

# Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

**Date** : 16 Jan 2022  
**Sermon Title** : Life or Death  
**Speaker** : Rev Reuben Ng  
**Text** : Matthew 4:4; Gen 2:7; 2 Tim 3:16

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## INTRODUCTION

On the Mount of Temptation, Jesus encountered temptations by the devil, as recounted in Matthew 4, yet He did not succumb but resisted the temptations with God's Word.

### Temptation 1: (Matthew 4:3)

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matt 4:1-2) Temptation is by the devil because even though God may test us for us to discover where we think we are at is not the correct place in terms of our relationship and maturity in our growth in God, God will never tempt us (James 1:13).

Many years before this, in a place of abundance in the Garden of Eden, the devil tempted Adam and Eve who succumbed to the temptation. Now, in a place of scarcity, no abundance, the devil comes to Jesus after He had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, when Jesus was not only hungry but famished, and tells Him to do something which He can do, is nothing wrong in the act itself, but Jesus, representing humankind this time, resists the devil.

- What humanity could not do at the beginning, Jesus who came to save us and represent us could do on our behalf and resisted the devil.

***Jesus' answer was, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4 (ESV)***

- God wants us to have 'Life' and have it abundantly. The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy; for us to fall into 'Death'.

### Jesus' response to the devil tells us:

1. The Word of God sustains us and gives us life for daily living to walk and appreciate and enjoy the life that God calls us to have.

- The Word of God is the place/window for us to walk in the life of God.
- Jesus quoted Scriptures in response to the devil's temptation. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3) In His answer, Jesus resisted temptation with the Word of God.

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- Even though Jesus was very hungry, His response hints that there is something more essential and life-giving than physical food – the word from God.

In Deuteronomy 8:2-3:

- Moses was reminding the people of Israel that God might humble them so that they do not think beyond who they really are and what they have; that they would recognize they are deficient by themselves and in need of God in their lives.
  - Also God tests them to reveal what is in their heart just like how Peter's heart was revealed when he denied Jesus 3 times. The test is to reveal if they would keep His commandments.
  - Food, as we know, is crucial for our survival and it gives us energy, even to serve God. In quoting these verses while going through this temptation where He is famished, Jesus is reminding us that the Word of God is many times more important than physical food which is really also very important for our survival. As followers of Christ, there is a higher and more essential thing for us to feed on – that is the Word of God. The life that God calls us to live, and that God has ordained that is rightfully ours in Christ, requires us to go beyond the physical food and to feed on the Word of God that sustains us. In the same way that food sustains our physical life, the Word of God is crucial in sustaining us spiritually.
- ❖ **Hence, if we want to be a people who really receive and walk in the life that God wants us to have, we have to go beyond just living a good and holistic life enjoying good food, good homes, hobbies, resting, breathing, meditating and other things which are good. We need to respond to the higher call that is the Word of God that goes beyond all these things; that which is essential to sustain us to live and walk in the life that God wants us to have.**
2. The Word of God strengthens us in the way we can resist temptation to lead to life.
- Jesus resisted temptation with the Word of God – He knew scripture so well that He could use it to respond to the temptation. He moved away from the temptation and does the right thing, moving into righteousness that leads to life.
  - On the other hand, if we do not know the Word of God, we will not be able to resist the temptation using God's word and so will succumb to it, leading to sin and death as the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
- ❖ **In the face of temptation, the Word of God gives us life. We know that God wants us to have life eternal and not death, and for us to move in that**

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direction, we need to resist temptation, and in order to do so we would need the Word of God.

## Temptation 2: (Matthew 4:6)

Jesus was tempted to jump from the highest point of the temple by the devil who quoted from Psalm 91 - "The angels will lift you". This shows us that the enemy of God's children knows God's Word well enough to quote it, but uses it in a way that was against what it was intended to be, to bring death.

- God's Word is to be used to instruct in a gentle way to bring life – not for our own agenda, to bring harm, oppression or condemnation to others.
- If we do not know God's Word well enough, we may be misled when the Word of God is misused.

Here, Jesus again responded to the devil with the Word of God and that puts the devil in his place.

## Temptation 3: (Matthew 4:9)

Jesus had come down to gain the world for God – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son". (John 3:16) It was precisely Jesus' mission to come down to this world that through an act of sacrifice and through His servant leadership, He would obtain the world for God His Father. Hence the devil was clever to offer Him a painless and express manner to get what He was here for.

Again, Jesus resisted the devil with the Word of God and the devil fled thereafter.

## CONCLUSION

***"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness," (2 Timothy 3:16)***

Another place where the Bible speaks about God breathing is in Genesis 2:7 where God formed man out of dust and "breathed into" his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature. When man was first formed he was completely lifeless and it was only when God breathed the breath of life into man that man came to life. It might not be just a coincidence that a parallel is being drawn here; that when we read the Word of God, God is breathing life into us sustaining and strengthening us. When we do not read the Word of God, we are cutting ourselves short of a solid and divine avenue for us to receive the life of God.

God has done everything possible for us to succeed as a Christian, to grow and flourish as a child of God. In Christ, God has given us all the spiritual blessings; a church to worship in with people who care, His Word and His teachings and wonderful teachers to help interpret His Word. Let us receive these blessings and choose life over death by feeding on God's Word that gives us life.

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# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

## **A. Review Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.***

Appoint someone to read Matthew 4:4, Genesis 2:7 and 2 Timothy 3:16 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, how do the 3 verses speak to you?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Life or Death"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

2. The Word of God sustains us and gives us life for daily living to walk and appreciate and enjoy the life that God calls us to have.
  - a. (i) What does Jesus' response in Matthew 4:4 in a state of severe hunger, tell you about the importance of the Word of God in comparison to all other things in your life?
    - (ii) Will you be able to place the same importance and hunger on God's Word even when faced with a physical need such as in finances, relationships, health, time, possessions, power, position and others? Why?
  - b. How have you responded in situations when you had a need and were tempted by the devil to do something which is "what you can do" and "nothing wrong in the act itself" but would lead you away from God?
  
- 3a. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the least and 10 the most, how able are you to
  - (i) use God's Word to resist temptation?
  - (ii) discern that God's Word is being misquoted or misused?
- 3b. Why do you give yourself these ratings?
- 3c. What are some practical steps you need to take to improve your ratings in 3a.?
- 3d. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3c. above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies and Prayer**

***Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.***

4. Share your testimony on how the Word of God had helped you to resist temptation and walk in the path of righteousness that leads to life.

OR

Give thanks to God that we have the Word of God which is easily accessible and readily available, and we live in a nation with freedom to meet for worshipping God, have Small Group meetings and Bible study at any time and place we choose, so we may grow in the knowledge of God's Word and our relationship with Him.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3c and 3d to God, committing to daily feed on God's Word that gives you life. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach, rebuke, correct and train you for righteousness by God's Word so that God will breathe life into you as you read His Word.

As a group, pray also that when you are faced with temptations the Holy Spirit will remind you of God's Word so you may be able to resist temptations and move in the way of righteousness that leads to life.

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