Sermon Title: **Lead Me Not Into Temptation**

**By Joseph Aoude**, on Sunday March 1, 2020

**Prayer:**

**Oh God may the words of my mouth and meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight oh God our rock and our redeemer. Amen.**

A few years ago, I turned on the television to watch “Wild World of Animals.” The narrator was telling the story of the Honey Badger and its love for honey. Now a Honey Badger is a mammal mainly found in Africa, Southwest Asia and the Indian Continent. It looks more like a weasel and by its name we know it has a love for honey. The Honey Badger has been labeled as the world's most fearless animal. Because of its love for honey, the Honey Badger will attack a beehive in its desperate search for honey.

So on this particular evening, I could not help but laugh to see despite all of the bee stings, the Honey Badger would return time after time in its relentless pursuit of trying to take hold of the honeycomb from the beehive. When the bee stings became so unbearable, the Honey Badger appeared to be walking away in defeat, but would only return for one more try. The reality is that too many bee stings could end up being fatal to the Honey Badger. I guess the taste of honey was just too good to give up! As I watched in disbelief, I could see how the temptation would persist, and despite the numerous bee stings, getting hold of the honeycomb made all the difference to the Honey Badger. Finally, after many tries, and many bee stings, the Honey Badger emerged from the hive with the honeycomb in its mouth, and with many bees attacking its face. What a sight that was!

As humans and Christians, many times we find ourselves in the valley of temptation. It is a time when the temptation is great and we simply cannot resist despite all the dire consequences. Friends, how many times do we find ourselves in some compromising situations that we cannot explain and indulge in habits that we know could be detrimental to ourselves, our families, our communities and above all to God. You would think that we ought to know better, but too many times we give in to these temptations. Many marriages are on the rocks today because of a spouse who has strayed away into some form of temptation. Temptation such as over indulging in alcohol, drugs, and disturbing habits and life-styles that become unbearable to their partners. Wherever we look, wherever we go there are avalanches of temptations all around us! At home, at work, and everywhere we go temptations are lurking! Whether it may be our additions to over-eating, drinking, shopping, gossiping, Internet time, Face booking, Texting or spending way too much time on our cell phones and other gadgets.

One thing that is clear to us is the fact that we are all guilty of some form of temptation. We are wise enough to know that there are consequences when we falter, and that we should live our lives following the footsteps of our great God and for many that is not always easy. The word temptation means “the desire to do something, especially wrong or unwise.

**So how do we deal with temptation? How do we stand up to our temptation?**

The Bible gives us a classic example of the mannerism of Jesus and how he dealt with temptation. According to the story in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus the son of Mary and Joseph was now all grown and was about to begin and fulfill his 3 year ministry on earth. Jesus had just experienced a water baptism from his cousin John The Baptist. When Jesus had fasted 40 days and 40 nights he was hungry. Immediately after Jesus came out of the water the voice of God identified him as the Beloved Son. As soon as Jesus came out of the water the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:16-17) And of course the devil who is the great tempter took notice! The devil knew that Jesus was hungry after fasting 40 days and 40 nights and came to tempt the freshly baptized Jesus, like a lion waiting to devour a newborn gazelle.

The tempter came to Jesus and said, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to be turned into bread.” Jesus answered and said, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” **That was the first temptation.**

Then the devil took Jesus into the holy city and set him on a pinnacle, which is the high point of the temple. And said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God cast yourself down and the angels will protect you. Cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall hold you up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Jesus said unto him. “Thou shall not put the Lord thy God to the test.” **Notice that was the second temptation.**

Now you would think after 2 temptations the Devil would quit. For a third time the Devil charged at Jesus by taking Jesus into a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory and beauty of them; and saith unto him, “All these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me.” **Then said Jesus unto him, “Begone Satan, for is is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God and him only only him shall thou serve.” Then the devil left him and behold angels came and ministered unto him.**

Notice it took 3 temptations to get rid of the Devil! **Notice in all three instances, Jesus used scripture as ammunition of choice to get rid of Satan. Jesus used spiritual ammunition to get rid of the devil. Also notice that Jesus was quoting from the Book of Deuteronomy which is the Book of blessings and cursing. Jesus said, “It is written, It is written, then begone Satan!”**

Friends, today I ask you, when was the last time you were tempted? How many times were you tempted for the same thing within a 20 minutes span? There is always that temptation to stop at the bar and have a few drinks before going home. The temptation to stop at the Strip Club one night this week. The temptation to buy a car that you cannot afford. The temptation to keep up with the neighbor next door. The temptation to take something that does not belong to you and thinking that no one will see you. The temptation to cheat on your spouse, or to tell a lie to get what you want; and the temptations go on and on…..

**When the temptation became so great, How did you stand up to your temptation? Did you use scripture to overcome your temptation? As Christians, we ought to know that Jesus gave us a classic example on dealing with temptation. Jesus used the opening words: It is written.....**

I think that there is great power in these opening words. **IT IS WRITTEN!!** Notice after we say it is written then we can add some scripture to confront our temptation!

As Christians and especially new converts who are just getting to know and receive Jesus. we all should be aware that all that is not good in the world and all that is evil is always waiting for an opportune time to attack the people of God. Satan is an opportunist who needs a good spiritual confrontation!

Today I urge you to **Stand up to your temptation!** The devil is like a roaring lion seeking souls to devour, whose motive is to steal, kill and destroy. He is the “great deceiver.” The Apostle Paul referred to him as “The father of lies.” The devil will sometimes quote and abuse scripture to lure his victims to go against the will of God. **Let the devil know that God has chosen you, and there is no room for deceit!**

**Tell the devil it is written that You are a beloved child of God and that you'll Stand up to your temptation my Friends, let the devil know that you are the righteousness of God in Christ. Like the Honey Badger who could not resist the temptation of the honeycomb even if too many bee stings could be fatal; Likewise when we give into our temptations there will be many consequences to face. friends stand strong on the promises of God. Let us learn to resist what is not Christlike because when we resist all things that are not Christlike, all of that will flee away from us! It is written that on Christ the solid rock we stand, and that all other ground is sinking sand! I believe more than anything that we all want to be guided by the Holy Spirit, not by our temptations. We want to have Jesus as our consolation, not temporary comforts that leave us hungry or empty. May each one of us seek to understand our own actions in the moment of being tempted or after , it is my hope and prayer is that as the saying goes, “each of us do the things we know we should do, and cease to do the things we hate.” May our great God continue give us the strength, courage, and more than anything the peace to continue to pray, “Lead me not into temptation.” And to stand up to your temptation, too. May it be so. Amen.**