

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. 3The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* 5Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 7Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; 9and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 11Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Where God guides, God provides. These are the words posted on the sign of a greenhouse on Detroit Road. Where God guides, God provides. That is the whole sermon this morning.

In the garden Adam and Eve doubted that God was really providing all they needed. Living day by day under the care of God seemed to limiting. They wanted to know. They ate the fruit that was to be desired to make one wise, the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It is not that they were hungry - or lonely - or afraid. The garden was full of tasty fruit. God had provided the companionship of one another, and God's own companionship and care. But still they wanted something more.

Something more - like knowing what was going to happen tomorrow, or next week, or next year. If they knew they could plan, make sure that they would have enough, if they knew they could find a way to change what would be, steer toward a glorious tomorrow.

If they knew, they would no longer have to trust in God; they could be in charge. So they ate from that tree thinking that knowledge would raise them up on a high mountain from which they could see all things. But in eating they sunk down into a swamp of shame and anxiety and fear. Now they were in charge of a future that would end in death.

Adam and Eve began in a garden paradise, and ended scratching the dirt for food.

Jesus was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness, the desert. Here God was providing nothing, no food, no companionship, for only the enemy, the devil, stalked there and Jesus was his prey.

Jesus was famished - more than just hungry. For forty days and forty nights he had fasted. The devil invited Jesus to make a common meal for himself, bread from the stones that were so abundant. What God is not providing, you provide was the invitation. But Jesus replied, "One does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Jesus refused to provide for himself, God would guide, God would provide.

"Well, if you believe in God, let's really go for it Jesus - to the top of the temple, the dwelling of God on earth. Give God a chance to really show God's power, give yourself a chance to really show your faith. Does not God's holy word say that God's own angels will watch over you?"

But Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'".

Where God guides, God will provide.

Forget about God altogether was the final invitation. You can have it all now, worship me and you will, was the devil's promise - all the kingdoms of the world and all their splendor.

"Away with you Satan, for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

God guided, God provided.

Through days of walking the roads of Galilee - through a wedding feast at Cana, and a pasture meal for thousands and on to a supper in an upper room - through trial and mocking - through the torture of the thirty-nine lashes - through dragging a cross to the hill of execution - and nailing and thirsting, and dying, God was guiding - until a new morning dawned and all the providing was so clear.

Jesus trusted in his Father - more than pangs of hunger, and pain of nails, he trusted in the light that is God when all the world turned to darkness.

God was guiding Jesus to provide for you. Through Satan's tempting, and friend's betrayal, God was guiding Jesus to provide for you.

Through cross and resurrection God was guiding Jesus to provide for you.

For God has given you a new knowledge altogether – Jesus, who is your knowledge and wisdom and hope.

Where God guides, God provides. Jesus is the one who has gone before us on the path of God's guiding.

Follow him. God is guiding, God will always be providing. Amen.