

IN MAURICE SENDAK'S, 'WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE,' A BOY'S IMAGINATIVE ENCOUNTER WITH WILD BEASTS STARTS OUT SCARY, BUT BECOMES A GREAT ADVENTURE. WE ALL FACE BEASTS! OUR MONSTERS ARE HEALTH AND FINANCIAL CONCERNS; POLITICAL FIGURES, HAUNTING MEMORIES...AND TEMPTATION!

ON A HILLSIDE OF RED ROCK, JESUS FINDS A CAVE AND MAKES A CAMP. THE SPIRIT HAS DRIVEN HIM INTO THE WILDERNESS IN ORDER TO UNDO WHAT ADAM MESSED UP IN A LUSH GARDEN. HE MUST REPRESENT US IN A FACEOFF WITH SATAN. HE HAS TO SEND HIM PACKING OR WE WILL BE STUCK WITH ADAM'S SIN. *FOREVER!*

JESUS FACES THE DEVIOS SERPENT WEARING OUR FLESH – ADAM, PART II. HE EXPERIENCES SUFFERING AND TEMPTATION SO HE KNOWS OUR PLIGHT. JESUS GOES FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE **BADEST BEAST** SO HE CAN PREACH THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL. HE ENCOUNTERS AND CONQUERS, HEAD-ON, ALL THAT WE FACE, SO HE CAN CARRY OUR SIN AND SORROW AS HIS VERY OWN.

THE DESERT IS FRIGHTENING. I'VE BEEN IN A TENT AS A PACK OF HOWLING COYOTES RAN RIGHT BY; IT'S SCARY. SCORPIONS AND SNAKES ADD DANGER TO THE WILD DOGS AND JACKALS THAT WANT TO MAKE JESUS A LATE-NIGHT FEAST.

DEHYDRATION AND DEATH ARE REAL POSSIBILITIES IN THE JUDEAN DESERT. THE WIND HAS SCULPTED THE LANDSCAPE, TRANSFORMING HILLS INTO MONSTER-LIKE SHAPES. AN OASIS IS VERY RARE AND THE SIGHT OF BLEACHED ANIMAL BONES SHARPENS THE PROSPECT OF DYING.

AS THE WIND HOWLS, THE SAND CUTS INTO JESUS' FLESH. THE WILD THINGS WAIL. HE'S ALL ALONE. THERE IS NOTHING COMFORTABLE OR ENCOURAGING IN THIS PLACE FOR OUR ADVOCATE.

AND, HE HAD NO TIME TO REFLECT ON HIS MINISTRY BEFORE THIS SOUL-SEERING ADVENTURE. JESUS IS DRIVEN HERE IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS BAPTISM. HE WALKS OUT OF THE JORDAN, THE CONFIRMED BELOVED SON OF GOD AND THE ANOINTED ONE, BUT APPARENTLY, HE'S ON A SCHEDULE. JESUS IS LED BY THE SPIRIT OUT 'WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE,' IN ORDER TO MEET A REAL MONSTER!

ONCE JESUS IS STARVING AND DEHYDRATED, LONELY AND WEAK, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY DRAINED...THEN, SATAN COMES WALKING THROUGH THE DESERT SAND RIGHT BY CHRIST'S CAVE WITH A TALL BEER AND JUICY BIG MAC.

*HUNGRY JESUS? TURN THAT STONE INTO BREAD.* UNABLE TO GET JESUS TO SULLY HIS FORTY DAY FAST, HE TRIES TO GET HIM TO PROVE HIS FATHER'S PROTECTION AND THEN, PROMISES TO QUIT HIS DEVILING ALTOGETHER IF JESUS BOWS TO HIM. NOPE...THREE TO NOTHING FOR JESUS – THE DEVIL LOSES!

WE KNOW FROM MATTHEW AND LUKE THAT JESUS SPEAKS THE WORD OF GOD FROM SCRIPTURE TO SEND THE BEAST AWAY WITH HIS POINTED TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS. MARK ONLY PRESENTS THE CONTEST, SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE BATTLE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL IN THE REST OF HIS GOSPEL.

