

Amen and amen. When we come this morning again to Luke chapter 4, before we turn there, let's pray together and ask God's blessing. Father in heaven, we thank you for your word and its truth and its power to convict us of our sins, to convert us, O God, from the wrong path onto the right path, from unbelief to faith, from death to life. It brings us to know Christ our Savior, the only name under heaven given amongst men by which we can, by which we must be saved. We come this morning, O God,

as those by nature who are foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, We spend our life in malice and envy. We are hateful and we hate one another by nature. And yet, O Lord, when the kindness of our God and your love for all mankind appeared, you saved us, not on the basis of deed, which we have done in righteousness, but according to your mercy, by the washing of regeneration and by renewal of the Holy Spirit. So come this morning, Father, by your spirits this afternoon, and fill us and strengthen us to stand firm in the faith, to resist the devil, confident that when we do, he will flee from us. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, in our text this morning,

we see our brave Savior tested once again. He's being tested on his allegiance to God, on his commitment to the first commandment, thou shalt have no other gods before me, on his laser focus to keep the glory of God's name and the good of God's people firmly in focus. Will he stay on mission? Will he win the world for God, God's way? And to do that, of course, he must endure the cross. He must despise the shame in order to bring many sons home to glory. But the devil offers up another way, another possibility of winning the world that involves sidestepping the cross. What a thought. And he can have the world. If only he will bow down and worship the devil. An easier way, a less costly way to win the world. Or so the devil says. Now you remember in Luke's gospel, Luke is setting forth Christ as the second Adam. If you read chapter three of Luke's gospel, you'll see it gives Christ's genealogy. And it ends, it goes way further back. Matthew goes back to Abraham, but Luke goes all the way back to Adam. Jesus is the son of Adam, the son of God. These two sons of God, Adam, the son of God, and Christ, the son of God. And just like Adam, Adam was tested at the very beginning of his public ministry of representation of every human being, Christ is tested by Satan at the very beginning of his temptation, or his ministry. Adam, of course, was tempted in a garden, paradise, well-fed, strong. Christ is tempted in the wilderness, a barren wasteland, a graphic picture of what sin has done to the world. And Christ is tempted when he's physically exhausted. He's been fasting for 40 days, and he is at the end of his tether, at least in terms of his physical strength. And that's the question, will

Christ stand where Adam fell. And you remember from last week as well that the crux of every temptation, the way you understand the temptation is not by listening to this devil and he's trying to imagine what was the devil getting at, what nut was he trying to turn with the wrench of temptation, but you go to Christ. Christ gives the perfect answer to every temptation. And you look at what Christ said and how Christ responded. And as you look at Christ, you notice he constantly quotes scripture. It is written is the answer and end of any discussion. But Christ doesn't just quote any scripture, he quotes scripture only from the book of Deuteronomy. And that's suggestive too, because Christ is in the wilderness, just like Israel was. They were there for 40 years. Christ is there 40 days, but the number kind of parallels the two, 40 years, 40 days. And you remember the book of Deuteronomy was given to explain why God left Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. And the reason was they failed three very particular tests. The test of obedience, the test of worship, and the test of trust. And you'll see Christ as a second Israel, as it were, being in the wilderness, being tested, and just like Israel, he is tested on obedience. Will he wait for God to give him the right to eat his next meal? Or will he exercise his divine power independently of the Father and make bread for himself? And Jesus passed the test of obedience. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. Well this week we'll see him be tested on worship. Will he get the first commandment right or not? And then next week we'll see him test, pass the test or face the test of trust. Will he trust God? Will he trust the promises of God to keep him and to hold him? Or like Israel in the wilderness, will he always be demanding some tangible evidence, some tangible proof that God is with him and that God is on his side? And he'll face that test as the devil comes and quotes scripture to the Son of God. That'll be next week. Actually, it'll be the week after next, because I don't think we'll get through everything today. I want to come back and circle back next week and speak a little bit more to you. about idolatry. Let's read the word of God today, this morning. I'm going to begin in verse 4. Actually, I'm sorry, verse 5. This is the word of God. And the devil took Jesus up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. and said to him, to you, I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to him, I will give it, sorry, to whom I will. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours. And Jesus answered him, it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him alone. shall you serve. Him alone shall you serve. Amen. So the devil takes Jesus up to a high mountain, a very high mountain. And imagine he's setting before Christ flashes of visions, because there's no mountain on earth, of course, from which you can see all the kingdoms. But it's metaphorical,

