

Temptations

Scripture Passage

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In [their] hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." (Matthew 4:1-11 NKJV)

Thesis

The greatest temptations often come during times of spiritual revival.

Commentary

It is a terrible thing to be tempted by the devil. We are taught to pray that we would not be lead into temptations. Unfortunately, temptations will come, and they will come when you least expect them.

When you say to yourself, "I am safe," the hour of temptation is near. Clearly, the devil has his ways, and a discerning believer may note his methods and guard his house well. Our duty is to be ever vigilant in our watch.

Notice the timing of Jesus temptation. An examination of Matthew 3:13-17 will tell you that Jesus has just been baptized. The heavens had opened and a voice called from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. What a wonderful time of honor, a spiritual high.

This is when the attack comes, when Christ was honored. At the beginning of His ministry, the devil sought to kill His efforts. So too will be your hour of greatest temptations. When you are doing well, when the Spirit of God is upon you, and the kingdom of God is advancing, then he will come as an angel of light to destroy you and the work you are doing.

Why this is the time when evil is most active. When good is prevailing, evil is enraged. The devil hates God and all His children. The Lord has put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil. Therefore, when advances are made in the kingdom, the devil is threatened and he attacks like a wounded animal.

However, my friends this temptation is not without a purpose. God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able. He does not tempt anyone, but will allow temptations to come to prepare you.

When the gunsmith makes a new weapon, he tests it. He loads 4 to 5 times the powder in the charge and fires the gun to ensure it will not explode under normal use. Only then is the gun sold to the sportsman. The same is true of us. Before He places us into service, He tests us to ensure we will be safe. Without temptations, we would not be of much use. How could we comfort another unless we have been comforted? How can we lead others through the valley of despair unless we have found our way out? How could we help a poor pilgrim escape doubting castle unless we have been able to use the key of faith? I tell you there is a purpose to it all.

Guard yourself friend for the devil is a roaring lion walking about seeking someone to devour. He will notice the one doing the most good, and attack that one first, and hardest.

Father, we do pray that you will lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Remind us to take heed when we stand lest we fall. When you deem it necessary to allow us to be tempted, give us an equal measure of grace to endure it without sin, amen.