

❶ 【Man is always hungry】

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The "Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit, who is God. That God led Jesus into the devil's temptations means God permitted the devil's temptations. This recalls the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that stood in the center of the Garden of Eden. These two trees symbolize two ways of life: "living by God" and "living apart from God, relying on one's own strength and knowledge." From the beginning, humans were given the freedom to choose their way of life. However, the first Adam was tempted by the devil and chose the wrong way of life, relying on his own strength. This is called the Fall. Yet Jesus, the new Adam, by undergoing the same temptation, restores Adam's disobedience.

"After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry" (verse 2). People feel hungry even after skipping just one meal, let alone fasting for forty days. Forty is a symbolic number representing trials. The word "hungry" in English expresses this state. People are always hungry. They hunger for love, for comfort, for kind words, for life and peace. Even if temporarily satisfied, they soon hunger and thirst again, never truly fulfilled. "Hungry" is the word that most profoundly reveals our humanity.

❷ 【Three Temptations】

(1) Then the tempter, that is, the devil, came and said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." He was suggesting that instead of being sustained by God, Jesus should obtain food by his own power. But the Lord replied, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (verse 4), and did not turn the stones into bread. This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3 in the Old Testament. Humanity's greatest concern is "whether we can eat, that is, whether we can survive." To live, humans advanced science and technology, developed medicine, learned to preserve food, and mastered techniques to raise and multiply grain, livestock, and fish. We no longer worry about food. Japan has an abundance of food. But does this abundance of food truly satisfy our hearts? No, it has not. In fiscal year 2025, suicides among elementary and junior high school students reached a record high. No matter how much we are filled with material things, the hunger and thirst of the human soul cannot be quenched.

(2) Next, the devil made Jesus stand on the roof of the temple and told him to jump down and show himself. Moreover, the devil tempted him by quoting Scripture. "For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you

carefully in all your ways.” This is a quote from Psalm 91:11-12. But the Lord replied, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (verse 7), rejecting the devil's temptation. This is also a quote from Deuteronomy 6:16. Do not be surprised that the devil uses the Bible. The Unification Church reads the same Bible as we do. They simply pick passages that suit them and interpret them to their advantage. The Bible is a double-edged sword. How you read it determines how you interpret it. At first, I didn't understand the phrase “test the Lord.” But I understood it when I told this passage to children at the nursery school using a picture-story show. It means trying to become greater than God, making God your servant, and forcing God to grant your wishes. This is something most Japanese people do unconsciously today. They choose a god who seems likely to grant their wishes, and if that god doesn't listen, they quickly switch to another. Just as having many servants is better, having many gods who obey you is better, so they place numerous gods within their homes.

(3) Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor in an instant, saying that if He would worship him, he would give Him all these things. He said that if He compromised with evil and gained power, wealth, and strength, He would become as powerful as God and live. But the Lord said, “Away with you, Satan! Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only” (verse 10). This is also a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:13. This is a sin politicians often commit. There was a political party that thought that if they allied with the Unification Church to gain votes and secure power, they could implement policies exactly as they wished. And what if surrounding nations started wars? They argue that increasing defense spending is unavoidable to win. They say that gaining strength and power is the way to survive. But what did Jesus say? “All who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Even if killed by others, one can enter heaven, but killing others causes one's soul to die. It is not people who destroy us, but our own sin.

Ultimately, these three temptations share one root: they seek to break the first commandment of the Ten Commandments: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). It is the temptation to say, “Become a god yourself!” Break this one, and all the others will inevitably follow. Do you know what the greatest sin is in the Bible? It is this first commandment of the Ten Commandments. It is the sin of not being able to make God your master. It is the sin of disobedience, of not being able to follow God. This is the greatest sin. What does Jesus command us to pray for first in the Lord's Prayer? “Hallowed be Thy name.” Ninety-nine percent of Japanese people today do not keep this. So what about Christians? Both Putin and Trump are Christians, yet they have made themselves their own masters. Unsatisfied with what God has given them, they move boundaries and wage war to seize earthly resources. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is a Jew and should

know the Ten Commandments. Yet he does not keep them. No one obeys God. No one keeps God's commandments. No one listens to God. Everyone has become like gods themselves.

Many people living on earth are not keeping this. This is a serious matter. Moreover, they remain unaware and casually say, "I have committed no sin." They are just like the people of ancient Jerusalem. Even Christians who have left the church are not keeping it. My own children are not keeping it. Everyone thinks they are their own master. There is no time to judge others. Someone must intercede.

● Father Ioann of Kronstadt said, "Every day, the Church embraces us in her arms with a mother's love, ceaselessly offering prayers to the Lord God for all people—whether evening, night, morning, or day. The Church teaches us, purifies us, heals us, uplifts us, strengthens us, and guides us along the path to salvation and eternal life."

The church must pray for the forgiveness of people's sins, the sins of Christians, and the sins of families and children. And it must continue to pray that people who truly honor and obey God as God will arise.

③ **【Remain in humanity, that is, remain in Christ】**

The first Adam was tempted with the words, "You will become like God" (Genesis 3:5). Here too, the devil says to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, try this." It was the same at the cross: "If you are the Son of God, save yourself. Come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). Yet Jesus remains steadfastly a man who obeys God completely.

● There was a Jewish psychiatrist named Viktor Frankl. During World War II, he was imprisoned in Auschwitz concentration camp. He survived and wrote a book about his experiences, stating that in that harsh environment, "he learned that man can become either an angel or a devil." He also wrote: "Human freedom is not freedom from conditions, but the freedom to decide one's attitude toward these conditions."

Do you want to be an angel? Or do you want to be a demon? Left to ourselves, we fall. We fall endlessly. Because the power of evil is at work. But God came to lift that falling humanity up to heaven, to make us true human beings. The only true human being is Jesus Christ. To remain human is to remain in Christ. It also means to remain in Christ's words. It means not departing from Christ, but living a life like His.

There was a movie called Brother Sun, Sister Moon. It depicted the life of a monk named Francis of Assisi in medieval Italy. I saw it when I was young and had just become a Christian. Francis sings: "The life God gave me, God dwells within me too, that love now revives in my heart." We are good things created by God; God dwells within us too. I want to strive to remain human and become human, to pray

to God and seek that strength.