

Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent

"You shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you..."
(Deut. 26:11).

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

In the beginning, Adam was True Man - *fully human* -

NOT in the sense that he had opposable thumbs, walked on two legs, or would eventually come up with the idea for indoor plumbing,

but in the sense that he bore the Image of God.

Adam, True Man, was set apart from everything else in creation.

He was entrusted with dominion - with tending the world and providing for spouse and children and neighbor in his vocations as the mask of God,

the very means by which God would provide for the life of the world.

In the fullness of his humanity, he was set apart from everything else in creation for love -

for intimate communion with God and with one another - with spouse and children and neighbor.

In the beginning, Adam lived in the full awareness of his identity, meaning, and purpose as the image of God.

He knew what it meant to be *fully*

human,

fearing, loving, and trusting in God above
all things.

He knew that God alone
would provide for all things – that He had given him his body and soul, his food
and drink, his beloved wife, the world, and everything in it, and would
continue to take care of it.

He knew that God had created him in righteousness for everlasting
communion with Him.

And He knew the truth of God's Word – "Be fruitful and multiply... Have
dominion over every living thing...

I have given you every plant, every tree for
food...

Don't take, don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or
you shall surely die..." (Gen 2).

Yes – Adam and his
wife, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, True Man, *fully human*,

feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things.

They *trusted* Him for His provision.

They *loved* Him for His
righteousness.

And they *feared* Him,
respected Him, and acknowledged Him to be the Lord, ordering their lives in
accordance with His Word—

Until they didn't—

until the devil, that crafty serpent, offered a different word, a
beguiling word... a *competitive word*.

It was a word of unimaginable
potential and mind-boggling promise:

“You will be like God” (Gen 3:5)!

And who wouldn't
want that?

It made so much sense! It looked so desirable!

So they bit... literally.

They broke communion
with God by rejecting His Word and taking the forbidden fruit.

They no longer feared, loved, and trusted in *Him* above all things,
but instead chose to order their lives in accordance with this *competitive* word,
this *ungodly* word that promised
them a whole *new* identity, meaning,
and purpose for their lives: We would be like God!

And in that very
moment, we lost our full humanity.

We lost the image of God.

We enslaved ourselves to that ungodly,
demonic word,

and we have lived under the delusion that we can now provide for
ourselves, justify ourselves, and determine what is true for ourselves.

No longer led by the
Spirit, no longer ordering our lives in accordance with God's Word,

we are little different from the beasts of the field whose sole concern
is filling our bellies, satisfying some certain God-given urges,

and getting some sleep.

No longer fully human, we have set our minds on the things of the flesh.

But there now has
come a second Adam – the Lord Jesus Christ –

the True Man, fully human, emerging from His baptism in the Jordan a
new creation,

different from what He was when He went in.

For He went into that
water Holy and Righteous, True God and True Man, having eternal dominion, and
bearing
the light of God's image (2Cor 4:6).

But He came out bearing your sin and mine – the sin of the world –

everybody's sin but His own, for He had no
sin of His own.

He went into that
Jordan river to unite Himself with you in your sin, that in those baptismal
waters,

you might be united with Him in His righteousness.

Rising up from the
water, He then began the journey that we read of today –

the journey through temptation and the wilderness –

the journey of perfect obedience even to the cross where He would die for
your sin to restore you to your full humanity.

We are told Jesus
was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Luke 4:1), NOT as in “thrown under
bus” or “tossed into the arena” to see how He'd do,

but as in, “led by the Spirit, and not by the flesh.”

Led by the Spirit, He was guided by the Word of God and not by the

competitive word of the devil.

The devil, of course,
tried to lead Him astray.

He had, after all, been successful 100% of the time so far in turning
Man *away* from his full humanity to go
the way of rebellious beasts.

But Jesus was led by
the Spirit and NOT by the flesh.

And He did what we could not do ourselves.

“Bearing the
likeness of sinful flesh,” as St. Paul explains,

“He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement
of the Law might be fulfilled *in us*”
(Rom 8:3-4), that is,

that WE might be restored to the fullness of our humanity by His
victory over sin.

He walked not
according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And so He remained True Man, fully human every step of the way,
fearing, loving, and trusting in God above
all things.

Ever aware of His
identity, meaning, and purpose,

He remained faithful in His vocation as Son of God and Lover of the
World.

He ordered his entire life in accordance with the Word of God, trusting
in the provision of His Father,

walking in righteousness,

walking in the Way of Truth.

The devil gave it

his best shot of course, tempting Jesus to go it alone, to reject the Spirit and His Father's Word,

to *provide* for Himself, *justify* Himself, and chose what was *true* for Himself.

"Getting a little

hungry? Provide for yourself - Turn this stone into bread."

But Jesus does NOT provide for Himself,

but trusts fully in His Father's provision.

"Ready to be king of

the world and gather Your people to Yourself?

Just make this one little compromise, this one little concession, and it can all be yours.

Simply give me a nod, a little thanks, a little praise -

Certainly you can justify that for all good it will do in the long run..."

But Jesus goes the

way of the Spirit and refuses to justify such a compromise.

He will fear, love, and trust in God alone,

and He will not acknowledge this competing word.

Finally, the devil takes

one last shot and offers a different interpretation of God's Word:

"You know, you can jump from here and the angels will scoop you up and bring you in for a nice, gentle landing, right? Has not God promised in His

Word?

So go for it -

Just “throw yourself down from here...” (Luke 4:9).

But led by the Spirit, Jesus abides by the spirit of God’s Word, refusing to test God, tempt God, or go with this different interpretation of the Scriptures.

He fears, loves, and trusts in God alone, remaining perfectly obedient to His Father,

holding fast to that Image of God - doing what you and I failed to do.

He remained True Man
- *fully* Human, without sin!

And He did it for you, because you could not do it for yourself.

Indeed, Christ’s righteousness is now YOUR righteousness.

For God’s Word clearly states, “As by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the One Man’s obedience the many will be made righteous”
(Rom 5:19).

And God does not lie!

In Christ, your humanity
has been fully restored!

Through your Baptism into Christ crucified and risen, you ARE a new creation -

fully human, *fully*
regenerated, *fully* re-genesis’ed!

And as you now make
your way through the wilderness of this fallen world,

you, too, have the Spirit of Truth who leads you, protects you, and
comforts you.

So walk by the
Spirit, and not according to the flesh.

Don't let Satan wrap you up in that idolatrous, day-to-day delusion
that you can actually provide all things for yourself, for it is your Father in
heaven who provides for your every need.

Don't give in to the devil's idolatrous delusion that you can actually justify
yourself and excuse your actions, for it is Christ your Redeemer who justifies
you and clothes you in His righteousness.

And don't give in to that idolatrous delusion that you can interpret
the Scriptures any way you want and choose what is true for yourself, for the
HS calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies you in the one true faith.

So, don't be a
beast.

Don't go the way of the devil and his competitive word.

Don't go the way of your sinful flesh, but in
the way of the Spirit.

Go in the way of
your identity, meaning, and purpose as a new creation in Christ -

Go in the way of vocation, love, peace, and everlasting communion with
God and with one another.

Go in the way that fears, loves, and trusts
in God above all things...

That is, after all, what it means to be fully
human!

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Preached by Pastor Holowach

Sermon texts: Psalm 91:1-13, Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Romans 10:8-13, Luke 4:1-13.