For those of you who are drivers out there, many of you have probably own one of these GPS devices in your car? And for those of you who do not know what a GPS is, it stands for Global Positioning System. It’s an electronic device that can locate precisely where you are anywhere on this planet earth and can help you navigate from point A to point B.

I would say for the most part, a GPS device can get you where you need to be, however, it does have its limitation if you goes underground or cannot receive any signal from the satellite above.

These devices come with different voices and even personalities. Yes, personalities! Often times I find myself completely disagreed with the direction that it was telling me to take, so I decided to rebel against the GPS’s advice and go on a different route. It may not be the shortest in terms of distance but may be faster in terms of time, based upon my general knowledge of the area. Every time I do that, the GPS would keep making this sound…..“recalculating, recalculating….” I always get a kick out of this, just to drive the GPS nuts.

This past Wednesday as you know, was Ash Wednesday. It marked the beginning of the season of Lent - which is a season of **preparation**, **meditation** and **reflection** leading up to the Holy Week of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. During these 40 days, some people may give up certain things or privileges that they cherish in life, while some take on new experiences, not for the purpose of impressing others, but to help them focus better on their relationship with God. The season of Lent reminds us we are constantly on a faith journey and that we are never walking alone along this journey. We are also frail and vulnerable to various forms of temptations, and we need to depend upon God in every single aspect of our lives.

These 40 days of Lent signify the journey that Jesus took while in the wilderness. Throughout this season, Christians are invited to reflect on our spiritual journey and our relationship with Christ. We are invited to slow our pace down, hit the “Pause” button, instead of the “Fast-Forward” button. We cannot jump the gun in anticipation of the celebration of Christ’s resurrection on Easter morning, without going through the trails and “testing” that we must endure. **We must Recalculate our own spiritual journey.** Perhaps we might find ourselves standing at the crossroad while recalculate what our next step may be.

Our Gospel reading this morning from Mark invites us back to the scene of where Jesuss own journey began. This was the launching point of **our** spiritual journey as well - at our own Baptism. **Like Jesus, through our baptism, God declared to us that we are also Gods *beloved sons and daughters, of whom He is well pleased.***

According to our Reformed faith understanding, our baptism serves as the ***“Sign and Seal*** of Gods invisible grace and eternal covenant that was established between God and humanity. **Like the ashes that many of us received on Ash Wednesday, the water of our baptism served as a powerful symbol of a new life, a new beginning and our spiritual cleansing that can only be found in Christ.**

Through our baptism with the sign of the water, we are marked and claimed by God as God’s sons and daughters. Our baptism is not just a washing of dusts and dirts off our bodies[[1]](#footnote-1), but it is a spiritual cleansing that prepares and equips us to go through our wilderness moments and to be God’s witnesses in this world.

When we are out in the wilderness, we WILL get tested and be tempted. We WILL be attacked and challenged by our enemies because of our faith from time to time....but most importantly we can always depend on our spiritual GPS to guide us back as we **Recalculate our Journey.**

While Jesus was out in the wilderness, He was tempted by Satan on numerous occasions. This morning, I would like for us to focus on the significance of why Jesus was tempted by Satan. If Jesus was Gods only begotten and beloved Son, why ….why would God put Him through such temptations? The very temptations that Jesus faced are the same temptations that we all face every day.

First of all, **these temptations test our discipline, our self- awareness and self-control.** As I mentioned earlier, during this Lenten season, some people give up certain privileges or things that might have distracted or deprived of their personal relationship with God, so this way, it can help them better focus and center their lives more on God. It takes a great deal of discipline, especially when we are being asked to give up some of the things that we love so much.

Personally I feel that **its not the matter of WHAT we give up, but WHY. How our lives are being influenced and consumed by many of these distractions in life?**

Immediately after Jesus’s baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, God allowed all of this to happen. The Father had full confidence in His Son, so much that He was willing to let His Son go through these series of trials and testings.

Scripture also tells us that Jesus was never alone when he was being put on the tests. God sent angels to be with him, attending to him, “waiting on him”, looking out for him. In some translations, this same word was translated as **serving,** **taking care of, or even ministering to**][[2]](#footnote-2) by the angels. This is surely comforting for us to know, that the same can apply to us as well that **God will never abandon us nor allow us to walk in this wilderness journey ALONE.**

Furthermore, through these temptations, **they make us more aware of our own human weaknesses and shortcomings**. We are frail and vulnerable to evils in this world and we must put on the best defense upon God’s strength. As Jesus said, ***Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."[[3]](#footnote-3)***

Thirdly, **God wanted Jesus to experience what we experience day-in and day-out.** When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and His full humanity was on display as He too was being tempted by Satan. Jesus was not only fully divine but he was fully human also. He went through what we’re going through. When he experienced physical hunger, Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Next, Satan promised to offer Him everything there is, for as far as His eyes could see, with however only one condition, that He must bow down and worship Him. And lastly Satan tempted Jesus to jump from the highest point from the temple and dare God to send angels to save Him. Test after test after test, Jesus countered Satan’s attempts with the Word of God as His 1st line of defense. He was equipped and ready to face His challenges ahead. He was demonstrating to all of us how it was done.

Having gone through those temptations and did not surrender to Satan, Jesus Himself can fully relate to what you and I must go through each and every day. Jesus also has been out in the desert road and in the wilderness also. He has been proven. He has been tested. This only made him more relational and more effective as He began His earthly mission. This is the hope that we can all draw upon as we journey through the wilderness of our lives during these 40 days.

From our Old Testament reading earlier in the book of Genesis, we also saw another sign of God’s covenant at work with Noah, the flood and the rainbow. The flood did more than just wiping out almost the entire human race. It was a spiritual cleansing and awakening moment for humanity. As painful as it may seem, God decided to save only those who are faithful and obedient to Him, as long as we come before God, repenting and confessing our sins. God was willing to give up all that He had up until that point and to re-calculate a new journey through this new sign of the covenant.

Friends, it is my hope and my prayer for all of us throughout these 40 days and 40 nights that we may seek Christ first, above all things. He is our Spiritual GPS that will bring us back to where we belong. **Each day, all of us are challenged to put on a new perspective to see God and the world differently, in spite of the sins of humanity. Through God’s covenantal grace and love, we are once again reminded that we are frail, we are human, we falter and fall short of God’s glory. From dust we are formed and to dust we shall return, but God’s covenant towards us will stand forever.**

This is the Good News and our greatest hope in Jesus Christ. May we be ***Reconnected and Reconciled with God*** once again, as we ***Recalculate our Spiritual Journey*** over these 40 days *.* To God be all glory, honor and praise. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *I Peter 3:18-22* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Mark 1:13* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Matthew 11:28-30* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)