2 SATAN LOOKS LIKE A FOOL WHEN JESUS HEADS TO GALILEE TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS: **REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL!** MARK GIVES US JESUS AS THE GOOD NEWS; HE CANCELS SATAN'S POWER OVER US; HE CRUSHES HIS HEAD!

NOW, WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT DRIVES US INTO THE WILDERNESS. THIS WORLD IS A WILD PLACE WHERE BEASTS CONFRONT US DAILY. BUT, WE FACE THE MONSTERS WITH JESUS.

THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT EASIER! BECAUSE OF HIM RIGHT AND WRONG MATTER; YOU KNOW TO SERVE OTHERS RATHER THAN SELF. IT'S EASIER TO LIVE LIKE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. YET, YOUR SAVIOR CHOSE CRUCIFIXION INSTEAD OF 'EASY' AND THAT MEANS DENYING SELF, PICKING UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOWING HIM RIGHT THROUGH THE CLAWS OF SATAN.

NONE OF US ARE SPARED TRIAL OR TRAPS. THAT'S WHY JESUS HAS US PRAY: **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.** IT'S ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN GOD'S WORD AND HIS SON THAT WE SEE ADVENTURE WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE. WHEN WE FACE TEMPTATION WITH JESUS, IT'S WRAPPED IN HIS CROSS, GRACE AND HEAVEN!

CHRIST HAS DEFEATED THE TEMPTOR AND EVERY BEAST YOU FACE. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE DESERT DOESN'T STAY IN THE DESERT. IT CONTINUES AS JESUS CASTS OUT DEMONS, DISEASE, ~~AND~~ SORROW, & SIN!

THE DEVIL'S OVERTHROW IS MADE OBVIOUS IN CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH; IT WILL BE COMPLETELY FULFILLED WHEN YOUR ADVERSARY IS THROWN INTO THE FIERY PIT WITH ALL THOSE WHO TAKE THE EASY WAY.

IT WAS POPULAR IN THE EARLY CHURCH TO GO OUT INTO THE DESERT TO FAST AND PRAY. PEOPLE WANTED TO COMBAT THE DEMONS. ST. ANTHONY OF EGYPT WARNED: **THE DEMONS CAN ONLY SCARE THE TIMID. SIGN YOURSELF WITH THE CROSS AND LEAVE THEM IN THE DESERT TO MAKE FOOLS OF THEMSELVES.**

IF YOU DON'T FEEL TORMENTED BY DEMONS, THAT'S PARTLY BECAUSE YOU TRUST IN CHRIST. BUT, IT'S ALSO BECAUSE THE DEVIL IS SUBTLE. HE TEMPTS YOU TO FIND SECURITY IN YOUR POSSESSIONS, FAMILY AND REPUTATION. HE TEMPTS YOU TO BE CRITICAL AND JUDGMENTAL; TO MOCK OTHER SINNERS.

OGDEN NASH ONCE JOKED; **I CAN RESIST ANYTHING EXCEPT TEMPTATION.** A FRENCH GUY WITH A LONG NAME WROTE: **WHEN YOU DEFY TEMPTATION, IT IS USUALLY BECAUSE THE TEMPTATION IS WEAK, NOT BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG.**

YOU ARE WEAK, BUT HE IS STRONG. AS YOU CLING TO JESUS, TRIAL AND TEMPTATION IS WASHED AWAY IN FORGIVING LOVE. HEH, YOU'RE A BAPTIZED CHILD WHO COMMUNES IN THE VERY BODY AND BLOOD OF THE SATAN CRUSHER.

THE LORD OF SABAOOTH GOES WITH YOU INTO THE WILDERNESS AND HE WILL NOT LEAVE YOU BEHIND. SO, LIFE ISN'T REALLY SCARY; IT'S AN ADVENTURE!

AMEN.

8- PREPARE  
- PRAYER

9- APPROPRIATE 175  
- APPROPRIATE 176  
(Preparable)