

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

*“Away with you, Satan!”*

Matthew 4:1–11

The Spirit drives Jesus into the desert. Not gently. Not comfortably. He is driven. Forty days of hunger. Forty days of silence. Forty days of stripping away every comfort. And when He is weakest—when His body trembles and His lips are cracked—the tempter comes. This is not a gentle story. It is a confrontation. And notice something stunning: Satan waits until Jesus is hungry. He waits until He is vulnerable. Temptation rarely comes when we feel strong. It comes when we are tired, lonely, discouraged—when we feel unseen, when prayer feels dry, when fasting feels pointless. “If you are the Son of God…” There it is. The first attack is not about bread; it is about identity. “If you are the Son of God…” The Father had just proclaimed at the River Jordan, “This is my beloved Son.” And now the enemy whispers, “Are you sure?” Lent is not first about giving up chocolate or coffee. Lent is about this question: Do you know who you are? You are beloved sons and daughters of the Father, and the enemy will always attack that identity first.

“Turn these stones into bread.” In other words: satisfy yourself. Use your power for yourself. Feed yourself first. How often are we tempted to build our lives on appetite—physical appetite, emotional appetite, the need to be affirmed, noticed, praised? We live in a world obsessed with consumption: more food, more entertainment, more validation. But Christ answers with unshakable conviction: “One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Hunger will not kill you, but a starving soul will. The second temptation is a spectacle: “Throw yourself down. Let the angels catch you.” Perform. Impress. Make God prove Himself. How many of us often pray like this? “Lord, if You are real, fix this immediately. If You love me, remove this cross.” But Jesus refuses to manipulate the Father. He refuses a faith built on drama instead of trust. “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” Real love does not demand proof; it surrenders.

And then the final temptation: power. “All these kingdoms I will give you… if you worship me.” It is the temptation to rule without the Cross—glory without suffering, a crown without thorns. Is that not the deepest seduction? To compromise just a little, to bow just slightly, to trade worship for comfort, to let ambition replace obedience. But look at Christ. He is exhausted. He is starving. And yet His voice does not tremble. “Get away, Satan!” No negotiation. No conversation. No curiosity. He stands on the Word of God. And here is the heart of it all: Jesus does this for us. He enters the desert so that when we enter ours—our addictions, our doubts, our secret battles—we do not fight alone. He defeats the enemy not with spectacle, not with force, but with obedience, with trust, with fidelity.

Lent is your desert. And maybe right now you feel hungry—for love, for clarity, for peace. Maybe you feel tempted to turn stones into bread, to demand signs, to bow to lesser gods. Do not be afraid of the desert. The desert strips away illusions. It reveals what we truly worship. It forces the question: Who do I belong to? At the end of the Gospel, the angels minister to Him. After the battle, there is consolation. If we stand with Christ—if we cling to the Word, if we refuse the lie about our identity—angels will minister to us. Grace will come. Strength will come. Resurrection will come. This Lent is not about small sacrifices. It is about becoming unshakeable. It is about learning to say, with Christ and in Christ: I belong to the Father. I will not bow. I will worship the Lord my God and serve Him alone.