

Temptations. From the lure of the forbidden cookie jar to dark, evil internet, from gossip we long to share, to the grudges, criticisms we give birth to. Temptations. Perhaps as if you're dieting, just 1 more serving won't hurt, just 1 more snack, it's been a long day, you deserve it. It won't hurt. Much more deadly is the battle Satan wages against you. Still asking the old question to you in many ways, "did God really say?" Did God really say you couldn't do this, say this, live like this? The devil is clever. Much of what he implies is true.

Look at Adam and Eve's temptation. Look at Christ's temptations. Look at your temptations. They're not the immoral evil we often think of? Mostly looks pleasant, harmless, pleasing to the eye, no big deal. 'Doesn't God want me to be happy?' 'Surely God will understand my situation when I react as I do.'

That's why we often don't fight against temptations. It's not harmless, sin hurts you, hurts others, sin only brings death.

At that time, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Notice it's God's will Jesus goes to the wilderness; he be tempted there. And why He is there has everything to do with the battle that takes place in the wilderness of your life.

The first temptation: to meet His own human needs, to undermine He comes as a servant, obedient as also man to God, for God to perfectly provide. He denies Himself in order to suffer in our place; doing what must be done, what love requires.

And how often you love, serve yourself first, do not look to God to provide. Justify your sins that you have your reasons, you're tired, you're hungry, you're having a bad day, you deserve to be happy, on and on. Repent.

The devil tries again. This time he takes Scripture out of context, twisting its meaning to tempt Jesus to put God to the test.

Luther notes how we should consider this temptation the worst one. It abandons Scripture alone; how often we indeed put God to the test, demanding from Him what no child has the right to demand. How often we disregard Scripture, think we have a better idea, we twist God's word to please us. Repent.

So, the devil tries a third time. The temptation simple: "Why don't you avoid all of the pain and suffering that human life brings. Just bow down and worship me for a moment, even if insincere, and I will leave for good. How often do we served, trust other gods, foremost ourselves. Repent.

Satan will attack Jesus unto His cross, 'These people aren't worth it. Look what they do. Most people hate you; the ones that don't always fail you. Why are you doing this for people like this, who so often stray, who don't hold to your word, who so easily fall into temptation.

He answers Satan attacks. He does it all for there is no other way for you to be His.

Where Adam, thus mankind failed, the new Adam is restoring, reconciling all things. For even in the garden the promise of Eve's offspring, literally -seed of the women, virgin birth as there is no man to provide the seed; promise of the Christ there in Genesis reading that the Christ is wounded heel yet will destroy the devil's head.

And God must clothe His people, as a lamb dies then for Adam and Eve and later for you, blood shed that His children wear the garment of salvation the Lamb He provides, covering their shame.

We pray **Lead us not into temptation.** Confess the Catechism. **God tempt no one, but we pray in this petition God would guard and keep us so the devil, world, our sinful flesh may not deceive us, mislead us into false believe, despair, great shame, vice, as we are attacked by these things daily. We pray we overcome them, win the victory.**

In the hymn Mighty Fortress, **one little word can fell him.** While there is debate what is this 'little word', Luther did say once, the little word: *liar*. Call the devil 'a liar.'

Satan knows you well, where you're vulnerable, subtle ways to make you fall. To gratify your desires, passions. To destroy every relationship you have. Fills your head with lies!

Where Christ is, the devil will not be far off. One of Luther's famous sayings: **Where God builds a Church, the devil builds a chapel.** He found our Lord in the wilderness. He finds you as well. That's why you suffer, why you face so many temptations. The devil is attracted to the Truth and faith.

Don't forget Satan's very good at religion. He quotes the Bible to Jesus, still today behind all this 'God-talk' that is lies and twisted truths. Satan rejoices each night you set aside Bible devotions. Satan laughs at those who think that it doesn't matter what religion you are as long as you're sincere. Satan doesn't mind spiritual people. What he doesn't like is people believe the preaching of true Gospel, Christ crucified, receive the Sacraments with penitent faith, people trust in the merits of Jesus alone for forgiveness.

Immediately after our Lord's baptism He was in a wilderness, attacked by Satan. This should tell us something about your baptism. Doesn't make our life easier, but more difficult. It begins a battle. Satan (as God's enemy) now becomes your enemy when you're made God's child. Baptism places us into a battle. The sign of the cross inscribed on our foreheads and heart is like a target.

Do you realize how hard Satan is working against you? Trying to tear you away from the life that God has given you in your baptism; wants you to forget God's work in you, to look to yourself for the answers and solutions to life.

Only by the Word and Holy Spirit will you be protected from the schemes of the evil one, that we should all pray more fervently that God would guard us and all the baptized from the power of the devil.

So many temptations. We repent, fight-on, use the means of God's grace for strength. We all have bad habits, self-destructive behaviors. We all have grudges, nit-pick, repeat our mistakes. It has been answered. Jesus died. That matters. You can't fix your family or friends, the economy, the church, or America, let alone yourself. You can't undo the past or take it back. But you don't have to. Jesus died. You are forgiven, your sins swallowed up in the wounds of Christ. That's what truly matters.

Jesus confronted by Satan, won this battle for you. What you couldn't do, Christ did for you. His baptism is your baptism. His conquering sin is your conquering of sin. His crucifixion, His righteousness, His victory over death, His resurrection are all yours.

Christ is with You. Speak His words, pray. He has authority and power in your life. You have angels attending to you, fighting for you. When you know you will win –because Christ has already won –you don't give up the fight. Do not despair. Do not give in. You fight on. You never give up. Do not stop fighting. For us fights the valiant One. He will keep you, bind up you wounds of falling into temptation, He gives strengthen. The devil cannot harm you. You are His.