Both the lessons today are filled with temptations.

It’s tempting to think these stories have nothing to do with us.

It’s tempting to read the first lesson as being more about big red apples and talking snake than about trusting in God’s provision.

It’s tempting for Adam and Eve to listen to the serpent instead of listening to God.

It’s always tempting to listen to someone who tells us what we want to hear, as opposed to what we need to hear.

It’s tempting to believe that life is to be lived on our terms, that we know better, that our days are in our hands.

It’s tempting to see the easy way as the right way.

It’s tempting to think of God’s word as just one of the many words that we hear every day.

It’s tempting to hear God’s call for obedience as directed to someone else. As Adam and Eve know, it’s tempting to decide, “That’s not what God meant.”
It’s tempting to feel too mature for such a simple tale.

It’s tempting to believe God doesn’t really care, that God isn’t really that close, that God really isn’t that involved.

It’s tempting to accept that God is just kidding. It is tempting to listen to the serpent. Really tempting.

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It’s tempting to ignore the connections between what happens to Adam and Eve in the garden and what happens to Jesus in the wilderness.

It’s tempting to hear Jesus’ conversation with Satan as simply an amusing game of who can quote the most Scripture the fastest rather than as Jesus’ commitment to follow the path that God had set before him.

It’s tempting to disregard the humanity of Jesus.

It’s tempting to overlook him as an example of what life before God can be, obedient and faithful.

It’s tempting to believe he really doesn’t know what it is like for us, that the ground he walked on was some other ground, that the air he breathed was some other air.

It’s tempting to heed the alluring voice of Satan that is as close as the television or the internet.
It’s tempting to root so hard for the super-hero Jesus that we miss what this text has to say about whom is worthy of worship and what is worth giving our lives to.

It’s tempting to see this story as just something sensational that happened only to Jesus. Really tempting.

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Both the lessons today are filled with temptations. There is a sense in which our religion is filled with temptations.

It’s tempting to see worship as optional, just something to entertain us, if we happen to be available.

It’s tempting to think of this season of Lent as archaic chatter and outmoded foolishness.

It’s tempting to see obedience as quaint and sacrifice as trivial.

It’s tempting to discount the value of penitence and reflection and discipline.

It’s tempting to view the church as an institution mostly interested in budgets and membership and programs.

It’s tempting to see giving money to the church as about paying dues instead of our participation in God’s redeeming work.

It’s tempting to believe that our children will learn the faith without any sort of intention on our part.
It’s tempting to believe that we all just happened to show up here this morning.

It’s tempting to see it as just water.

It’s tempting to see it as just bread, just grape juice.

It’s tempting to accept that none of this will change us. Really tempting.

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According to Genesis, humans have been tempted from the beginning. According to Matthew, even Jesus knows what it’s like to be tempted. We all know what it’s like. Day by day, we know what it’s like. There are many voices, many things, which would have us do something other than what God would have us do or be someone other than who God would have us be.

May God give us the wisdom and the courage to choose well, and to live faithfully.