

“WHY ARE ALL THOSE DESERTS THAT ONE SEES AFTER OUR SUNDAY MASSES,, ON THE TABLE IN THE SOCIAL HALL?”

WELL,, BECAUSE TODAY,, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT TEMPTATION AND DESERTS HAVE OFTEN BEEN CALLED: “*TEMPATIONS*”,, *BECAUSE THEY TEMPT US,, AND THERE’S SOMETHING “DELICIOUS” OFFERED IN EACH BITE,, IF WE’LL JUST GIVE IN!*

THE FLAMBOYANT IRISH POET,, OSCAR WILDE,, ONCE SAID;

“THE ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF TEMPTATION,, IS TO GIVE IN TO IT!”

WE OFTEN LAUGH ABOUT TEMPTATION,, AND MOST OF US DO GIVE IN TO IT,, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. SOMETIMES IT’S THAT 2,000 CALORIE PIECE OF DELICIOUS,, COCONUT CAKE,, WHICH IN ITSELF,, DOESN’T APPEAR TO HURT US,, TOO AWFUL MUCH,, DOES IT?

BUT,, AT OTHER TIMES,, THE STAKES ARE MUCH HIGHER,, THE TESTS BECOME MUCH HARDER,, AND THE CONSEQUENCES CAN,, BE EXTREAMLY PAINFUL.

**SOME TESTS AND TEMPTATIONS CAN BECOME SO HARD,, THAT IT BECOMES ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE,,
*“NOT GIVE IN”!***

HERE’S A LITTLE STORY OF TEMPTATION AND TESTING,, IN THE NATURAL,, ANIMAL KINGDOM. THE AFRICAN LION AND THE WILDCAT,, THEY LOOK ALOT ALIKE,, BUT,, THEY’RE ACTUALLY QUITE DIFFERENT!

AN ANCIENT AFRICAN THEORY EXPLAINS IT THIS WAY.

A LIONESS GAVE BIRTH TO SEVERAL CUBS. SOME ARE TRULY LIONS AT HEART,, BUT SOME,, ARE NOT!

SO,,, HOW DID THE MOTHER KNOW,,, WHICH IS WHICH?

WELL,,, MONTHS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE CUBS AND JUST BEFORE THEY WERE WEANED,,,

THE MOTHER LEFT THE DEN,,, AND THEN,,,

IN AN UNSUSPECTING MOMENT,,,

SHE JUMPED BACK INTO THE DEN,,, AND WITH A THUNDERING ROAR,,, AS IF SHE WAS THE ENEMY,,, SHE ATTACKED HER CUBS.

SOME STOOD UP AND FOUGHT THEIR **ENEMY**,,, WHILE THE OTHERS FLED,,, WITH THEIR TAILS TUCKED BETWEEN THEIR LEGS.

THE CUBS THAT HELD THEIR GROUND,,, AND FACED THE DANGER,,, PROVED THEMSELVES TO BE REAL LIONS!

THOSE THAT RAN AWAY,,, PROVED TO BE MERE WILD CATS,,, FALSE LIONS.

JUST AS THIS TESTING,,, DISTINGUISHED TRUE LIONS FROM FALSE ONES,,, OUR TESTING ***WILL PROVE TRUE CHRISTIANS,,, FROM FALSE ONES.***

UNDER THE OLD COVENANT,,, GOD SUBJECTED ISRAEL,,, ***TO TESTING IN THE DESERT. THEY FAILED THE TEST***,,, AND **THAT MADE THE NEW COVENANT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,,, NECESSARY!**

TODAY,,, WE EXAMINE **THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST,,, IN THE WILDERNESS.** WHILE JESUS STANDS HIS GROUND,,, HE EXPOSES SATAN AND HIS TACTICS AND,,, HE DEFEATS THE DEVIL,,, SHOWING,,, THAT;

HE IS TRULY THE SON OF GOD!

BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S VICTORY,,, WE TOO CAN HAVE VICTORY **OVER THE TEMPTER.**

A FEW WEEKS AGO,,, WE HEARD ABOUT THE BAPTISM OF JESUS,,, AND AN IMPORTANT POINT OF THAT GOSPEL,,, WAS THE FACT THAT,,, **IN ORDER FOR JESUS TO DIE FOR OUR SINS,,, HE HAD TO BE SPOTLESS,,, WITHOUT SIN**,,, AND SATAN KNEW THAT!

