

Live By Every Word Matthew 4:1-11

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)

Did God really say you couldn't look at women who are not your wife? Did God really say that you are not allowed to desire Fredrick Schmedlap's seventy-eight inch, curved screen, ultra HD, smart TV? Did God really say that people in love are to wait until they are married? Since the word Trinity isn't used in the Bible, we do not need to think of God as one God in three persons, right?

Satan began in the garden with an obvious falsehood. God obviously didn't tell Adam and Eve that they couldn't eat of any of the trees in the garden, only of that one tree. Satan used a portion of what God had spoken to entice Eve, it sounded like it might be true, at least close to it. Then he continued from there, he appealed to her desires – what she wanted and felt – and then tempted her to do what God had said she was not to do. She knew it was against God's Word, yet she ate anyway.

There are many today who do the same thing with God's Word. What they say, sounds reasonable. They may even quote the Bible. But just because someone claims to quote the Bible, and even if the quote is correct, is it truly in context? Oftentimes, there is just enough truth that it sounds like it might be true, or at least it is close. How many times have you heard people say, "Money is the root of all evil." That is not biblical! It actually says, "The *love* of money is the root **all kinds** of evil."

But it is nice to do the popular quotations of the Bible, which are often not truly from the Bible – they have simply been misquoted that way by so many, and for so long, they have just become popular.

These type of quotes appeals to us, often they are exactly what we want to do. We are after all, grown adults, God gave us brains to think for ourselves, He wouldn't want us not to use them. Besides, God understands our needs and desires. I only have to open my eyes and I can see there are other Christians doing the things that our restrictive pastor says we're not to do. Isn't the Bible open to many interpretations?

Jesus had been in the wilderness for forty days and nights. He'd been fasting. He hadn't eaten in forty days. That would be like going without food from now till Good Friday, April 14. I don't know about you, but I'd be hungry.

Satan comes along. “Hey Jesus, you’re hungry. You’re not only just a man, but you are also true God. You could if you so desired, speak a word and make a pizza with all the fixings. OK, maybe that’d be a little too flashy. Since you’re hungry and you have the power to do so, why not just something simple? What’s the harm? Why don’t you just speak the word and change a couple rock into loaves of bread?”

Jesus answered him saying, "It is written, " 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

He could very well have said, “Yes, I am hungry. My flesh is sorely tempted to do just as you say. It sounds reasonable. And truly, what would be the harm? Nobody else would be endangered. It isn’t like eating a little bread is sinful?” And yes, He could have made the stones into bread.

Instead, Christ resisted the temptation. The Word of God made flesh resisted temptation. Unlike Israel in the wilderness for forty years, Jesus lives according to the divine word. Unlike you and I, Jesus lives according to God’s righteous demands. Jesus’ relationship and life come from what God provides and more importantly from what God speaks. The issues of the body, it’s lusts and desires, come after the Word of God.

Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness is God’s will, it is the Spirit’s leading. Jesus refuses to use His power to reject God’s will and purpose. In His temptation, He is the obedient Son, the Son of whom the Father declared, “this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” The Father’s Word declared Him to be God’s Son living by every divine word, even in temptation.

On that Thursday, in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ was sorely tempted. His flesh desired to avoid the coming trial, the suffering at the hands of evil men, the scourging, the verbal abuse, the physical pain, and the agonizing death by crucifixion. But again, He abides by His Father’s Word, “not my will but yours be done.”

It is this perfect obedience of Christ, to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God, that is your greatest joy. Christ is able to sympathize with your weakness. He knows what it is like to be tempted, but He did not succumb to sin. His perfect life is what He sacrifices for your sake upon the tree. Upon the cross is the fulfillment of God’s promise to Eve. On the cross, her offspring crushes Satan’s head, crushes Satan’s power, for on the cross, sin and death are defeated.

It is therefore with perfect confidence that we can come before the throne of grace. You have been baptized into His death. You receive God’s mercy when you bow your head in repentance, acknowledging your sinfulness, and finding in Christ, the grace to help in your great time of need.

You are to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. His word which calls you to repentance, but even more His word of grace. Baptized into His death, united with him in a death like his, you shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Rom. 6:5) You are

given a new life, a redeemed life, a life of joy and happiness in the redemption that is yours in Christ Jesus.

Dear friends, live by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Live by every word. Live by the Word which made simple water a rebirth for you. With a Word from the mouth of God, you were given a new name, called the beloved of God, washed and cleansed to live a new life. This Word is your confidence. There is no confidence in what you do, or what you feel is right. But, what the Word of God proclaims to be true about you, is true. It is true because of Him who gave His life for you and to you.

Live by every word - the Word of forgiveness Christ speaks to you by the mouth of your pastor. It is a sure Word, a confident Word, a word commanded by the Word made flesh to be spoken into your ear. In that Word not a spot of your disobedience to His Word remains, you are cleansed of your sin and given new life.

Live by every word. "Take eat this is my body," and the very Word gives you His flesh to eat. Live by every word. "Take drink this cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." It was for this meal that the Word made flesh shed His blood, that you may eat and drink of the salvation He poured out for you of His own lifeblood.

In hearing and believing the Word of forgiveness spoken to you - in eating and drinking the meal of His body and blood which He speaks into existence in your presence - in trusting the Word in the water that spoke your life of faith into existence, you are worshiping God and giving Him the highest praise.

Live by every word. Do not put the Lord to the test, but trust His Word to you. For in that Word, in Christ, you are God's beloved children and have life everlasting. Amen.