

Jesus, on his meeting with the devil did not have a full stomach, and most likely didn't have anything in the wilderness that was edible. When the tempter came to him Jesus was at his physically weakest point thus far in his life, and he was good and hungry. So the first temptation was food... turn the stone into bread. Of course Jesus could have done that, after all he turned water into wine in one of the later miracle stories. Yet, even though he was weak from hunger, Jesus was spiritually full and did not give in to the temptation but replied to the tempter with scripture from Deuteronomy. Jesus knew he could not rely on his own power but needed God's sustaining presence to prepare him for what lay ahead.

How often when we have a problem presenting us do we do everything we know how to do to solve the problem, and when that doesn't work, we say, "I guess I will pray"? Prayer and reading the scripture is a starting point, not an ending point.

When the devil realized he wasn't going to win Jesus over with food, like he had Adam and Eve, he moved on to more tempting things. Throw yourself off this pinnacle of the temple, the highest point here in the city, he tempted saying, "You'll be ok. God will send angels to protect you." Again Jesus responds with scripture from Deuteronomy telling him we aren't to put God to the test. Jumping off the pinnacle would have made God prove he was on Jesus' side; it would have been trying to prove that God was with him, something that needed no proof.

What does that mean in our life today to put God to the test? There are two ways of testing God, one is perfectly fine and the other is not. God tells the Israelites to test him, when, in Micah he says to bring all the grain to the storehouse, and he will open the floodgates. It has everything to do with trusting God to provide for your needs. The other testing of God, was telling Israel not to put God to the test in Deuteronomy which involved the people doubting God to provide what they needed in the wilderness. When we test God in our doubt, we are not trusting that God will provide. It would be like us saying, "If you're real God, and I'm not sure you are, but if you are real, then I'm going to jump off this overpass into traffic and trust you that I won't get hurt."

The third test from the tempter regarded glory, looking successful in the world. "Look," the devil said, "if you bow down to me you can be in charge of all this.... You'll have riches and power, and you can be so proud of what you have accomplished." Jesus saw the devil for who he is and sent him away saying "only God deserves worship, not buildings, not power nor affluence, nor people, only God."

Matthew Myer Boulton in his commentary on today's gospel found on SALTproject.org sums it all up by saying, "Jesus' three responses don't just debunk the devil's temptations; they effectively declare the good news of the Gospel: Yes — God loves you, and loves us all! God is the One we are made to trust — with humility and grace — for nourishment, love, and guidance. Even as we, too, travel through the wilderness, every good gift in our lives is manna from heaven, our "daily bread" for which we can and should give thanks — and for which we can and should pray afresh each day, presuming nothing, with empty hands and humble hearts. For the God of grace is among us — and God's own child, Emmanuel, "God with us," walks at our side. In seasons of scarcity and plenty alike, God is the font of every blessing!"
All Glory be to God.