

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 3The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." 4Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" 5Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 9Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' 11and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 12Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.*

What will you pray for this week? One will pray for money to pay the bills, credit card debt is threatening. One will pray for a new job, income that will take the pressure off. One will pray for people in New Guinea whose bodies are shriveling like the drought-stricken sweet potato vines. One will pray for a daughter struggling to raise a child on her own. One will pray for a church to prosper so that money will be there to build and add staff. One will pray for enough to pay the rent and buy the medications to keep a body going until death.

When he was hungry Jesus was tempted to turn a stone into bread. In the physical world there is no more basic value than that, bread. When there is bread enough life can continue. When there is an abundance of bread it can be traded, sold, like a farmer sells the wheat to build bigger barns. Had Jesus turned stones into bread, here we would teach how to get rich for Jesus' secret would be ours. But Jesus said no to being a bread Messiah. There is something more basic than bread - *Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*

For what will you pray this week? One will pray for peace in the streets of south Lorain. One will pray for peace between Mom and Dad. One will pray for peace in the city, everyone working together. One will pray for peace among the nations, an end to terrorism and producing weapons that blow off feet and arms, and weapons to make people sick.

Satan promised, *"To you I will give all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory and authority over all if you will worship me."* Jesus ruling over everyone and everything - even

over every home and every action - think of what it would mean! Sometimes people have thought about God that way, talked about God as if everything that happens God has done. Satan promised Jesus just that power over everyone and everyone - but Jesus chose to worship God instead - *"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."* Jesus did not choose to be an "everything-in-all-the-world-is-good-Messiah."

For what will you pray this week? One will pray for a brother who has had a stroke, for the miracle of his talking and walking again. One will pray for a friend stricken with cancer, a cure. One will stand before a coffin and ask that a loved one might be raised - right now, at this instant - a resurrection for all to see. One will pray for a beleaguered church, for a new day of love and prosperity that will bring the crowds and will have the neighbors envious. One will pray for talents and abilities that were not given at birth.

From the very top of the temple Jesus and Satan looked down. *"Throw yourself down from here,"* Satan tempted, *"for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"* From Psalm 91 Satan quoted - from God's own word, God's own promise - but Jesus responded, *"It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* Jesus would not be a miracle Messiah, turning nature inside out so people could fly. They would have crowned Jesus king, right on the spot had he done it, but Jesus refused. No leap from the top of the temple that day.

Think about it, someone walks through that door, gets washed into Christ in Holy baptism, fed Christ's own body and blood in the meal, and what has changed when they walk out of that door? They will still get cancer like their unbelieving neighbors do. Debts and droughts will leave them short of money, short on bread, they will pray for miracles and get them about as often as their unbelieving neighbors will. If her husband is an abuser when she walks through that door, most often the prayers prayed here will not suddenly turn him into St. Francis. No, he'll still be Attila the Hun. Jesus was being tempted to be a bread Messiah, an authority over everything Messiah, a miracle Messiah. If he had chosen any of those I'd be paid better than the doctors, you'd call me instead of the ambulance when you were ill.

But Jesus said no to those. He chose to be a crucified Messiah. All his authority and power and might would be poured out in his dying for you.

Something matters more than your physical well-being. Something matters more than bread for your mouths, and a peaceful world, and health for your bodies. If you pray only for these you are not praying for enough. Jesus died on the cross to make a new you. At the very center of that new you is God, God's spirit in you. You might be satisfied to live in a world with your stomach full, your body healthy, no threats on the horizon. But Jesus wants not your happiness but your heart, your love. Jesus wants you to know not only God's gifts but God.

You will encounter God in Jesus' suffering and dying.

A father loves a child, provides for a child, provides everything the child ever wanted for the child. What happens? Is the child grateful, filled with love? Or do the demands, the wants, the needs increase, the appetites grow without limit?

What will God give you that you might love God? Jesus died on the cross, the answer to all your prayers.