JESUS COULDN'T FALL "TO THE TESTS AND TEMPTATIONS OF SATAN,,, AND,,, REMAIN SPOTLESS.

SCRIPTURE TELLS US THAT JESUS HAD JUST BEEN BAPTIZED,,, WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT ***DROVE HIM*** INTO THE MOUNTAINS OF THE DESERT,,, TO BE TESTED.

NOW,,, THE WORD ***DROVE***,,, MAY SEEM TO BE A STRONG WORD,,, BUT,,, ***IT'S MEANT TO SHOW THE INTENSITY OF WHAT JESUS HAD TO EXPERIENCE.***

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, ***THE LORD'S 40 DAYS OF FASTING AND TESTING BY SATAN,,, ENDED IN TRIUMPH AND VICTORY OVER THE ENEMY,,, AND AFTER THIS GREAT VICTORY,,, JESUS BEGAN TO CALL PEOPLE INTO A SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE,,, THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF GOD*** AND SATAN WASN'T VERY HAPPY ABOUT THAT!

SATAN'S MAIN PURPOSE,,, ALWAYS WAS,,, TO OVERTHROW THE MESSIAH,,, BECAUSE HE KNEW,,, THAT JESUS HAD COME TO BRING SALVATION;

BUT IF HE COULD JUST GET JESUS TO SIN,, JUST ONCE IT WOULD RUIN THE WHOLE PLAN OF SALVATION!

SO,,, SATAN DECIDED TO GIVE JESUS THREE TESTS:

THE 1ST TEST;

WAS THE TEST: OF THE LUST OF THE FLESH,,, WAS TO TURN THE STONES,,, INTO BREAD!

AFTER FASTING 40 DAYS,,, JESUS MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY HUNGRY,,, AND THE DEVIL KNEW IT. SO HE TRIED TO USE THAT HUNGER,,, TO TEMPT JESUS,,, TO DISOBEY THE FATHER'S WILL,,, BY TEMPTING JESUS,,, INTO USING HIS DIVINE POWERS,,, TO SATISFY HIS OWN NEEDS. BUT JESUS WOULDN'T BE TEMPTED BY FLESHY HUMAN WEAKNESS.

INSTEAD,,, JESUS RESPONDED BY SAYING:

IT IS WRITTEN,,, ONE DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE,,, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FORTH FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD!

JESUS WAS TALKING ABOUT LETTING THE HOLY WORD OF GOD,,, BECOME: *OUR SOULS NOURISHMENT!*
BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, JESUS DIDN'T JUST SET ASIDE,,, "*SOME*" OF HIS LIFE FOR YOU,,, HE GAVE UP "*ALL*" OF HIS LIFE,,, FOR YOU!

SO,,, I URGE YOU,,, SET ASIDE *SOME TIME*,,, DURING THIS *LENTEN SEASON*,,, TO READ THE GOSPELS AND TO ALLOW GOD'S WORDS TO NOURISH YOU AND GIVE YOU PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL ONE!

THE 2ND TEST;

WAS THE TEST OF JESUS' OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER!
JESUS IS TEMPTED TO PROVE THAT HE IS GOD'S SON,,, BY THROWING HIMSELF DOWN,,, FROM THE PARAPET OF THE TEMPLE,,, TRUSTING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE INJURED,,, BECAUSE THE HANDS OF THE ANGELS WOULD SUPPORT HIM.

JESUS SAID TO SATAN:

AGAIN IT IS WRITTEN,,, YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD,,, TO THE TEST!

THE 3RD TEST;

WAS THE TEST OF; "THE LUST OF THE EYES!"
THE DEVIL PROMISED JESUS,,, ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH,,, BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL,,, *IF ONLY,,, HE WOULD BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP HIM!*
HE OFFERED JESUS POWER AND GLORY,,, OVER ALL JESUS COULD SEE AND SENSE RIGHT THEN,,, *INSTEAD OF GOING TO THE CROSS,,, AND PARTICIPATING IN THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION*
YES,,, JESUS WANTED THE WHOLE WORLD TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,,, BUT,,, WOULD HE ACHIEVE THAT,,, BY WORSHIPPING *A FALSE GOD?*

NO,,, HE WOULDN'T!

