**First Reading Genesis 9:8-17**

*Today’s reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.*

8God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, 10and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. 11I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” 12God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: 13I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

**Psalm 25:1-10**

1To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 2My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. 3Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous. 4 Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. 5Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long. 6Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting. 7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord. 8You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way. 9You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way. 10All your paths, O Lord, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

**Second** **Reading 1 Peter 3:18-22**

*As God acted through Christ’s suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.*

18Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

**Gospel Mark 1:9-15**

*The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God’s reign.*

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” 12And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. 14Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

**Sermon**

Well, we made it through yet another Super Bowl…oh, I’m sorry, I mean, we’ve enjoyed another Super Bowl with last week’s thriller between the San Fransisco 49ers and the Kansas City Chiefs. As usual, there was plenty to talk about outside of the game itself including the commercials, the half time show and what Taylor Swift was up to throughout the game. But another lingering topic after the fact were 2 particular commercials associated with the

message “He gets us.” The “he” here means Jesus, so the commercials were to convey a message about Jesus to a very large audience.

There has been a lot of discussion surrounding these ads, wondering who was behind them, whether it made sense to spend that much money on a Super Bowl ad, whether the ads sent the right message. To be honest, I haven’t paid close attention to any of it. I did not see the original commercials because I have a 4-year-old. I haven’t really read the positive comments or criticisms of the ads. But if it made anyone stop and think that maybe Jesus really does care about them, then maybe that’s something.

I couldn’t help but think of that phrase “He gets us” in connection with today’s gospel passage from Mark. I see this story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness as a “Jesus gets us,” moment. But let’s not get too lost, because I know this passage is quite busy. We may only have 7 verses in front of us, but there’s a lot of activity. Mark’s gospel is the shortest of the 4 gospels in the New Testament, so the writer had the tendency to move quickly from one story to the next. In fact, one word that the gospel uses frequently is the word, “immediately,” which gives us a sense that Jesus is moving from one activity to another with urgency. We will also notice that the stories in Mark’s gospel are lacking in the detail that is given in other gospels. That is particularly true with the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. But I think it is the perfect opportunity to look at this as a “Jesus gets us” moment.

Here’s what we know about Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness: The spirit drove him there. Not in a convertible, not even in a jeep. The verb “drove” indicates that this happened pretty forcefully. This is something to notice…there seems to be a force, a power associated with these heavenly movements…the tearing apart of the heavens, the Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness. This is the power, the force that enters this world through Jesus. The world had never known anything, anyone like Jesus before.

So, the Spirit propelled Jesus into the wilderness, seemingly on the heels of his baptism. The wilderness is a wild place…you probably got that from its name…but it is a place where wild forces are at work…wild animals, no water, ridiculous windstorms at times, and, of course, at least in this instance, there is the force of temptation, which has been personified with the name Satan. We don’t have any part of any conversation between Jesus and the Tempter. But that makes it easier for us to identify with what Jesus is going through. Jesus experience in the wilderness is a human experience. We are the ones who deal with temptation all the time. By

going into the wilderness and dealing with temptation, Jesus got a real sense of what it is like to be us.

Think about it, think about your lives, what you do every day. Do you realize how much temptation we deal with all the time? And I’m not talking about someone giving you a chocolate chip cookie when you gave up chocolate for Lent. I mean the temptation to believe that we are less than who we are as God’s children. The temptation to believe that we have to keep the balls in the air all the time or we’re a failure. The temptation to feel like a failure when things don’t go as we wanted or as we planned. These are the temptations that we face inside ourselves. We haven’t even talked about outside temptations.

We are constantly tempted to put too much faith in human beings and human institutions. We are tempted to hold other human beings to standards that are way too high for a human being. We are tempted to put too much time and effort into things that are not going to benefit ours or anyone else’s well-being. We are tempted to focus on ourselves and not look at the hurting world around us, tempted to categorize people into deserving of help and not deserving of help, tempted to lash out at others when we are actually mad at ourselves. We are tempted to hold grudges rather than repent and forgive. We are tempted to associate the productivity of a person with their value. We are tempted to embrace the ways of the world rather than following the ways of God’s kingdom.

Jesus entered that wilderness and, as a result, Jesus gets it when we are tempted in all these ways. That’s why Jesus can enter our wilderness with us, with the crazy stuff happening in our world like shootings and political battles, and Jesus provides for us, just as the angels provided for him. Jesus entered this world, Jesus entered human experience, including temptation, Jesus suffered and died just like us. Because of his resurrection, there is no where Jesus will not go with us to help us, guide us, provide for us, love us.

When Jesus enters the wilderness, the Spirit that he received in his baptism was with him to remind him who he was throughout his time of temptation. That same Spirit that we received in our Baptism goes with us into the world, into our lives to remind us that we are loved children of God, created to love God, and love one another. So yes, Jesus gets it, Jesus understands temptation in our lives. And Jesus goes with us in the midst of temptation to

provide for us and remind us constantly that we have a loving God who forgives us and has claimed us as God’s children forever. Amen.