provision of God
 - *Psalms 104:27-31*

- Turn these rocks into bread
 - > Protection of God
 - *Psalm 5:11-12*
 - Throw yourself from this precipice
 - > Power of God
 - *Psalm 24*
 - Ruler over all the world, if only worship me
 - *Colossians 1:11-16*
- How do we resist when evil confronts these elements in our lives?
- > **BLESSING** = *The way we resist and confront temptation in the world*
 - Psalm 91:2-4
 - 1st Frame = *image - the gathered people in the Temple*
 - **recognize** the *Blessing of Community* in gathering, worshipping and learning together
 - Transition image = *Simeon blessing baby Jesus*
 - we need to **acknowledge** the blessing which has been given
 - ◆ Luke 2:33
 - 2nd Frame = *image - JtheB passing on the Cross (horizontal) and the Dove descending (vertical)*
 - We must **receive** the blessing that is given us
 - This is what Baptism is - the *recognition* of the gathered community who *acknowledges* the blessing which the person is about to *receive*
 - ◆ Notice the clam shell around JtheB's neck
 - > Clam/oyster shell is symbol of baptism
 - Perfect creation - takes in an irritant (sin) - baptism turns irritant into a thing of beauty (pearl)
 - Pilgrims used to pick them up as souvenirs at seashore shrines. So has become a symbol of pilgrimage - *the journey of faith*.
 - You will see it on many of the graves in Pilgrim and Puritan gravestones in NE.
 - Transition image = *Jesus as a carpenter*
 - Once we have received our blessing in Baptism (since Jesus' baptism is as much example for us as anything else) we must **work** to seek the blessings God has given us *in the world*
 - This is hard work - the physical quality of carpentry reflects the spiritual quality of the work required to live into our baptismal promises and blessings
 - 3rd Frame = *image - Jesus' hands - resistance or blessing? Both?*

- When we **rely** on God's blessings to us in the face of Temptation to give into the things of this world, we can resist just as Jesus resisted.
 - ◆ The teachings of our experience with the Lord Jesus Christ are the foundation for our trust in him, the Temple in which we stand with Christ.
 - ◆ The law of Jesus Christ - the Law he has inherited and the law he has written onto us (Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and Love your neighbor as yourself) - is the way we turn to God in the face of adversity
 - ◆ The temptations of the world are resisted when we rely on the Blessings of God which we have received, with Jesus, in our baptism.
- ❖ In faith, gather together so you might discuss, question, listen and learn the teachings of the faith, just as Jesus did in the Temple, recognizing that Jesus himself is the Temple in which we now worship.
- ❖ Turn to God by remembering WHO you are and WHOSE you are. This is the goal of the Law, the Torah. The Christian word for it is Repentance. The Law, which Jesus fulfills, drives us to the need for Jesus Christ. Accept the mantle of the Law and the Prophets which Jesus passes on to you in your baptism.
- ❖ The blessings Jesus receives in his baptism are also the blessings you receive in your baptism. It is those blessings which give you the power to resist the evils of the world and of the spiritual realms. Recognize, acknowledge, receive, work and rely on those blessings and do the hard work of faith God requires of us.
- ❖ AMEN