and the prophets had that in the Old Testament, and the devil brings Jesus up in a flash to a high mountain, and he's standing there, and he sees flashes, I think, of the visions of all of the glories of all of the kingdoms in the world. And the devil says to Jesus, I'll give these to you if you'll bow down and worship me. They've all been given to me. Now in what sense was that a real promise? Could the devil really say that? And there was a sense he could say that. You remember, the Bible calls the devil again and again, the God of this world. Now, the way I explain that simply is, if you remember back in the Garden of Eden, what did Adam do? Adam followed the devil. He listened to the devil's voice when he should have listened to God's voice. He took the devil as his God and rejected Yahweh, the true God, the maker of heaven and earth. And in a sense, God said to Adam and all his children, okay, if you want the devil as your master, I'll give you the devil as your master, and we'll see how that works out for you. And God gave the world over for 4,000 years into massive satanic darkness. debauchery, depravity, despair, and death, as the devil held the world in the grip of his thrall. And so the devil does have massive authority, and Jesus wouldn't be the first man, and he wasn't the last. who exchanged his soul for the world. Remember Jesus says, what will a man give if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? And that's the test, will you? Now you need to realize, in another sense though, it was not a real promise. Unlike God who keeps all of his promises to all of his children. The devil keeps none of his promises. Not now, not ever. Remember, he encouraged Adam and Eve to exchange paradise for an apple. You'll be like God, Satan said. He already was like God. And he took the apple and became more like the devil. As Thomas Watson said, God made us a little lower than the angels, but sin has left us a little better than the devils. And he already was naked, but he took the apple and suddenly he knew he was naked and he felt he was naked in an altogether new way. He felt exposed. He felt ashamed. He felt like he wanted to run and hide from God, his creator, which of course he did. The devil makes promises he never delivers on them. He's like the fisherman. Thomas Brooks says in his wonderful little book, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, Satan presents the bait and he hides the hook. He presents the bait. He pretends that he wants to feed you, but he doesn't want to give you the bait. He wants you to have the hook. And after the hook, the net. And after the net, the shore where you're flapping about in a realm where God never intended you to live. Outside the life-giving water of his living presence. Out on the shore, there you are. And after the shore comes the

billy club. And after the billy club comes the fire. He presents the bait, he hides the hook. The devil never makes good on his promises. So Satan offers Jesus the world. And here's the kicker. He doesn't have to go to the cross in order to get it. All he has to do is bow the knee and worship Jesus, or worship Satan, just once. And he can have the world an easier way, a less costly way. And notice how Christ answers.

It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him alone you shall serve. And if you have a footnote in your Bible or you know your Old Testament, you'll know that what Christ is referring to here is the book of Deuteronomy chapter six. It's the Shema. If you have a Bible, you can turn back there. If you don't, I'll read it, and don't panic, because it's a very familiar text. But the Shema, Jewish men, every morning when they get up, they say, Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Eched. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. It's the beginning of the Shema, right. And you've got to always remember, when you read the Bible, that if the New Testament quotes a portion of the Bible, it expects you to know all the context. Like, if I were to say, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, you would know I'm quoting from Psalm 23, and the rest of the Psalm would come into your mind. If I were to say, all things work together for good to those who love God and to those who are called according to His purpose, you would know I was quoting from Romans 8, 28, and you maybe have a bit of the rest of the section in your mind. Well, the Jews in the Old Testament And the apostles in the early church, they knew their Old Testament as well as we know Psalm 23 and Romans 8. So Christ only has to mention a verse, and it all comes into mind. Right? Like if I quoted a movie quote, and it was a well-known movie, the whole movie you've seen would come into your mind. You know, when I run, I feel his pleasure. from Charge of Fire, and you remember the whole movie. Well, the Jews are like that in the Old Testament, so when you hear a quote, you gotta go back and see, where did that quote come from? And it's the Shema in Deuteronomy 6, the book that explained why Israel were left to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, right? Now Christ is quoting from verse 11 of the Shema, actually, sorry, verse 13, but let's just work our way through, because it shows us the heart of Old Testament piety. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. That's wonderful. Now stop there a second. That when you realize there's only one God, it gives a simplicity to life. One God. If there's one God, then only one person should have all of your affection. And you love him with all of your heart. The Hebrew word for heart is

