

**Lent 1C 2010**  
**Luke 4:1-13**  
**Sermon for Advent LC**  
**February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010**

**“D.A.R.E.”**

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

D.A.R.E- stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education and is program, started in the 1980's and given much credit today for helping to educate young people about the dangers of drug abuse and helping them to “just say no” to drugs and alcohol. Are you familiar with the program? It goes without saying that programs such as D.A.R.E. are good and important- I remember my D.A.R.E. class and the value that it taught me even today and I think often about the value of the lesson of saying no, which in the DARE program comes after being educated about the dangers of giving in to the temptations that certainly will come your way. Sometimes I think it would be a good thing to have D.A.R.E. like programs for us today- not necessarily about just drugs and alcohol but other vices that we may face, programs that would help us to say no to the temptation of being God and not allowing God to be in control, or a program to help us overcome the temptation of thinking we always need the next best thing, the bigger house the faster car or whatever, or a program to help us say no to the temptation of thinking that all that matters is me, myself and I and forgetting that we as the body of Christ exist for others first. Without a doubt our world is a broken world where temptations run amuck- and as people in that world we face those temptations every day- and ultimately most of those temptations have to do with our ability or inability to stand strong in our faith and in living a life that is worthy of the Gospel- so today...I want to introduce you to a new D.A.R.E program one perhaps that if we listen carefully can help us in all those other areas. Are you ready?

I propose that we begin a course today called Devil Awareness and Resistance Education- or D.A.R.E. You might be thinking that I have completely lost it now and I am okay with that because I don't think I have. If we look at the Gospel for today as Jesus is led out into the wilderness for forty days we see that the devil is a very real presence of evil and temptation, constantly griping on Jesus tempting him to give up the mission to which he has been called, tempting him to let go of the authority that he truly has for the temptation of taking what the devil offers him. You see in these forty days of temptation Jesus stands strong I think because he has his story straight and that is what we need if we stand a chance in facing the temptations of our world. Jesus knows that God wins, that the devil loses and is not afraid to call it as he sees it. And in the midst of these terrible temptations we see the heart of Christ come to life through the very words he speaks...which are words from other parts of the Bible that give him strength and us strength as well. These words, too, then become the education we need to resist the devil today. The heart of the defense that Jesus makes against the devil I think are the words in verse 8 where he says “It is written, worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” Dear friends, that is the education we need today- that is all we need to know for I am convinced that if we can worship the Lord only in everything that we do the temptations we face will be less likely to overcome us. Think about that...if you lived your life every day in a way that worshipped the Lord

from how you acted to what you said, from how you treated others to the things you did for the world how would you be different? I think I would be stronger in my faith and filled with the joy of knowing God was with me all the time. Then...temptation may come, but I would have the strength to overcome. That really is the only lesson of this DARE program- worship the Lord your God and serve only Him...easier said than done eh? It worked for Jesus and I have to believe it will work for you as well.

Now it might be hard to hold your temptation in light of what Jesus is going through in our Gospel this morning. The Devil does not appear to you like he does to Jesus, and does not usually hold options in front of you. But I am sure you could name a few things that take on that role. And in a lot of ways your struggle with temptation is very similar to Jesus'. Jesus had just been baptized before he went to the wilderness, and Satan is striving to pull him away from his baptismal identity as the Beloved one of God. The temptations you face, be it lust, drunkenness, greed, envy, cursing God, or whatever also try to pull you away from your true identity as a child of God, try to tell you the ways of the world are better than the ways of faith, try to make you believe that it is okay to compromise your faith rather than standing strong. And in the midst of that- the voice of truth has the power to pull you back- worship the Lord your God, turn to God, seek God's wisdom and strength, seek to be lifted up by the community that surrounds you, and stand firm against the tempter, and the temptation by holding on to who you are a child of God- and listen to where God is leading versus where you may be being led.

Now, obviously we all are going to continue and be tempted, and even fall to the temptations that surround us. And as we do, the struggle to overcome that temptation gets even harder. We are not perfect, in fact we are very big sinners- yet God does not turn away from us even though the world often would want us to believe that. Know that whatever temptation has gotten you does not measure in comparison to the ultimate gift that God gives you to wash that sin away. In the waters of our baptism (like we proclaim to Alta this morning) your sins are washed clean because of Jesus' death, and you are given the strength to stand again against the things that pull you down. Yes, you have to make a stand sometimes that is not easy, but the love that God has shown you through Christ empowers you to be strong against these temptations daily, and the Holy Spirit within you enables you to resist the things that pull you away from your God. God's love and God's Word of truth has the power to overcome all things. So be aware friends that the devil is among us in the evil of our world, yet God wins - commit your life to worshipping only the Lord your God and then live out from the freedom that brings.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.