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Faith in the Home

First Sunday of Lent, Mark 1:9-15, "Wild Animals and Putting Things Right."

Immediately after Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit drove Jesus out to the wilderness for forty days. The forty days is significant because that amount of time represents the 40 years that the people of Israel were in the wilderness before being led into the promised land. Jesus' life and ministry is meant to relive much of Israel's early history, because He is the living embodiment of how Israel was called to live. This is also a precursor in the text to Jesus' suffering on the cross.

Adam and Eve's encounter when they were tempted by Satan. This takes us back to the fight of the temptations and finally drove Satan away from Him. Jesus is a living man, living as man was meant to live in God's creation before the fall.

One interesting highlight of Mark's account of Jesus' time in the wilderness is the testimony that Jesus was with the wild animals. Imagine encountering a dangerous wild animal in the wilderness. Imagine approaching a bear cub to give it a hug in front of its mother. What would it be like to have a pride of lions around you with each one waiting for their turn to have you rub their belly, and scratch behind the ears? That should sound completely absurd. However, had man never fallen then those things would be completely possible. God gave man dominion over all of creation, and Jesus being amidst of wild animals unharmed is revealing that Jesus has come to reclaim, renew, and restore His creation from Satan and our sinful fall.

Finally, the angels that ministered to Jesus served the practical function of meeting Jesus' human needs after his long fast. Given that Jesus was human, He would need nourishment and rest. The angels provided those for Jesus. But there is of course a larger meaning behind the angels ministering to Jesus. The angels serve God on His heavenly throne, and so there ministering to Jesus demonstrates that the man from Nazareth who would die and rise for our sins was and is indeed God, incarnate as a man. The angels serve God, and there they were serving Jesus. Therefore, Mark is proclaiming that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God.

Mark used two verses to sum up Jesus' temptation and forty days in the wilderness, and they contain a lot of meaning. It all points to one important thing. God has come to help us where we are powerless, and restore us along all of His creation. Mankind, alone cannot atone for sin. Mankind, alone cannot set the broken creation back in order. Mankind, alone cannot beat Satan without God. Mankind cannot do what needs to be done without God. Jesus is the living physical image of God, and He here to help, restore, and save.

Applications...

1. People cannot save or restore anything without Jesus. Trust in Him and go to Him for prayer for all things big or small.

2. Satan will attack and we will encounter his schemes and lies. Yet our savior defeated Him. When we are tempted, Jesus gives us a way out. When we fail and sin, Jesus' death on the cross is our source of grace forgiveness and mercy. Jesus is mightier and greater than Satan, and His grace and mercy are greater than our sin.

3. The fallen world is overwhelming for us at times. Yet, Jesus is the true King of all Creation. He has overcome the world, and promises to prepare a place for us in the new one.

4. What Jesus fulfilled during His time in wilderness were promises and prophecies from God. Therefore, we can trust in God's promise to be with us always, and especially trust in the promise that will receive from Jesus grants us eternal life in His presence which will be a glorious paradise.