

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Psalms (*Psalms 33:6, 8-9*)

By the Lord's Word the heavens were made; by the breath of His mouth all their host. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all who dwell in the world show Him reverence. For He spoke, and it came to be, commanded, and it stood in place. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection - The hidden power in the Word of God

God commanded and creation came about. The first chapter of the Book of Genesis tells us that God created the universe by His spoken words over 6 successive days. Out of absolutely nothing, through the sheer power of God's spoken words, creation came into being instantaneously. On the first day, God said: Let there be light. And there was light (cf. Genesis 1:3). Lastly, on the sixth day, God said: Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness ..." (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). There is great power hidden in God's Word which is released only by His divine will which stands forever.

God's Word can be proclaimed to overcome temptation and defeat evil. After Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights, Satan tempted Jesus not once but three times. He tempted Jesus saying: "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." Jesus said in reply, "*It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'*" (Matthew 4:4). Jesus was quoting from the Book of Deuteronomy: *He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your ancestors, so you might know that it is not by bread alone that people live, but by all that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:3).* Thus, in order to be spiritually nourished, we need to feed ourselves with God's Word daily and not just earthly food alone. The devil went away, defeated. Through this victory of Jesus, we have the power to overcome all temptations of the flesh.

Then the devil took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and made Him stand on the parapet of the temple and said to Him: If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning You' and 'with their hands they will support You, lest You dash Your foot against a stone.' "Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" (Matthew 4:7). Again, Jesus quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy: *You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test, as you did at Massah (Deuteronomy 6:16).* Satan was soundly defeated. Through the victory of Jesus, we are given every grace needed to overcome our sinful pride.

Then the devil took Him up to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to Him, "All these I shall give to You, if You will prostrate Yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and Him alone shall you serve.'" (Matthew 4:8-11). Jesus was proclaiming Deuteronomy 6:13: *The Lord, your God, shall you fear; Him shall you serve, and by His name shall you swear.* Completed defeated, Satan left Jesus. Thus, Jesus gains for us the power to overcome the allure of all false idols of the world including Satan. By His victory, we are given the grace not to compromise and take short cuts but walk on the path of truth.

The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit and is part of the armour of God (cf. Ephesians 6:17). St Paul reminds us that our real enemies are not people but the evil spirits who work through their human agents. Thus, he exhorts us to put on the whole armour of God in order to defeat the temptations and schemes of the devil. As a master deceiver, he cunningly dresses up evil to look good, and falsehoods to look like truths. God's Word is truth (cf. John 17:17). As it is the truth, God's Word can expose falsehoods and anything contrary to the truth, which may not be obvious. Thus, God's Word can help us discern the truth of the difference between good and evil. *Indeed, the Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).* God's Word is living and relevant, not dead or outdated. It is powerful as God Himself stands behind it. With the proper faith and always subject to God's will, the hidden power of the Word of God can be released to heal the mind, body, soul and spirit. The Word of God can help us discern whether our thoughts and desires are good or evil, holy or worldly.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You are the Incarnate Word of God. You said through Prophet Isaiah: *So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, but shall do what pleases Me, achieving the end for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).* God's will is expressed in His Word which has the power to do what God pleases. Give me a great thirst and love for God's Word so that I can fulfill God's will always and everywhere for the glory of His Name. Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk