

Clackamas United Church of Christ
Rev. Adam Ericksen (as Satan) & David Palanuk (as Jesus)
3.1.20

Jesus and Satan Walk into a Church...

Jesus: (Walks in from the back, sits on the stairs looking bored.) I've been out in this dessert for 40 days. I'm starving. I was baptized and I heard the voice of God say that I am God's beloved son and that God is happy with me. Then the spirit sent me out here to be tested my Satan. But I've been hear for almost 6 weeks and I haven't felt Satan or God in this place.

Satan: (Walks in from the back) Well, hello Jesus.

Jesus: Speak of the devil...

Satan: Here I am!

Jesus: The Spirit told me you would come.

Satan: (Sits next to Jesus) Man, you've been out here for so long. Why would the Spirit do this to you? That's so mean, to make you suffer like this for so long in the hot sun. You don't deserve this. Aren't you the son of God? Is that what God told you at your baptism?

Jesus: Yes.

Satan: Why in the world would God put his son through this test? Is this to punish you?

Jesus: No. God is love. My job is to show the world God's love. That's why I'm the son. I'm here for 40 days so that I can identify with those who have no food and no power. So that I can empathize with them and help them.

Satan: That's weak. You are a loser who hangs with losers. I believe in winners. I make winners.

Jesus: I'm not interested in your winners.

Satan: Oh really? **If** you are the Son of God, prove it! Feed yourself by turning this stone into a loaf of bread.

Jesus: **If?** Are you questioning my identity? I'm starving, but my mission is not to feed myself. It's to identify with those who are starving so that one day I'll be compassionate enough to use my power to feed others.

Satan: Dude, it's just one loaf of bread. Besides, this is life and death! You will die if you don't eat.

Jesus: Stop being so dramatic. One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that God speaks to us. And so far I hear God saying that we are all his beloved children and we all deserve to eat, not just me.

Satan: Hmm... You are pretty good, Jesus. But I haven't failed yet. Come with me to the top of the Temple of God. (Satan and Jesus walk up the stairs and stand on chairs.) You are standing on top of the Temple. This is the height of political and religious power in all of Israel. This is about you and your greatness, Jesus. I can make you into the most important person in Israel's history. You will be greatest king and the greatest religious leader at the same time. Isn't that what God wants of you, anyway? If you are the Son of

God, the King of Israel and the great High Priest, then prove it! Throw yourself off the Temple. After all, God says in Deuteronomy that he will send angels to hold you up so that you won't dash your head against the rocks!

Jesus: Yes, and there's a Psalm that says, "Don't put God to the test." I don't need to test God. I already know what God thinks. God told me at my baptism.

Satan: You are really annoying.

Jesus: Is that all you got, Satan? If so, you should just leave now.

Satan: One more... (Satan and Jesus hop off the chairs. Satan opens a map of the world.) Do you see this? All of this belongs to me. I own the world and all the kingdoms within it.

Jesus: Whoa. I thought...

Satan: You thought God owned the world and all the kingdoms? Ha! Your Father is a weak, foolish old man. I own them. They were given to me. The rulers rule through me! You may be God's Son, but if you become my Son we can rule the world together. Caesars, Emperors, Pharaohs, Kings, they will be nothing compared to you. You will go down in history as the most powerful ruler of all time. Think of all the good we could do together. We could destroy all the bad guys and finally bring peace to the earth! All you have to do is worship the true Lord of this world – ME! Come on Jesus. It's an easy decision. Just bow down to me and all of this will be yours!

Jesus: (Hesitates, thinking about it) No. You rule the world through violence. I will rule the world through love.

Satan: You are weak. You know that this will lead to your own death. You will be the greatest loser in all of history. Besides, they will never follow you. They will corrupt your words and make them mean things you never said. They will justify violence in your name. They will turn your religion of love and acceptance of all into a religion of hate and exclusion. You will die for a lost cause and your life will have been a total waste.

Jesus: (Shaking his head) No. You are wrong. I am not here to force my will upon others. I'm here to invite people to live into the Realm of God where there is enough food for everyone if we just share and where we use our religious and political power to help those who are most in need. You have failed, Satan. This test is over. Get away from me!

Satan: (Walking away toward the back) You win this round, Jesus. You have resisted me, but we will see if your followers are as strong. I will be back. (Satan leaves)

Jesus: (Looking around at the people as he walks down the aisle.) I know my people. At times they will fail. But I also know that they are not defined by failure. They are defined by God's love. And so I must go back into the world to show them how much God already loves them. They might not listen. They might not follow me. And they might even put me on a cross. But not even that will have the last word. God's love will have the last word. May it be so now and forevermore. Amen. (Walks out.)