the inner man. We have a Greco-Roman view of our heart, which means we think of it as the place of our affections, like Valentine's Day, the arrow through the heart. But the Hebrew view of the heart is much bigger than that. The heart encompasses the whole inner man. When you close your eyes, the heart is the real you behind your eyelids, the person living in the darkness. We think with our heart. Every intent of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6 verse 5. Our conscience is part of our heart. When David cut off Saul's robe, it says his heart struck him in the Hebrew. So the heart is the whole you. And because there's one God, the whole of you should be given in love for God. Everything that you are, the real person given to God. With all of your heart. It doesn't stop there. With all of your soul. Now the word soul in Hebrew goes back to a very deep ancient Akkadian word for throat. It's reminiscent of God breathing the soul, the life force of man into Adam that made him more than dust. Adam's a pile of dust. And suddenly he becomes a living soul, the breath of God. And the soul therefore represents your life force. It's an Old Testament It's kind of, maybe Sting was thinking about that when he wrote that famous song, every breath that I take, I'll be loving you, right? That's the idea. With all of our person, but with all of our breath, every breath, every breath I breathe in that gives me life to take another step, I'm gonna spend that breath and spend that life loving you. But he doesn't stop there. With all your heart, with all your breath, all your soul, all your, Might, now the Hebrew is actually the word very, literally says love the Lord your God with all your very. which makes terrible grammar, but it makes wonderful theology and for piety. We're to bring all of our veriness, no lackluster, half-hearted, lily-livered, lukewarm love. We're to bring all of the energies of our being to bear when we worship God. We're a Ferrari on the open road. I passed a Ferrari, actually it passed me, not surprisingly, on 77. It was glorious, brand new Ferrari, and the roar of that engine. It was made not to do 70 miles an hour, it was made for the Autobahn, 180 miles an hour, down the road, roaring full throttle. And that's to be a picture of you, you're to give all of your being in love to God. And he goes on, not just you, but your family. And these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. You're to cut them literally, not just teach them, the word is to cut them, to engrave them into the hearts of your children. And you do that by holy gossip, talking about them everywhere you go and in everything you do. When you sit down, rise up, when you go out, when you come

in. These opposites, merisms that cover not just going out and coming back, but everything in between. It's a Hebrew poetic metaphor, right? It's like govern your family. And this word is to leave its mark on your thinking, your touching, your home life, and on your civic duty. It says that next. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand. They shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Now that's interesting, right? The sign on your head. And on your hands, the Jews took that literally and put law in little boxes and put it on their hands and their eyes. But it's actually, it was much more symbolic than that. The law is to overshadow your thinking, your mind. And the law is to overshadow your touching, your working, your living, your hands. And in Revelation, right, the devil's people also have a mark on their head, on their hands. And it's not a credit card chip. It's a way of thinking and a way of working and living that marks you out as belonging to the devil, just like God's people in the Old Testament had a way of thinking and living that marked them out as belonging to God. It's much more practical and goes much deeper than a credit card chip in your hand or on your head. You can still use Apple Pay, don't panic, right. And it's to be on the doors of your house, it's to govern your homes, and on the gates of your cities, it's to govern your civic life. Right? I know that thou shalt not steal, and thou shalt not commit adultery, can make a very uncomfortable working environment for lawyers and politicians, but it's to govern our civic life. Present lawyers accept it, I'm sure you all love the Ten Commandments, right? But this one great love has one great enemy, and it's forgetfulness. We can forget the giver and think only of the gift. We are to worship the giver and use his gifts, but we human beings are so prone to get that back to front. We worship the gifts of God and we use the giver, the one who gave them. And we get now to Christ's quote. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord your God. who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the Lord your God you shall fear, Him you shall serve, and by His name you shall swear. And that's the verse that Christ's referring back to. He's saying, I will not forget my Father. I'll not forget His word, I'll not forget His glory, I'll not forget His mission. I'm gonna win the world, but I'm gonna win the world His way, and that means going through the cross, not sidestepping it. Even if that means that I go to the cross with the darkness and the curse and the hell and

