

and Adam's action led to the sin of many but Christ's will lead many to godliness (v. 19), to "eternal life" (v. 21). (Vv. 13-14b are an aside: before God gave Moses the Law, humans were not held accountable for their sins; even so they died.)

Matthew 4:1-11

In Mark, only the essential historical facts are recorded: those in vv. 1, 2 and 11c. The disciples probably knew none of the details of Jesus' trials, for temptation is essentially a personal inner battle with one's conscience. "Forty days" (v. 2) reminds us of Moses and Elijah, both of whom also fasted for forty days as they prepared for their roles as God's agents to Israel – as does Jesus. All three of the temptations the Devil ("the tempter", v. 3, "Satan", v. 10) presents to Jesus are ways of sinning against the great commandment in Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, ... soul, and ... might". The "heart" was the seat of will, of moral choice; "soul" means life; "might" means possessions. (All Jesus' answers are from Deuteronomy 6-8.) To change "stones" (v. 3) into bread would be to use his power for his personal benefit. Jesus says that the "word" (v. 4) of God is the chief nourishment. The "holy city" (v. 5) is Jerusalem; a "pinnacle" probably overlooked the temple courts and the deep Kidron Valley. Jesus answers: testing God's protection by unnecessarily risking life is a mockery of real martyrdom – and of his sacrifice to come (v. 7). The Devil, evil forces personified, invites Jesus to prefer personal wealth and power over love of God (vv. 8-9). Jesus answers: God is the only god to be worshipped and served (v. 10). The details make the point that Jesus is the perfect lover of God, the ideal Israelite, the founder of a new way of being human. © 1996-2020 Chris Haslam

~ Notices ~

Ukraine Appeal clareanglicans.ie or: www.christianaid.ie

Turkey and Syria Earthquake relief - Bishop's appeal

– see sheet at back of church for details or go to: www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give

Living the Questions Course – sign-up sheet in church

Book Club 1st (or 2nd) Tuesday of every month – please ask Sue or Carolyn (St C) or Clare (SP) for details.

Vestry membership - For those not yet on the general vestry list, please complete a form at the back of church if you would like to be part of the church's Easter Vestry.

Meditation- St Columba's – Every Thurs 7.30pm- church room.

Lectio Divina – please let me know if you would be interested in forming a group who would meet to read and reflect upon scripture together. See sign-up sheet.

Prayer Workshop I plan to offer a workshop on prayer during Lent. Could let me know what best suits on the sign-up sheet.

Martin Sheen movie – 'The Way'. As a Lenten reflection, it is a moving and inspiring film - venue will either be the Rectory or in church depending on numbers. See sign-up sheet.

Confirmation - Please let the Rector know if are thinking of becoming confirmed in 2020 – I have three names so far.

Select Vestry meetings - members will be emailed for agreed dates.

Easter Vestries – we must soon set dates for Easter Vestries.

Website: clareanglicans.ie

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com

Tel: 065 672 4721

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1st Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Spirit of God, you drove Jesus to the edge of the world to find his truth and his calling: scour our hearts and awaken our hunger, that freed from empty promises and hopes we may find ourselves in you, through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Hymns

1) 207, Forty days and forty nights

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N29ZnwU4LM>

2) 596, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxZeY2D5tc>

3) 645, Father hear the prayer we offer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1-9wam-2Rk>

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Psalms 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, *
whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, *
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my
groaning all day long. *

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity; *

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; *
at a time of distress,

the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble; *

you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; *
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, *

whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.

Many are the torments of the wicked, *
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.
Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,*
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Romans 5:12-19

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned, sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just 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.

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God, you renew us with the living bread from heaven. Nourish our faith, increase our hope, strengthen our love, and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from out of your mouth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Commentary

Genesis 2:15-17;3:1-7

Our reading is excerpts from an epic tale about the creation of humanity, beginning from after the creation of "the heavens and the earth" (2:4), a time when the earth was semi-arid. Ancient peoples thought that there were waters under the earth. Seepage of this water was insufficient for

cultivation; as yet there was no rain and "no one to till the ground" (2:5). At that time, God formed human (Hebrew: adam) "from the dust of the ground" (2:7) and gave him his spirit of life. God put human (as yet androgynous) in Eden (2:8), his earthly domain, to cultivate and care for it. God tells him he may eat the fruit of the trees there, except for two: that of "the knowledge of good and evil" (2:17), of complete knowledge and understanding (or of moral choice); and that of "life" (2:9, 3:3), of eternal life, of becoming divine. If he does, he will "die", i.e. be separated from God. God provides human with an equal "partner" (2:18) of human's flesh. Thus the tale explains sex, of "Man" (2:23, Hebrew: ish) and "Woman" (isha). At this point, the couple do not see shame in nudity, for their relationship to God is guiltless. Now the snake, a mischievous creature, (also a character in other ancient epics) appears. He sows doubt in the woman's mind about what God has commanded, and she responds inaccurately (3:2): she adds "nor shall you touch it" (3:3). The snake suggests that God is trying to fool her: rather than diving, she will attain mastery of knowledge, and become divine ("like God", 3:5). She finds this irresistible; she eats of its fruit and gives some to the man. Nudity is now embarrassing, for the couple has lost its innocent trusting relationship with God (3:8). In 3:8-19 God metes out punishment for disobeying his order: to the snake: it will lack legs and eat dust to the woman: (a) despite the great pain of child-bearing, she will seek to bear more children; (b) (in an ancient society) man "shall rule over you" to the man: (a) cultivation will be laborious; (b) he will die, returning to "dust"; and to all three: humans and snakes will be enemies.

Thus, are explained some basic facts of life. But sin has not changed God's intent: Eve is "mother of all living" (3:20) and God protects the couple by making "garments" (3:21) for them. To protect them from exceeding human limitations and becoming like gods, he expels them from Eden, into the ordinary world.

Psalms 32

The psalmist tells us what he has learned in life: happiness is having one's sin forgiven and taken away ("covered") by God, and enjoying a clear conscience (v. 2). In vv. 3-5, he states his experiences: he was seriously ill ("your hand was heavy upon me") and was in pain ("groaning"), both signs of his alienation from God. (Illness was commonly regarded as punishment for sin.) He acknowledged his sin and did not continue his waywardness ("I did not hide ...", v. 5); he confessed to God, and God forgave him. Now v. 6: those who are faithful to God are not in danger of dying when gravely ill ("distress", v. 6). (The "waters" are a symbol of death.) He is now protected by God (v. 7). Perhaps God speaks in vv. 8-9: he will lead the psalmist in his ways, through instruction and counsel. Don't be like "a horse or a mule" (v. 9) who must be coerced into action: use your initiative in being open to God. V. 11 is spoken to the congregation in the Temple: rejoice in the Lord!

Romans 5:12-19

Paul has said that Christians, reconciled to God, will be saved, sharing in the risen life of Christ. Two notions are important here: the punishment for Adam's sin was to die both physically and spiritually ("death came through sin"); and we both sin ourselves and share in his sin ("spread to all"). Paul contrasts Adam and Christ, both inaugurators of eras. Adam foreshadowed Christ as head of humanity ("type", v. 14, precursor). Adam disobeyed God's direct command ("the transgression", v. 14, "the trespass", v. 15). The "free gift", i.e. Christ, is unlike Adam's sin: "many died" before Christ's coming but even more so are "many" (indeed all) saved through Christ; Adam was condemned to separation from God but Christ brings union with God (vv. 16, 18); Adam's sin allowed "death" (v. 17) to rule through the Devil ("that one") but we let good rule our hearts ("dominion in life");