INSTEAD,,, HE REMAINED STEADFAST AND FAITHFUL TO GOD THE FATHER,,, AND JESUS SAID TO SATAN:

GET AWAY SATAN,,, IT IS WRITTEN,,, THE LORD YOUR GOD,,, SHALL YOU WORSHIP,,, AND HIM ALONE,,, SHALL YOU SERVE.

WITH THAT,, SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT,, THE DEVIL LEFT HIM AND IMMEDIATELY,, THE ANGELS CAME TO JESUS,, AND MINISTERED TO HIM.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, WE NEED TO REALIZE,, *THAT AS GOD'S CHILDREN,, IF WE ARE BEING LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,, WE'RE GOING TO BE UNDER CONSTANT TESTING AND ATTACK,, BY SATAN.*

HE'S CUNNING,, AND HE'LL WAIT FOR JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT,, WHEN THE CONDITIONS ARE JUST RIGHT,, WHEN OUR DEFENCES ARE DOWN,, AND IT'S THEN,, THAT "HE WILL,, JUST LIKE THE LIONESS DID TO HER CUBS,, "POUNCE,, AND ATTACK YOU!"

IT'S DURING THOSE TIMES THAT HE WILL TEST US,, JUST LIKE HE DID JESUS!

SO,, WHAT IF,, WE'RE NOT BEING TEMPTED BY SATAN,, RIGHT NOW? WELL,, THAT'S PROBABLY WHEN YOU SHOULD BE MOST CONCERNED!

LET ME EXPLAIN:

IF SOMEONE DOESN'T KNOW THE LORD,, IN A SENSE,, SATAN ALREADY HAS THEM IN HIS GRASP,, AND HE DOESN'T HAVE TO WORK TOO HARD TO TRIP THEM UP.

BUT SATAN WANTS TO DECEIVE EVERYONE AND IF SOMEONE IS ALREADY A CHRISTIAN,, HE HAS TO WORK HARDER ON THEM,, THAN HE WOULD ON THE OTHERS. DOESN'T THAT MAKE SENSE?

THE DEVIL MAKES US QUESTION OUR FAITH,, ALL THE TIME. *IT'S WHAT HE DOES,, AND HE'S GOOD AT IT!* HE'S SIMPLY A TERRIFIC "CON ARTIST"!

BUT A TRUE CHRISTIAN,, LIKE CHRIST,, WON'T FALL FOR HIS LIES AND DECEPTION.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, DON'T ALLOW SATAN TO CON YOU,, INTO BECOMING "CONFUSED" AS TO WHETHER OR NOT "*YOU'RE A BELIEVER,, WITH FAITH. FAITH,, IS BEING SURE THAT YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN AND FAITH COMES BY READING AND HEARING,, THE WORD OF GOD!*

THE MORE WE WORSHIP,,, STUDY AND PRAY,,, THE MORE WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE,,, THAT WE BELONG TO JESUS,,, WE ARE CHRISTIANS AND WE BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST,,, AND NO OTHER!

OUR FAITH IN CHRIST,,, IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN AND WILL SAVE US,,, WHEN IT COMES TO THE TEMPTATIONS,,, THAT SATAN THROWS AT US.

JESUS ALONE,,, IS OUR SAVIOR AND HE ALONE,,, IS OUR STRENGTH,,, TO OVERCOME THE TESTS OF LIFE.

SO,,, DURING THIS *LENTEN SEASON*,,, LET'S CHOOSE TO SUBMIT OURSELVES TO THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE AND *SATAN WILL FLEE FROM US*, OUR OLD SIN NATURE AND THE POWER OF SIN,,, WILL GROW WEAKER AND WEAKER AND WEAKER,,, AS WE EXPRESS OUR FAITH AND SURRENDER MORE OF OUR LIFE,,, TO THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,,, AND OF THE SON,,, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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1,385 Wds, 6 Pgs