

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

This is a very short reflection on today's gospel reading.

Jesus had been in the desert praying and fasting for 40 days, and was hungry. Then the devil came and tempted him.

First, by food – Jesus replies, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Second, the devil tempts him by saying, throw yourself off the pinnacle of the temple, to prove you are the Son of God, and therefore will not die. The devil is crafty – he quotes from Psalm 91:11-12, verses that promise God's help for someone in adversity, saying,

“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.”

Jesus replies, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Finally, the devil takes Jesus to a high place and tempts him, promising that all the kingdoms of the world they can see will bow down to Jesus if he worships the devil. Jesus replies ‘Away with you, Satan! for it is written, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”’

Then the devil leaves, defeated, and angels come and minister to Jesus.

Reflection

Do we resist temptation when it comes to us, or do we quietly allow it to conquer our hearts and minds?

Jesus resists all the temptations of the devil. He does not allow his hunger and weakness to override his obedience to the Father. How about us? When we are tired, stressed, disappointed, or in need, how easily do we surrender our values? How quickly do we justify small compromises that slowly weaken our spiritual strength?

Temptation itself is not yet sin, but the moment we begin to welcome it into our thoughts, we open the door to falling. Let us guard not only our actions, but also our hearts and minds.

In the second temptation, the devil challenges Jesus to test God. How often do we do the same? Do we sometimes demand signs before we believe? Do we say, “Lord, if you do this for me, then I will trust you”? Yet true faith does not bargain with God. True faith rests in him, even when we do not see, even when we do not fully understand. Blessed are we when we trust without demanding proof.

The third temptation speaks deeply to our present world. The temptation of wealth, power, and material comfort. Money, in itself, is not evil, but when we begin to want it, depend on it, and value it more than God, it quietly becomes our master. Let us ask ourselves; are we serving God, or are we unknowingly serving our possessions?

During this Lenten season, we will encounter temptations; subtle and obvious, small and great. They may be presented attractively, disguised as being harmless or even necessary. But we are not helpless. We have the Word of God. We have prayer. We have grace. We have Christ, who has already shown us how to overcome.

Let us stand firm. Let us choose obedience over convenience, trust over doubt, and holiness over temporary pleasure. AMEN