

Journey to Easter- Friday, February 19 (Day 3)

Mark 1:9–15 NIV

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The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Jesus Announces the Good News

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Discussion

When people think of the Holy Spirit's fruits, they often think of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.—and not without good reason (see Galatians 5:22–23). The Spirit energizes and enlightens, comforts and encourages. All of this is true. But Mark 1 reminds us that the Spirit also drives us into the world where we encounter adversity, resistance, and temptation. Immediately after his

baptism, the Spirit "drove" Jesus into the wilderness, where he was tempted by Satan. Lent offers us a time to reconsider how we think and talk about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's work is manifold and powerful. But one thing is certain: like the Israelites, we will be led into the wilderness, where faith is tested and adversity is certain. But like Jesus, we enter that wilderness with the same baptismal promise Jesus received: "You are the beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for accompanying us in the wilderness, where we face all manner of adversity, temptation, and resistance. Give us strength to trust you. Amen.

Source: Luther Seminary St. Paul, MN

Image: Submitted by the Dymeks from a trip to the Holy Land purchased in Jerusalem.

