

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

*“Everything that Jesus did, He did for us,
in our place, as our substitute and champion.
Everything. He did nothing that wasn’t for us.”¹*

But Satan will tell you otherwise.
Satan has only one task: to create doubt or uncertainty in the Word.

The first Word given to Adam was about food.
From some trees he was given to eat.
From other trees, one in particular, he was not given to eat.
The Word given to Adam was a word of promise containing food.

Satan got his first victory by bringing doubt to that word.
He turned the eyes and ears of Adam and Eve away from the Word and toward the food.
*“Look at how shiny, and delicious, and good it is!
And it will make you run faster, and jump higher, ace your exams, and all will like you.
God didn’t really mean you would die. He just had something to hold back from you.
He just didn’t want you to have the power, or the goods, or what He has.”
So take and eat.”*

That was Satan’s first victory.
And he’s had many more since.
Many victories centered around food.
We sometimes this *gluttony*.

Food’s an easy target because both God and Satan know we need it.

The difference though, between God and Satan, is that God gives us all we need—
both to the just and the unjust, the good and the wicked alike.

Satan has nothing to give because nothing is his.
So what Satan is always bent on doing is taking what is the Lord’s, and pretending like it’s his.
He twists and turns our Lord’s word in such a way that we no longer have His Word, but a lie.

And with food the lie is always: you need more.
And you *need* more quickly becomes: I *want* more.
I like more. More is better.

And then our eyes and ears are quickly off the Lord who provides these great gifts,
and they’re sunk deep into the food itself—
not receiving it as gift, but as something I’ve gotten and deserve.

¹ David Petersen, “The First Sunday in Lent-Invocavit,” *Thy Kingdom Come*, 31.

We are incapable of resisting the temptations of Satan.
 He makes for us a god out of a gift the true God wants to give.
 He snatches us away from His giving Word and promise,
 and creates doubt, uncertainty, and suspicion between us and God.

It all starts with food because the body is weak.
 Then Satan attacks your faith.
 But to get there, he'll just have you worship him.
 You don't need even to *believe* in him—he'd say—just *worship* him.

That's another great lie from the devil.
 The substance or content of what we believe matches our worship—the two go together—
 you can't have worship one way, belief another, and expect to get to the same place.
 Worship is nothing other than the form of faith.
 We worship the way we do because we confess and believe the way we do.

But this is another temptation we cannot resist.
 We can't resist doing worship the way we want or like.

Then comes the lynchpin temptation: Satan brings the Lord's word against the Lord Himself.
 He tempts God to do His Word in a way and at a time that God hasn't given His Word to be done.

In all of these temptations the common ground is this:
 Satan wants us to have things apart from the way God gives them to us.

Food, worship, and even His Word—
 all of these are good gifts sent by God, promised to us—
 but Satan would have us get them some other way.

He promises a false freedom and empty joy.
 He promises food as much as we like, until our heart's content—no matter what God says.
 He promises glory and popularity and success—as if any of it were his to give.
 He promises a fulfillment of the word in a way that the Lord has not set that word to be fulfilled.

That is the work of Satan—those are his lies.

They rage against us day and night, pulling us down and wringing our necks.
 With us, Satan wins, because he won with Adam;
 and in Adam's fall, we all fell.

The reality is: we always succumb to temptation.
 We become addicted to whatever lets us escape—
 whatever gives us one more break from this world, from this suffering—
 rather than trusting our Lord in the midst of our suffering.
 We fall to the same temptations over and over again because that's what sin does.
 Sin is that separation from God's Word, which is separation from God Himself.

But Jesus is not like us in this way.
 He has no sin. And so no separation from God or His Word.
 And on account of that, nothing He does is curved in on Himself.
 It's all outward, all for us, all *for you*.
 Everything He does is done for us. *Everything*.
 There's no bit of Scripture that has Jesus doing His own thing or for Himself.

This temptation is no different.
 He isn't tempted to prove His strength or to give Him something to boast about.

He's tempted for you.
 Because when temptations come, you cave every time.
 But not Jesus.
 Jesus has no desire for the self-centered things we seek.
 He can't even imagine having something for Himself.
 He dismisses it out of hand *because it's outside the Word of God*.
 He dismisses each of these temptations because that's not the way the Lord has given His gifts.

Jesus trusts the Father to give His gifts in His own time.
 40 days without food causes anyone to be hungry—even Jesus.
 But Jesus doesn't then go and get His own food.
 He waits. He waits for the Father, trusting with unwavering faith that He will provide.

Seeing all the kingdoms of the world in a moment brings great awe to anyone—even Jesus.
 But Jesus doesn't seek to have them on His own.
 He waits. For even these the Father will give Him.

In all of this, Jesus is never apart from or running against the Word.
 For Jesus, it is always, *it is written*.

Sure, His example is good for us to follow: fast, pray, and cling to the Word of God.
 But that's not what this story is about.
 Jesus does nothing for Himself, or just as an example.

Everything He does, He does for you.
 Resist temptation, suffer humiliation, hunger, thirst, and death—all for you.
 Endure the cross. And bear your sin.

He does it all with undoubting faith in the Word.
 And He does it all for you.
 And then, He gives it all *to you*.
 Just like in the beginning: God attaches the promise of life to food—but this time it's better!
 This time, the food is given to you; and with it, Jesus.
 And with Jesus, we receive the defeat of Satan, the end of temptation, and deliverance from evil.
 So, take and eat. Here is Jesus for you.

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