



The Mar Thoma Church Diocese of North America & Europe Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

TEMPTATION VS TRANSFORMATION

Matthew 4:1-11

Lent is a season of retrospection, penitence, renewal and fasting. In other words, this season provides us an invitation for a journey with our Creator from being to becoming. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit enable us to participate in this fulfilling journey and make us transformed.

We can understand from the beginning chapters of the Gospels and especially in Luke that Jesus had a deepening awareness during His years at Nazareth that His Father had for Him a destined and destiny-making mission to accomplish. His ministry actually begins with His baptism in Jordan River by John the Baptist

A temptation is an enticement to get a person to go contrary to the will of God as Satan tried to do with Jesus. A temptation can be seen as a fork in the road; the leading of the Spirit and the opportunity of the devil, and one must choose. It certainly is a chance to rise as much as it is a chance to fall. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, Jesus obviously was hungry (v. 2). The devil always waits for an opportune time to trap a person, as a spider upon making a web, hide for its prey. Fasting is often used as a means of focusing one's attention in prayer, disciplining oneself to unite body and soul. Jesus was readying Himself for His earthly ministry.

In the first temptation, the devil demands a miracle for the physical satisfaction (V. 3). Here Satan is trying to get Jesus misuse His prerogatives as the Son of God. But Jesus depends wholly on God for His sustenance, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man does not live on bread alone". In the second one, the devil wants Jesus to prove that He is the Son of God by throwing Himself down from the highest point of the temple. But Jesus knew that proving, as God's Son would come by submitting Himself on the cross, not by flinging Himself from the top of a building. Therefore, Jesus refused the demand by citing Deuteronomy 6:16: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." In the third temptation, the devil asks Jesus to accept his authority over the world by worshipping him. Jesus refused the devil's offer by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13: "Fear the Lord your God and serve Him only." As Jesus kept His life under the control of the Word, Satan could not deter Him from His mission. If we know God's Word, which is the sword of the Spirit, we too can be victorious over Satan.

Prayer: Gracious Father, we often go after the cravings of our desires. Enable us to withstand the pressures of this world by submitting to the will of the Spirit.

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Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"
Matthew 4:10