

4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.4:2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.4:3 The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."4:4 But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,4:6 saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"4:7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor;4:9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"4:11 Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Let's face it. If temptation wasn't popular, it wouldn't be called "temptation". Temptation is really hard to escape, no matter how much even people of faith try to resist it. Consider this story:

There was a couple who had a deep faith; they even did a weekly Bible Study together. During the middle of the month, as was his fashion, the husband paid the outstanding bills. In the bills was a credit card statement from a local department store. On it he noticed the purchase of a very expensive dress. He went to his wife who was sitting in the living room, and said in a stern voice "Why did you have to purchase such an expensive dress?" Tearfully the wife said "the devil made me do it." The husband responded "Well we've talked about that before, and you should have responded, "Get behind me Satan!" She replied, "I did, and you know, the dress looked just as good from the front as it did in the back!" So I bought it!

On the First Sunday of Lent the gospel lesson is always about the temptation of Jesus. If there is one common thread in the devil's "temptation" is how easy things can be fixed if only Jesus does not take the bait. The devil's way might be easier in getting to a goal but it has "conditions" attached. Someone put it this way:

Notice Satan's version of grace - it had an IF clause attached to it. [[This reminds me of the many ploys out there today - get 400 dollars of free merchandise - IF you sign up for MSN for three years. No money down - no interest for 12 months - you can own a new car NOW! But all you have to do is make payments for the next five years! It's not exactly as free as you thought!]] Satan said, "I'll give you ALL these kingdoms, if you bow down and worship me!"

What are you "tempted" to do? Remember succumbing to temptation may not in the end reap the "good" results you want. Lean on God for help with the knowledge Jesus struggled with temptation too. If you do give in, it will not be the end of the world; you will always find the God of grace there to forgive, if you turn to God with a sincere heart.

Pr. John Van Haneghan