the tomb, so be it. I will allow nothing to distract me, to divert me from my Father's will and the cost that I will pay to save my Father's people. And that commitment of Christ is the foundation of all your security and mine." He hasn't changed. He's still committed, laser-focused on doing the Father's will. He has died and He has risen, and He will come again, but in between, you better believe He will keep the souls of those people for whom He paid a very great price to redeem all those years ago on the cross. That's the essence of the temptation. Now we're gonna come back next week and think more about this in detail. But you and I like to think that we're past idolatry. That's something pagans do, bowing the knee to worship gods of wood and stone, silly people. We like to think we're past idolatry, but we are not. I had to think, well the first commandment is so basic, it's so simple, it's so obvious. How could we possibly go a foot wrong there? God is God and we are not, and nothing else is either. It's easy. We're to allow nothing to take his place, to challenge his primacy, to obscure his glory. We think, I've got that down, that's easy. We like to think that we're past idolatry, but we are not. You remember Calvin's famous quote that we are by nature, we have by nature in us a factory of idols. Our hearts are constantly manufacturing idols. What is an idol? We'll end here this morning or this afternoon. An idol is anything that challenges the place of God in your life, in your mind, in your affections, in your faculty of desire and choice. One of my friends in ministry likes to put it like this, an idol is anything that you allow to control you the way only God should. Think about that. An idol is anything that you allow to control you the way only God should. How does the true God control you? Think about that. If you know how the true God controls you, you'll understand when you turn away from him, you're allowing the false God to control you in that way. The true God commands our allegiance and our love, right? Because he alone can promise us what I call the three S's that human beings all yearn for. Satisfaction, security, and significance. Satisfaction, we want to feel satisfied with our lives. Want to be happy. And God, of course, is the only source of satisfaction. At his right hand, there are pleasures forevermore. He gives us the river of his delights. In his light we see light. I have come, Christ said, that you might have life and have it abundantly. God isn't the enemy of our life. He's the friend of our life and the friend of our happiness. I tell that to my kids all the time. You know, I am the friend of your happiness. Satisfaction. Security. We want to feel safe. We want to feel secure. We want us to be secure. We want our families, our friends to be secure, the people we value, the institutions we value, the country we value. We want to feel safe. And where do you find safety? God is our refuge and strength, the help in tight places, always

close at hand. God's our refuge, our shield,  
our storm shelter. That's where you find security.  
And then significance. We want to feel that our life  
has mattered. We've made the right difference in the lives  
of the right people by doing the right things and for the  
right end. When we die, we want people to miss us. We want to  
feel that our life counted for something, don't we? Where do  
you get that significance? Money? Wisdom? No, God says,  
let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the rich  
man boast in his wealth, or the mighty man boast in his strength,  
but let him who boasts boast in this, that he knows and understands  
me, that I am the Lord. Satisfaction, security, and significance. And God should  
control us, loving  
Him, serving Him, glorifying Him, as Piper says, by enjoying  
Him forever, as the sole source of satisfaction, the sole source  
of security, the sole source of significance. But the problem  
is, you and I, by nature, and it's the reason behind the season  
of every sin you or I ever commit, we take our eyes off God and  
we look down to things down here and we allow other things to  
control us the way only God should. We allow other things to whisper  
in our ears, so I can satisfy you without God. Illicit sex. gluttony, overindulgence  
in alcohol,  
ungodly entertainment, getting your own back on people who hurt  
you. They hurt you, and so you get the dagger, and you oil it, and you  
wait for that right moment at the right time, in just the right  
circumstance when you can stick the knife in and twist it, and  
you do it in such a way that you're assassinating their character  
purely for prayer. I'm so concerned about Lizzie-Ann,  
you know. And it'll sound so pious, but the dagger goes in,  
and the destruction is done, and the reputation is ruined,  
and you walk away thinking, oh. We're finding satisfaction, not  
by serving God, but by satisfying ourselves without God and against  
God. Idols. And then security. Are we gonna trust God? Or are  
we gonna try to kinda control life ourselves? How many mothers,  
how many fathers try to control their family? And they grip their  
children like sand in Darth Vader's fist, but the harder they grasp,  
the more the sand slips through his fingers, as Princess Leia  
says. And we try to control everything. We're not trusting God, no, no,  
we'll do that, we'll take care of it ourselves. Or in a workplace,  
similarly, we can easily pull other people's down. Behind the  
scenes in work, we're manipulating people, all for climbing over  
other people's carcasses as we assassinate them in the workplace,  
put them down, showing how wise we are to see the faults in brother  
or sister, and we're putting them down, we're climbing up.  
out of the bucket, as it were, like a lobster, over the bodies  
of those around us, trying to get some security. And then significance. Are you  
going to boost? What  
makes you significant? Is it that you know God? Or is  
it Do you live life with deep insecurity and you think, I'm  
really nothing? I better define myself by the



