

First Sunday in Lent 2010

Grace, mercy and peace to you because Jesus Christ defeated sin death and the devil by being obedient to His Father's Will and His Father's Word.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" 5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" 9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.

Prayer: Lord Jesus thank you for standing face to face with our enemy the devil and defeating him with God's powerful Word throughout your life and even up to your very last breath on the cross! Fill us with your spirit that we might remember to use that same word of God to overcome the devil's lies and temptations.

Overcoming Life's Obstacles!

The Satanic "If's

The Divine Answer:" It is written"...and still is today!

1) "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

After Jesus' baptism with the words of God the Father still ringing in people's ears, "This is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased." Jesus entered the wilderness for 40 days of fasting, where the devil came to him for a confrontation face to face and tempted him to mess up his mission. Remember the mission: To seek and to save the lost. In order to seek and save the lost Jesus Christ had to live perfectly under God's law as a perfect human and then die innocently in the place of all sinners. That is the mission the devil does not want to see succeed. So he tempts Jesus first with a satanic "if" that focuses in on his human weakness: WANT.

Jesus' stomach and body was craving, wanting food. He was hungry. Jesus is also true God and as the Son of God he could at any time day or night rain down from heaven frosted honey buns with a hint of coriander seed or a flock of perfectly cooked and glazed quail. So he has the ability to turn these stones to bread; he has the want – so why not do it? What's the problem? The mission! The mission of the Christ is to live as a perfect human being. Perfect obedience and trust in the creator, his heavenly Father. The temptation, for Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that the devil wanted Jesus to fall into was to take matters into his own hands and not submit and buckle under His Father's plan for him. Instead he wanted Jesus to use his divine power selfishly, not in service to the mission.

Jesus answer says it all, "It is written and still is written, "Man does not live on bread alone." Jesus quoted from God's Words that were given to the children of Israel before they entered the Promised Land to keep them focused on the truth about life. With all the physical blessings that would come to the Israelites in the Promised Land so would come the temptation to think that life is all about the benjamins, the creature comforts. Just because our body wants it doesn't mean we need it or that it is good for us or that God must give it to us! Jesus defeated the devil's first "satanic if" by remembering that our Heavenly Father takes care of all our needs. All we need is the Word of our God

2) “If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

This next temptation hardly sounds or feels like a temptation at all to us at first glance. It sounds just like a flat out lie. Did the devil really think Jesus would believe that he has all the authority and splendor of the kingdoms of the world? But the devil is the father of lies and has been lying since the beginning with Adam and Eve “Eat of the fruit and you will be like God.” The devil’s shady deal was this – he would give Jesus all the splendor and authority of the world’s kingdoms, if Jesus would submit his knee and his bowed head. Again the devil is attacking the mission of Jesus Christ. He came to seek and to save the lost. He came to rescue sinners from the power of the devil by obeying His Father’s Will, suffering and dying for the sins of the world. Maybe the devil’s way sounded appealing? A lot less torture and suffering. Maybe the easy way out?

But Jesus answered the devil’s second temptation the same way as the first, “It is written and still is today, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.” Jesus Christ stayed committed to His Father’s mission, His Father’s Will, His Father’s plan even though it consisted of extreme suffering and even death. He overcame the devil’s temptation by remembering there is only one great promise keeper worthy of our praise and honor – The Lord our God.

Today we face that temptation daily. Time after time the devil comes with his lies that if we sin we will be happy. If we trust God and go his way we will be sad. We see it all around us. People fall for this lie, even Christians. Please, please Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. Don’t fall for the devil’s lie.

3) “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ”He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully.”

AS if the devil got fed up with Jesus overcoming his traps with passages, he decides to quote from the Bible himself. Takes him to the highest point of temple and says jump off and prove that the Word of God is all that! It is written after all....He will give his angles charge over you to guard you!” In an insidious way the devil is attacking the mission of the Christ. Jesus Christ was sent to save sinners by submitting to God’s Will perfectly. The devil was tempting Jesus to force God the Father’s hand. By jumping off he would control God the Father and make him do what he wanted him to do, prove his Word is reliable. But the devil misquoted the passage and didn’t use scripture to interpret scripture. Jesus answered the test as he did the other two, “It is written and still is today, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

This last temptation is still around us today. The devil whispers in our ear that we can bargain and deal with the Lord to prove his Word is true! Lord, if you get me that big promotion, if you cure me of cancer, if you help me win the big game, then I will read the Bible every day, pray everyday, etc. Or we say, God give me a sign. If the lights are all green on the way to work then I know you want me to move. Or I have heard this sadly too many times in my short life already, “I know God loves me because of all the blessings I have.” Or, “Look at my life, why does God hate me?” The devil tempts and tugs and pulls us away from God’s Word and to focus our attention on this world’s events to prove His love to us. How sad it makes me feel to hear my friends and family look for God’s love outside of His Word or for assurance of God’s blessings on their life outside of His Word. Please stop looking in your life’s experiences for proof of God’s love and forgiveness. And take Jesus example to heart. All you need to live is God’s Word. All you need to survive against the devil is God’s Word. All you need to get ahead in this world is God’s Word!

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is a great blessing to us! First, it shows us that Jesus Christ was 100% committed to saving us from our sins and he would not let the devil keep him from that saving mission. He came to seek and to save that which was lost! Second, it shows us that we do not have to fall for every lie, trick and deception by the devil. We have the truth of God’s Word written in stone forever. The truth is not out there! The truth is in here. Right here! Right now! It is written and still is today!