

THE 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

February 21, 2010

(Deuteronomy 26: 4-10; Romans 10: 8-13; Luke 4: 1-13)

TEMPTATION IS INEVITABLE AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT

A story has it that **Cyrus**; the founder of the Persian Empire, once captured a **Prince** and his family. When they were brought before him, **Cyrus** asked the captured **Prince**,

“What will you give me if I release you?”

“***The half of my wealth,***” replied the Prince.

“And if I release your children?”

“***Everything I possess,***” said the Prince.

“And if I release your wife?”

The Prince had a deep breath and answered; “***Your Majesty, I will give myself.***”

This kind of questions **Cyrus** asked the **Prince** might seem so simple to many. But after a second thought, one should see it as a great trial for the Prince, in such a situation, to prove his faithfulness, love and dedication to his wife and children. Consequently, Cyrus was so moved by his (Prince’s) devotion that he freed them all, unconditionally.

As they returned home, the **Prince** said to his wife, “***Wasn’t Cyrus a handsome man!***” With a look of deep love for her husband, she said to him, “***I didn’t notice. I could only keep my eyes on you - the one who was willing to give himself for me.***” Lent is the time for us to remember Jesus, the one who was willing to give his life for us and the manner in which he did, in fact, give his life for us.

Just after the **Baptism** of Jesus, the Holy Spirit anointed him and the voice of the heavenly Father declared him “***Beloved Son***” (***Luke 3:***). This anointed one of God – Jesus was subjected to testing in the desert. He was given three tests. Like the Prince who proved a worthy husband and father before Cyrus, Jesus stands his ground and gives the enemy a good fight, thus showing that he is truly the Son of God. By implication, no child of God can go without trials, because this is the means to distinguish between a true and a false child of God. As **Ben Sirach** advises, “***My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing***” (***Sirach 2:1***).

Brothers and sisters, since we are bound to face trials and temptations, it becomes very necessary to bear the following **4 points in mind while dealing with temptations**. They are:

1. Temptation always begins with a doubting thought. The first thing the devil does is sow a seed of doubt in one’s mind. Example: “***if you are the Son of God.***” In the Garden of Eden, the devil said to Eve: “***Did God really say you should not eat of any fruit of the garden***” (***Genesis 3:1***).

2. One is tempted only with what he or she **desires**, such as material possessions, money, fame, power, satisfaction of one's appetite or passion, etc.
3. The devil will always show or provide what I may call the ***devil's shortcut***, which may look so easy and simple. (***Command these stones..., just worship me and all these will be yours, jump down...***).
4. The ***devil's philosophy*** of "***using what you have to get what you want***" seems always right, but it is not so. The **end** cannot justify the **means**. Every gift from God is for the common good and not for any selfish use.

As God's children, we are under constant testing. Let us therefore bear in mind these **four methods of approach** the devil uses to pull us down. The only way to victory over all these is to surrender ourselves humbly and unconditionally to God in all situations. Are you ready and willing to do just that?

GOD IS GOOD! ALL THE TIME!