clothes I wear and the car I drive and the place I live and the job I do. And it's amazing, there's a great little book called Embracing Obscurity, it's anonymous. And the author jokes about this, he says, and it became a bestseller, it's a fantastic book. Really, really, really good book. And he realized, when I wrote this book, it was gonna be, it was a, God had given me great help, it was a great book, and I knew it would sell. And he said, but how can I put my name on a book when the title's called Embracing Obscurity? So he said, I left the name off the title. But he said, I found myself hoping by some, somebody would out me, and I would be known as the guy who wrote the book by accident. We long to be more than just another human being. We want to be seen as successful and powerful. Even me, minister. Who are you? And he talks about taglines. We all have a tagline. Who are you? I'm so-and-so. I'm Sally Ann, right? And we have a tagline to show that we are something. In the past it was, well, you know, I'm a pastor. But I used to be a physician. because I don't want anyone to think I was just a pastor. I mean, oh no, you know, somebody out in the world that I'm just a pastor. No, no, I used to be a physician. I used to be something. Now I say I'm a pastor, but I'm not just a pastor. I'm the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina. And you might know who I am. You might not know who I am, because I'm the least well-known pastor they've ever had. But Dr. Thomas and Dr. Ferguson were their pastors before me, and they're really famous, right? But we all have those wee tag lines we slip in about our children, who they are, what they're doing, their achievements, their successes, and so forth, to try and make ourselves feel significant. And when we do that, we're taking our eyes off God, that we know God. And what's more, He is not ashamed to know us. That's the source of true significance. So we'll come back next week. I'm hearing alarms going off, probably reminding me that it is 1245. So I will let you get back to your afternoons, but keep this in your mind. We have a Savior who passed every test, the test of obedience, the test of worship, and next week, two weeks time, the test of trust. And we are not justified before God by our ability to pass the test, but our righteousness is up there with Christ, who's passed every test God ever sent him, the devil ever sent him, and he has justified us with his righteousness, and on the cross, he died in my place, in our place, for our sins, to pay down the debt that we owed God. because of all the tests we have failed again and again and again. Look at the world today. You walk out here, you see a graveyard full of evidence that Adam failed the test. All across this world, graveyards filling up. rapidly because Adam failed the test. But we have a second Adam who didn't fail, he didn't fall, he stood firm against the devil. And in that, we can rest secure. Before you go into the fray this

week to face the devil yourself, remember the outcome is secure, not because of whether you pass or fail the test. but because Christ has passed the test for you, and you stand in Him, which is the root of satisfaction, security, and significance. Let's pray together. Father,

we thank you for your word. It's searching, oh God. We pray next week as we come back and delve a little deeper into the subject of idolatry and how we do have this tangled web of idolatrous lies in my heart and in the people's heart that lead us astray. And I pray, Father, you would help me, help them, help us all to lay aside every God substitute and to worship and serve you alone, our Father in heaven. In Jesus' name, amen.