

### ***Pastor writes***

The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'The victory of Jesus when tempted helps us when we are tempted.' We are now in the first week of lent and the reading from St. Luke's gospel enables us to look at the temptation of Jesus and to draw lesson to overcome temptation in our own life. Luke reminds us that Jesus was full of the Spirit after being baptized by John in the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days where he was tempted by the devil. During those forty days he ate nothing and therefore was hungry by the end of it.

Luke records three temptations faced by Jesus and how he overcame it. In the first temptation, the devil said to Jesus, 'If you are the son of God, command these stones to become bread.' The temptation that comes to Jesus is to make him question his identity as to whether he was indeed the Son of God. Jesus had been affirmed in his baptism as the Son of God. Here Jesus is hungry after forty days of fasting and the devil was quite sure that he would use his supernatural power to satisfy his hunger. Jesus overcomes the temptation by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, saying 'that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.' Jesus shows that true satisfaction of a human being's in the innermost part can only come by the word of God. We may think of various things that we crave for thinking that it will give us ultimate satisfaction. Ultimate satisfaction comes from the word of God- his commandments-his direction. Chris Wright says, 'all life on earth needs bread; human life needs the mouth of God that first breathed into our nostrils. Bread will keep us physically alive, but it is the word of God that uniquely gives human life its meaning, shape, purpose and value.

In the second temptation, the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, 'to you I will give you all this authority and their glory, for it is delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' The second temptation is aimed at granting satisfaction through power and authority. The temptation was to take the shortcut, avoid the cross and gain glory by worshipping Satan. The bargain was that Jesus would have to worship the devil. Jesus knew that he would be glorified only through his suffering, his death and his resurrection. He would be seated on the right hand of God with all power and authority on completing his work. Here the devil was in fact offering him a shortcut. Avoid the cross, just worship me and I will give it to you immediately. Instant gratification will be granted if only you will lose your soul to the devil.

Jesus was tempted to break the first command, of having no other God as any worship was due only to God. Jesus again quotes from Deuteronomy 13 saying, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve.' Jesus again uses the God word to confront temptation. He rightly shows that the Father is the only one who has dominion over all the earth and he alone will give that dominion to Jesus. We live in a world of instant gratification. We want everything and we want it now. We cannot take shortcuts which will be disastrous in the long run.

In the third temptation, the devil took Jesus and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself from here for it is written, "He will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone."' The temptation here is for Jesus to do something septectular and become famous. Jesus counters this temptation by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16 saying, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' By saying this, Jesus is stating that one cannot test God the Father, and one cannot test Jesus, who is God the son. Jesus refuses to be satisfied by material things, by power or by fame. Most of us are tempted by one of these things. Jesus has taught us a way to overcome temptation by being obedient to his words and sensitive towards the Holy Spirit's leading. Jesus also reassures us that there is no temptation that we cannot overcome because he will not allow us to be tempted beyond our limits (1Cor 10:13).The victory of Jesus when tempted encourages and challenges us to stand firm and overcome temptations when we face them.

Shalom  
Paul Swarup

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