

INVOCAVIT SUNDAY Matt. 5: 38-48 Mt. Calvary, West View / Pentecost, Avella 02/19/17

Theme: Do Not Tempt The Lord Thy God

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the continuation of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the 5th chapter:

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, `You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, there were two pastors attempting to erect a sign of great warning, that they wished every person to heed, lest they meet an unfortunate end. Reverend Boudreaux of the Holy Alliance of the Cajun Southern Baptist was working in unparalleled solidarity with the Right Reverend Roberdaux of the High Waters Praise of His Covenant Church down the ways. They were pounding in a sign near the dusty road which they carefully worded to all passerbys, "Da end isa Near! Turn Yo Sef 'Roun 'bout nar 'afore it be too Late!" As a car sped past them, from the looks and speed of the vehicle, it was certainly was one o' dem city folk, the driver leaned out his winder and yelled, "Shuddup You religious nuts!" from just beyond that there curve they heard a screeching and a screaming, and a big ol' splash. The Right Reverend Roberdaux turns to his esteemed colleague and asked, "DaYa tink maybe da sign jussay 'Bridge aht?"

The signs are always there, if we would just take the time to see them. Certainly this city slicker did not take the time to truly read the sign to understand what it was ultimately trying to convey for his safety and life. We too have signs for our benefit places all around us. Yes, Signs, signs, everywhere there're signs. Blocking out the scenery, perhaps, but they are only breaking your mind if you are too city to heed them. Adam and Eve were given a sign in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were told not to eat from said tree. The sign was the tree itself;

do not eat, in fact, to Eve it even said do not touch! Yet, the sign was not heeded, and they took, and they ate, and they died.

Oh, they died alright. It was not the lightning strike we were all expecting, but it sure was death. They were separated from their Lord; they could no longer be in His presence; they had to hide, for the shame they had in their nakedness. All these are signs that they were dead men walking; they needed another sign – one of life and salvation and a returning to the Lord their God.

They got one – in the promise of the Offspring that would come and strike the head of that mean old serpent that wished for their undoing. Oh, how they waited for that promise! He finally came, in the birth of Jesus from the virgin womb. He grew in years and stature before men, and the time had come for Him to be baptized, and enter into the wilderness and be tempted by the devil. Now the thing about the devil is, as crafty as he is, he is not very wise. For in his craftiness, he goes after Jesus in the most vulnerable spots – His kingdom, His humanity, His purpose in going to the cross. Yet in all this, he continued the same attacks he has used since the time of Adam and Eve. He tried to tempt Jesus into sinning. This is a rather unwise thing to do, for Jesus instructs him to see the sign placed in front of him, “You tempt Me as a man, I tell you, do not tempt the Lord Thy God!”

This is what you and I need to understand in this reading: Jesus clearly calls Himself God in the Flesh. For all the people who declare that Jesus never made His Godliness clear, well, it does not get any clearer than this! Tempting Jesus is tempting God for He is the second person in the Blessed Trinity. And as Adam and Eve were disciplined in tempting God’s wrath in blaming everyone but themselves, Jesus warns the nasty devil to be gone, for the only worship that is proper is a worship of God, the One and Only! Can the world see the sign before them that this is the Christ, Who has come to bring them salvation and healing? Do they see Him and Him alone as

the One Who will reconcile man back to God? Apparently not, for there are numerous religions and untold numbers of mental gymnastics done to try and tempt God into accepting their version of the creator, rather than trusting in the one presented to them.

Indeed, every sin is a tempting of God to accept what we have done as not our fault and blame Him for making the tree the source of our sins. Rather than just fessing up and saying, “we are miserable human creatures, needing the cleansing of the Son to save us.” We try to hide, cover our tracks, blame others for our sorry state. So convenient to blame Eve for eating the fruit. If we were to truly take our own assessment, we would fare no better in the face of temptation. We haven’t stopped eating the fruit of temptation, for we daily sin much and are in need a savior, Jesus the Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God, that this truly is what happens to you as the Holy Ghost so directs you to your baptism. With the daily remembrance of this act of God in and through you, there is a drowning of the old man with his blame game in the waters of your baptism and arises a new man that desires nothing more than to please Almighty God in His divine providence. It is this we celebrate in the Lenten season when we do celebrate at all. We celebrate what God has accomplished in His Son, the act of going to the cross, ignoring the temptations of the cursed one slithering upon his belly. Yes, He did what you cannot – He resisted the temptation and through His blood resting upon you, you receive everlasting life in His name.

Though we are not to be too joyful in the season of Lent, we can be joyful in the salvation won through the cross. Sin dampens our celebration; it reminds us that we are but dust and a sign that we have tempted God yet again. Only in Christ do we overcome the world and be counted at last worthy to reign with Him eternally in heaven. So in this season of contemplating sins and temptations, may we also contemplate the merits of the Son Who wins for you the salvation you

so desperately need, and desire to spread the message of Salvation that others may see the signs, cease their temptation of God, and live with us by faith alone in the Only Son from Heaven, the Savior of the World, Jesus the Christ. In His most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+
Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment