

Jesus is Our Way Up When Sin Takes Us Down

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Temptation is the desire to do something unwise or wrong. As human beings we are always in this situation when we do not judge correctly the out come of our action or when we think of the immediate gain but refuse to take cognizance of the consequences

- It is because of the long-term effect of our action that we restrain ourselves from doing bad or evil things.
- Words like seduction, attraction, pull, impulse, inclination and the like come handy to describe temptation.
- That is why it is not good to find ourselves in situations where we will give in to things that seduces, attracts or pulls us. We should always have a backup strength to oppose whatever is seducing us to do evil. The force of temptation is strong, resisting it is not easy, but that is what we are called to do.
- We need the grace of God to redeem ourselves after falling into temptation but the memory lives very long with us in life.
- As Christians who want to do the will of God always, we must learn how to resist temptation.
- Our inward lust responds usually to temptation. It is from there that we start planning how to carry out the desires of our heart.

1st Reading: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; is the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve. This is the story of how humanity started losing favor in the sight of God.

- “The serpent asked the woman, ‘Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?’”
- If evil comes to us in its true nature, it will be easy to recognize it. But it comes in very attractive, gentle and friendly nature. It comes in a way that it will be irresistibly attractive. It is never straightforward.
- Temptation comes at a time when we are vulnerable and are looking for something and anything to hang on for support and consolation. It is very deceptive. At such a time of need, just hanging on anything will look as if it is the only solution.
- “The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So, she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”
- It is not too difficult to convince another to fall especially a person who has affection for us. Adam followed suit because it was coming from his wife.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11; we see that the techniques used by Satan to lead people to temptation is the same but the response by individual differs.

- The techniques include: deception, promising pleasure and no pains, contradicts the certainty of true judgement (certainty of God judgement), challenges the truth (that is God’s character).

- Satan saw that Jesus was in a very vulnerable condition of fasting without food, isolated environment and also seeking power.
- Satan must have been thinking that Jesus was seeking material power for worldly achievements. He wanted to sell a cheap means for the redemption of humanity. But Jesus knew whom he was. A deceiver.
- In the gospel, we see the patterns of temptation that are common in life. The first is the lust of the flesh. That is to satisfy the body by feeding just the stomach. The second is the pride of life. That is the need for power and ego. While the third is the lust of the eyes. This is an attempt to make Jesus lose focus on the reality of the passion and cross as means of salvation.
- Satan loves to challenge or reinterpret the commands of God. Satan tempts us by getting us to question the authority of God. (Like saying: come on you don't believe all that outdated stuff about who is the head of the family, or restrictions on stuff about sexual outside marriage and morality or even saying that do you still read that ancient book called the Bible that was written in funny languages that no longer spoken and human beings are trying to interpret what they do not understand?)

2nd Reading: Romans 5:12-19; St Paul in this letter to the Romans offered us the strategy for victory over temptation. He made us know that though we have sinned, Christ becomes the root through which we get victory.

- "In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so, through one righteous act, acquittal and life came to all."
- The way to righteousness is through the Son of God who has come to lead us out of sin and help us with strengthen in our weakness. The human flesh remains weak in the face of obstacles and temptations but the grace of God becomes strength to us.
- Let us beware of twisted of doctrines or practices. Let beware of those things and places where we get what is contrary to the truth. We should not give room to every form of distortion under the banner of loveliness. We must let the authority of the Word of God and the Magisterium of the Church guide and lead us no matter how difficult to practice. We must not doubt God and His word no matter what. There is always the reality of God's judgment and that stands to truth. It will come whether we like it or not. Let us know that sin brings pleasure but results in pain that outweighs the pleasure.
- Jesus is our way up when sin takes us through the way down.