

## Tempted for You

**Matthew 4:1-11** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, "' Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup> and said 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, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "' You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

1 "Some Son you are," was the devil's jeer. Immediately before fasting in the wilderness for 40 days, Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan. There, the skies peeled open and God the Father declared of the One standing in the Jordan—Jesus— "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." So the devil taunted, "Some Son you are if your Father sent you out into the wilderness to starve."

2 "Some son you are," was also the devil's taunt to Adam in the Garden. The Lord had made the man and the woman in His image, had placed them in the garden, and given them dominion over creation. The Lord entrusted them with serving as His representatives to creation. But He had forbidden them to eat from one particular tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "Some son you are. God knows that when you eat from that tree your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

3 "Some child you are," is the devil's taunt to you, as well. If God loves you and is your Heavenly Father, why doesn't He take better care of you? Why doesn't He deliver you from your afflictions, your illnesses or injuries? Why doesn't He shelter you from hard times, from marital strife, from financial hardship, from employment worries? Why

doesn't he keep temptation at bay? So the devil causes you to doubt your sonship or daughtership to your Heavenly Father.

4 "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." The devil called Jesus to abandon His trust that His Heavenly Father is taking care of Him. He wanted Him to go-it-alone. But Jesus refused to give in to the devil's trickery and answered that bread is not more important than trust in the Father: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Having failed to get Jesus to doubt the Father's care for His Son, the devil next tried to get Him to take advantage of His sonship. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the temple and see if your Father protects you." Jesus again answered with scripture: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." Again silenced by the Incarnate Word of God, the devil tried a third approach, to tempt Jesus to be a disloyal son. "I will give you all the kingdoms of the world if you will fall down and worship me." And again Jesus responds, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" So the devil left Him.

5 Why endure these temptations? Why fast for 40 days? For you, beloved, your Lord was tempted for you. The writer of Hebrews says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (4:15). He was tempted because Adam and Eve were tempted and fell into sin. He was tempted because the Israelites were tempted and fell into sin. He was tempted because you are tempted and fall into sin. And He was tempted because you sin by doubting your Father's care for you, by taking advantage of your Father's provision for you, and by being a rebellious child. He was tempted in the same way you are, and yet He did not ever give in to temptation. He obeyed the Father perfectly. He obeyed Him perfectly, submitting to His will, even to be nailed to a cross and there crucified and died.

6 The Son of God was tempted for you. He withstood the attacks from the devil for you. He bore the weakness of human flesh for you and yet did not succumb to sin. All for you. He withstood temptation so that He could be the sinless sacrifice for sinners. For you. Because He who was without sin died in the place of sinners, rejected by God the Father in the place of sinners, He has reversed the curse earned by Adam. Where the first Adam failed, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, succeeded. When the devil told him to take and eat, Jesus refused. When the devil told Him to put Himself in the place of the Father, Jesus refused. And when the devil told Jesus to cease to worship the Lord, He refused. So He obeyed where Adam disobeyed. And yet he was punished so that Adam could go free.

7 Some son or daughter you are indeed!. In order to claim you as His very own, God the Father rejected His only-begotten son so that He might give to you the adoption as a child of God (Gal. 4:5). "See what kind of love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God, and so we are" (1 Jn. 3:1). Through the waters of Holy Baptism, God has claimed you as His dearly beloved child. He has placed His triune name upon you and has given you a new identity. You belong to Him.

8 Because of this, the devil will not cease to try to get you to give up your standing as a child of God. He will tempt you to doubt your Father's providence by using stresses and temporary trials in life to distract you from your Father's good gifts that will never cease: forgiveness, life, and salvation. He will tempt you to take advantage of your Father's care and concern for you by inviting you to test His goodness, skipping out on receiving these good gifts, throwing yourself off the Lord's temple into the world. The devil will tempt you to be a rebellious child, enticing you to continue to worship all your false gods, to continue to persist in the sins from which you have been set free. But your Lord was tempted for you, resisted temptation for you, so that His death might pay the

penalty for your inability to withstand temptation. He defeated the devil in the wilderness, and He defeated the devil on the cross.

9 And your Lord is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. In every temptation, he gives you a way out. What's the way out?

Forgiveness. The forgiveness that Jesus won on the cross is delivered to you in the waters of Holy Baptism, in the words of Holy Absolution, and in the wafer and wine of the Holy Supper. This forgiveness both changes who you are—from sinner to saint—and drives away the devil with his lies and his tempting.

*In the* ■☉○ℳ □✠ ◆⋈ℳ ☯☉◆⋈ℳ□ ☉■☉ □✠ ◆⋈ℳ ✠ *Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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