

Duck, Duck, God
Luke 4:1-13

Five years ago, our service had a very special theme. It was entitled, Duck, Duck, God do you remember? What I found memorable about this service was the message these young adults shared with us. They taught us that instead of ducking the hard stuff in life, we should be running to God for help. I remember the temptations they named were focused on things that pertained to their lives in school and with their friends. They specifically mentioned, lying, cheating, stealing, and fighting as things to run away from; asking God to help them be strong. They faced these temptations five years ago. Has their temptations changed? What will they face as the move into the world of adulthood?

The passage these students chose for their confirmation message follows Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. In a sense, this text reflects Jesus' confirmation moment. We watch as Jesus leaves the Jordan River with baptism water still dripping from his head, deliberately walking toward the desert. What happens in this desert was a transforming moment for Jesus. It was here Jesus proclaims his relationship with God. Even though every moment is filled with a temptation, Jesus ducks the desire to follow Satan and runs to God for strength and endurance. Jesus' connection with God is his key for survival. Today, my

prayer is that you, as graduating seniors, will understand the importance of strengthening your relationship with God. My hope is that we, your church family, have given you a solid foundation to know that God loves you. I chose this passage today because I believe Jesus' experience in the wilderness can give you guidance throughout your life. Let's take a closer look at the three things Jesus teaches us from the desert.

According to Luke, Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, is ready to take on the world. As we listen to Jesus' experience in the dessert, we are given three important warnings. First, we hear how Jesus has no food during these forty days. Satan tempts Jesus to use his almighty power to turn stones into bread so he can have food for strength. Jesus instantly responds, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" Food is necessary to sustain life in our human bodies. However, Jesus is stating that our spiritual bodies also need to be fed. Where will you turn to find food for your soul? It is easy to forget about church, reading the bible and praying when we venture forth on our own. However, this is a temptation to forget about God. Keep in mind God is there to help you in life. When the temptation arises, I hope you will remember to duck the temptation of leaving God behind. One reminder we send with you today is the

gift of always have a family you can turn to when you need some extra food for your body and soul.

Second, Satan identifies his own strength by showing Jesus the Promised Land saying, this can all be yours if only you will worship me. Satan puts a condition on power he will give Jesus. God has taught us that his power and authority can be ours anytime. It is given to us with God's unconditional love through our faith in God. Remember, God's love identifies the temptations from Satan and warns us when it is time to duck. As we have learned from the Easter story, there were many temptations for Jesus to turn away from his journey to the cross. However, Jesus knew there was a greater reward waiting for us as long as he remained faithful to God. Therefore, Jesus responded to Satan, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only." There will be many things calling your attention to worship something else instead of God.

As you begin your new journey, there will be a time when you want to blend in with the crowd. Church may be the last place you want others to see you visit. However, the church is where you will find the family that will love you unconditionally. In this place of worship, you can find God's power and authority to help you in life. No matter where you go, there is a congregation waiting to welcome you with open arms. In college, there are groups like the Wesley

Foundation that can become your church. They understand college life better than anyone. They have greater wisdom when it comes to helping guide you through those tough temptations. Our prayer is that you find a place where you can grow stronger in your faith by discovering your own way of worshipping God.

The third temptation Jesus faced was testing God. Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple asking that he prove God would protect him. Satan wanted Jesus to step off the roof so he could see how God's power worked. Jesus responded by saying, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." Jesus made an important statement to Satan by quoting this scripture. He told Satan he chose to believe in God rather than fall into Satan's temptation. The transition from youth to adult is filled with choices that only you can make. Even though a guiding hand is always around, whether you listen or not is up to you. However, the consequences of your choices are also your responsibility.

Jesus chose God because he trusted God's word to be true. The consequence of Jesus' decision was that Satan chose to leave. However, according to Luke, Satan would return at the opportune time. Satan always has a way of showing up at the most inappropriate times pulling us away from our moral values. Satan is our predator waiting for the right moment to sweep in

and play havoc with our lives. Jesus refused to allow Satan any opportunity to separate him from God. As you venture off to college or begin working in the real world, always remember to keep your faith and trust close to God. We learned in Confirmation class that one image of God is Jiminy Cricket. God is our conscience that keeps us honest, true, and always connected.

Now that you, graduates, have been reminded of how to survive in the wilderness, are you ready? The day is soon arriving when you will experience the grandness of God's world on your own. As you travel, remember to pack God as your cell phone, Jesus as your GPS, and the Holy Spirit as the battery that keeps them all up and running. Also, be aware that no matter where you travel in life there is a home waiting for you to arrive. In the United Methodist tradition, we are a global network that will welcome you with open arms. Parents, be assured that all the times you have drug them to worship and Sunday school, there was a bit more of God that creeps into their hearts. You, too, can trust that God will protect them, walk with them, and always love them. I pray God will bless each of you on your new adventure. Amen.