PASSING LIFE’S TESTS

Feb. 18, 2018 Matt. 4:1-11

The composer Andrew Lloyd Webber composed the popular rock opera ---‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ in 1973. How did he picture Jesus? As true God and the only Savior of sinners? No—What an opportunity lost. He took blasphemous liberties with the Gospels and insulted the Savior-----making Him out to be just a man, like Elvis or Frank Sinatra.

In our text today Jesus shows the world, thru the inspired words of the Apostle Matthew who He really is. Jesus had just been baptized by John the Baptist and Scripture tells us that the Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The Son of God is going to go head to head against the great deceiver of old who brought down from perfection our first parents, Adam and Eve, who did not withstand the testing of their trust in God’s word, when God told them: “You may eat of any tree in the garden except the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. The day you eat of it, you shall certainly die.”

They did eat and they did die----spiritually. We were born spiritually dead and enemies of God----until our Baptism.

God here intends to send the devil an unmistakable message----You are doomed! There is no way you are going to be successful in your bid to be the one in charge. After all, who made you?

But there is one thing we must keep in mind about the upcoming contest between Jesus and the devil. Jesus comes to battle as a man. A man who has full trust in His Father and in His Father’s word.

So, after 40 days of temptations, the devil himself came to Jesus. “If you are a Son of God, command these stones to become bread.” What if Jesus had done that to ‘show the devil what He could do?’

Jesus, like we ourselves, are to listen to God alone, not to the voice of the deceiver or his evil cohorts. Jesus quotes Duet. 8:3 to the devil: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

When we read Scripture or a daily devotion, come to church, God is talking to us to fill us with good things.

Then God allowed the devil to take Jesus to a high point of the temple and temp Jesus to put God to a test. “If You are a Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written; ‘He will command His angels concerning You, and On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’

Now the devil tempts Jesus to stupidly jump from a great height, trusting that His Father will save Him from any harm. Doing such a thing would be a selfish show on Jesus’ part, not something the Father wanted Him to do. By doing it, Jesus would have sinned. Then the world would not have a Savior but a slave of the devil who had listened to him.

It would be like someone who is having problems in life and turns to drugs or drink, instead of God.

Jesus responds, “Again, it is written, ‘you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’

Next, the devil, somehow, takes Jesus to a very high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and says; ‘All these I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me.’

Who does he think he is? The devil is no king. He possesses no kingdom. He is an imposter; a liar. He can only give death and grief; suffering and eternal agony. It was the spirit of the devil that caused that young man to kill 17 people at that school in Florida, causing so much suffering and grief.

During an event at the Olympics in Korea, someone in the crowd watching held up a yellow banner that read: “Jesus equals heaven. No Jesus equals hell.

Jesus is the only One who can give life. Forgive sins and give the gift of eternal lilfe.

Jesus responds to the devil: “Be gone Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.”

The devil had no choice. His creator had just told him to scram.

Our Savior Jesus was victorious over the devil even before the cross and grave and open tomb. What a great God we have.

So, what can we learn from this portion of Scripture?

In all of life, like Jesus Himself, always listen to the powerful Word of God. None of us know what is going to come our way tomorrow. What temptations, problems, tragedies, sorrows, or great good news, which Sam and I received last Monday when our youngest daughter, Malayna, informed us she was expecting. We had been praying for that and now we thank God.

In the Word of God we will find wisdom for all of life. Strength to say no to temptations that are not good for our immortal souls. Words of God’s forgiveness for sin. Assurance of eternal life for all who believe Jesus is the only Savior of the world. Words of comfort from God at times of sorrow and grief.

With God and His Word in our life, we can be prepared for anything that comes along. Daily readings are on your Sunday insert. Put it on your kitchen table, with a Bible.

With the Word of God, we too can say; “Be gone satan.”