Have you ever heard the phrase “If it weren’t for me, it wouldn’t get done?”

We all may be guilty of saying --or at least thinking-- this at some point in our lives.

Maybe it’s taking out the trash, buying groceries, picking up after others, or paying the bills. We think we are the only ones doing the most important yet tedious tasks of the day.

Patricia Tull in workingpreacher.org - a professor at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, remembers being in her “garden last summer picking strawberries and ... when she began to think about this in a different way.

She, too, used to be one of those who thought–if-she-didn’t-do-it-it-wouldn’t-get down- but realized as she knelt on the warm soft soil that she may have planted and weeded the strawberries,

but if *those* little plants didn’t concern themselves with the job of making berries, it wouldn’t *get* done. *She* couldn’t make it happen.”

We don’t have the “genetic wisdom”... she says, “to make the “leaves, stems, and roots form [much less with such subtlety].”

“... it’s pure miracle. Tiny tomato seedlings grow in miniature pots but soon become giants of production,

tiny corn kernels lie dormant but soon grow taller than people.... a potato in a mound of dirt later delivers many more and much deeper in the ground.

If these plants didn’t do these mysterious, subtle, powerful things, food wouldn’t happen at all.”

We might make the money that buys the garden plot – the one who digs, sows, plants, cultivates, waters, thins and controls the pests...BUT we don’t do it **alone**.

Maybe we take our hard earned money down to the store... we choose, buy, cook and set the table...but we still DO NOT do it **alone**.

We may play a part in the food cycle “but we are not the ones who turn seeds into food.

Every time we eat IS a miracle!” because we don’t do it **alone**.

The Israelites failed to remember this...they could not have survived on their own. They grumbled and complained when they didn’t get what they wanted...

they always seemed to want more and thought they were entitled to it.

In spite of it all, God sent manna from the sky, quail out of nowhere and fresh water from a rock...they were never **alone**.

When Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree, they were not **alone** either... God walked in the cool of the day as Master Gardener and if He didn’t give each little plant the job of being fruitful, it wouldn’t have *gotten* done...and thus the beautiful garden was born...

God gave the first couple everything they needed...but they wanted more.

In spite of our attempts to *be* God or our lack of appreciation *for* God He continues to wow us with His palette and brush.

As creator of all beauty God gives us all that we need and more.

But God also allows us to be led into suffering while never leaving us alone.

We don’t see this because we are overcome with LIFE or we *still* think we have control...and think can out smart the things that amaze us.

... we try to fix things by ourselves...and forget the basic needs in life are most important...that every time we eat is a miracle!”

And that We are never **alone**.

We are fed by the Word of God, we are encompassed by the Holy Spirit when temptation offers more than we think God will provide.

We are led to heights of promising

future and abundance

filled with earthly desires.

Though we are fed through the miracle of His Hand and are never **alone**...we fail to see it.

Because it’s a jungle out there… “The wilderness Jesus experienced was a dry and barren desert.

Ours “could be a journey through illness of our own— or a loved one’s. It could be a journey through unemployment or divorce.

Wilderness can be a time of difficulty and hardship. Sometimes we have to dash our foot against the stone to come to our senses.

S&S writes that “You do not have to leave home to go to the wilderness…wilderness is a place away from the normal.”

Jesus was led into extreme *abnormal*... but He had something else in His favor –

He was baptized. It wasn’t until *after* His baptism...that Jesus was taken out from His comfort zone and tested.

Jesus, son of man... in the flesh, faced trial and temptation to understand and walk through the same kind of difficulties we might walk.

When Jesus is baptized that’s when things began to change. He is put to the test.

“We begin our Christian life after baptism too... In our baptismal vows we promise “to renounce the devil, all the forces that defy God, and all the powers of this world that rebel against God.

If we are baptized as an infant, our sponsors take on that role and when we are old enough we confirm these very words.

“And learn that He will be our shield and portion as long as life endures.”

We are no loner **alone** in the wilderness of life.

Though Jesus’ temptations were far worse than ours…we cannot diminish the fact that we confront some pretty tough situations or endure great suffering.

We *are* baptized children of God, Forgiven, and given new life. We are protected by the Spirit and yet **led** by the Spirit into some pretty awful situations. Yet we are never **alone**.

Lent makes us more aware of “the reality of our lives. When we give up something….our eyes are opened…and we realize that “Life IS NOT nonstop joy, wonder, and excitement. There are times of **quiet**, times of **difficulty**, and times of **suffering**.”

The somber tones of Lent, the focus on confession, repentance, and renewal,” open us up to see the truth.

... we realize that we *are not* **alone**.

We begin to appreciate the miracle of food, most important, the Holy meal of bread and wine,

the bread from Heaven above...

...which fills us with the spirit of God, renews us and prepares us for the tasks that lie ahead.

We go into the unknown prepared and armed with the Word of God.

…God does not send us into the wilderness **alone**; in fact we are led there.

God knows we are His…that we are loved, protected...that He is our mighty fortress.

When Satan comes to Jesus he uses a Greek word that could mean since instead of “if”.

Satan does not say “if” you are the Son of God…Satan says “Since” you are the Son of God.”

I don’t think Satan doubted that Jesus was God’s Son. The verses preceding today’s text tells us He is.

At Jesus’ baptism “…a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

Satan doesn’t deny who Jesus is but tests His ability to **BE** who He is…

After Jesus fasts 40 days and 40 nights He *was* famished....hungry for food and for divine intervention.

when we find ourselves famished,

not only for earthly concessions, but for divine intervention...

And since we are children of God we too can endure the temptations, the testing, the going without...

...may we always realize God is there all along...we are never **alone**. Amen