

Sunday, March 4, 2012

The victorious Christ in the temptation (1)

The Church selects for us the chapter of the temptation at the beginning of the journey of Lent, although the temptation of the Lord Jesus on the mountain and his victory over Satan was at the end of his fasting for 40 days. Perhaps the Church wants to tell us that at the end of the journey of fasting, there will be victory and triumph, and that through fasting, we become capable of this triumph. Through fasting, we also become qualified to be served by the Angels, when they came to serve Christ after His victory over the temptation of the devil (Matthew 4:11). Thus, we become encouraged and strengthened at the beginning of the journey of fasting. As though, the Church assures us that whoever joins with Christ in the journey of fasting, will receive strength, wisdom, and grace to overcome the devil and all his evil deceptions.

The Lord Jesus accepted the challenge of the devil to book it as victory for man. Mankind has always lost all battles against the vicious and deceptive enemy prior to the incarnation of Christ such that the Bible asserted: *“They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”* (Romans 3:12).

Our Lord Jesus came to confront the devil on behalf of mankind, He wore our flesh to fight our war. As a powerful and mighty king who wore the armament of soldiers and joined his troops to strengthen them, to fight with them, and enable them to triumph over their enemy. Likewise, Christ took our flesh to fight our adversary, to destroy him before our eyes, and to give us the upper hand over him. Therefore, whoever believes in Christ, gets baptized, stays firm in Him, follows Him carrying the cross, will enjoy this triumph over the devil in his life, and will proclaim with our teacher St. Paul: *“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.”* (2 Cor. 2:14).

The Lord Jesus is our commander in spiritual warfare. He is a battlefield commander, He doesn't just guide us from a command center, but rather joins us on battleground in the midst of trials and tribulations, and fights with us so that we become victorious through Him.

He desires for His children to overcome and always be victorious. Therefore, He places in our hands all His resources and weapons so we can always be walking tall, fighting our enemy with total courage, and confident that *“If God is for us, who is against us?”* (Romans 8:31). Therefore, we also ought to place before us, this important fact *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”* (1 John 4:4).

Here we come to an important conclusion: We can never overcome on our own. Without the power of God being with us, it is impossible for us to taste victory. This is what the saints realized throughout history, is that their true strength lies in being steadfast in God. Consider David, for instance, when he entered in an unequal battle with Goliath the giant philistine. David told him you draw your strength from a sword and spear, a

shield and physical strength coupled with much experience in war, but I derive my strength from another source, one that is much greater, *“I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts”* (1 Samuel 17:45). David was aware of the source of his strength, so we always see him speak with God, saying: *“I will love You, O Lord, my strength.”* (Psalm 18: 1), *“Plead my cause O Lord, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me... Rise up to my help... Say to my soul, I am your salvation.”* (Psalm 35: 1-3).

The children of God realize that He is the source of their triumph, therefore, they like to partake of the holy sacraments, because communion provides them with a divine power to be steadfast in Christ the leader of their victory. They also cherish Prayer because it satisfies their hearts and strengthens them against sin, and fills their hearts with peace despite the ferociousness of the spiritual warfare. They cherish Fasting because it strengthens their will and elevates them above the desires of the flesh. Thus they experience inner victory before facing any outer enemy. They also cherish the word of God and they keep it for it is their mighty weapon in facing the poisoning arrows of Satan.

The children of God are victorious because of the power of the victorious Christ. He dwells within them and fights their war. He casts away all thoughts of hatred, thoughts of pride, the lusts of the world, its greed and vanity that they are tempted with. Christ is able to overcome and crush the enemy. As to the children of God, all what they need to do is to abide in Him in every way possible while He fights on their behalf so they overcome through His power.

Christ entered into a war against Satan on the mountain in order to win victory for us. However abides in Him will be victorious with Him.

To be continued.

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