

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE TEMPTATION – LENT I

- I Immediately after Jesus' Baptism, as the newly inaugurated Messiah – having been anointed with the Holy Spirit - He launched His finalization of humanity's Salvation.
 - A Being filled with the Holy Spirit in His humanity, the Spirit significantly impelled Him into the wilderness – a place long thought to be the haunt of demons.
 - B There He was destitute – no food and no companionship, but we cannot, however, say that He was completely alone, for He was always in the bosom of the Father and filled with His Spirit.
 - C Nevertheless, the devil spoke to Him offering 3 spiritual temptations to which He declined submission – in each instance quoting Scripture indicating the power of Holy Scripture and its immutability.
- II Luke concluded with this statement: When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.
 - A Several questions present themselves: firstly, have you ever felt moved by the Holy Spirit to do something – perhaps something you would rather not do?
 - B Secondly, when is the opportune time? Not so much for our Lord ... but for us?
 - C Close your eyes for a moment and imagine the ecstasy of feeling the Holy Spirit come upon you and hearing God the Father say to you: You are My beloved with whom I am well pleased.

- D Then, your next experience is to be confronted by the devil with temptation.
- E But is not life like that?
- F We have a momentous, sacred moment and then someone or something causes us to become profane.
- G But, Jesus did not use profanity; on the contrary, He repeated the Scripture that was part of His being.
- III In the Gospel, Jesus appears to me to be unhurried.
- A Walking with Jairus to heal his daughter but then halting to restore a woman within the community.
- B Choosing to take time for children – to hold them in His arms and bless them.
- C Accepting questions regarding His Person and His integrity.
- D He was—and is—in short – selfless and self-sacrificing.
- IV To contrast His approach to life with that which characterizes some of us and many in this world – especially in the affluent parts of the globe, I am employing the lyrics from a song, *Life in the Fast Lane* by the Eagles—a rock group—begun in 1971 and separated in 1980.
- A Our temptations materialize in a different form and therefore we require different imagery to grasp the full import of this Gospel reading.
- B The lyrics involve a couple who lived life in the fast lane with the refrain: Everything! All the time!
Now – not later!
- V She'd say "Faster! Faster! The lights are turning red.
Life in the fast lane – surely make you lose your mind.
Eager for action and hot for the game,
The coming attraction, the drop of a name.
They knew all the right people they took all the right pills.

They threw outrageous parties, they paid heavily bills.
 Out every evening, until it was light
These were upwardly mobile people but teens and college students can get caught up in this type of lifestyle.

VI Blowin' and burnin' blinded by thirst
 They didn't see the stop sign, took a turn for the worse.
 She said, "Listen, baby, you can hear the engine ring."
 "We've been up and down this highway; haven't seen anything. *They were burned out! The drug culture was overtaking them and the pace of their lives was deadly.*

VII He said, "Call the doctor. I think I'm gonna crash."
 "The doctor says he's coming, but gotta pay him cash"
The doctor was the drug dealer

VIII They went rushing down the freeway, messed around and got lost. They didn't know it, but they were dying to get off.

Get out of the fast lane!
*Remember how Jesus said: **The one who would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.**⁵ For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose themselves? (Luke9:24-25)*

IX Not all of those who live in the fast lane are addicted to alcohol or drugs! Their addictions are materialistic. I have encountered these people too often and attempted to counsel them. They had:

- A Children – so involved they cannot be children
- B Credit cards maxed to the limit
- C Excessive mortgages & enormous vehicle payments
- E Checks spent when they hit the bank
- F Their future is forfeited

- G And for what? To keep up with others in the fast lane? To prove something?
- X Or is it a matter of self-centeredness?
- A When is enough *enough*?
- B When does the pursuit of THINGS become a subtle form of idolatry?
- C Every psychologist or theologian has their own list of basic needs, and I will propose 6.
- XI Basic needs
- Shelter
 - Clothing
 - Food
 - Transportation
 - To love and be loved
 - Community
- XII In order to have shelter, clothing, food and transportation, one needs employment - the result of education.
- A Having employment, however, the quality of shelter, clothing food and transportation becomes optional.
- B To love and be loved as well as community can be found in Jesus Christ and in His Church.
- C Certainly a companion to love and one who loves us in return is a blessing from God, but in our life in Christ we grasp the understanding that He must be first in our lives.
- XIII In the surrendering of our lives to Him who knows us best but loves us the most, He will meet our needs.
- A In the First Testament reading from Deuteronomy, the liturgy of the Lord involves the sacrifice of a portion of what God has given - tithing.

- B The Psalmist declares that because we are bound to the Most High in love, He will answer us when we call upon Him because we know His Name.
- C From the Epistle to the Romans, Paul tells us that as we confess that Jesus is Lord we will be saved!
- D *If Jesus is my Lord, then He will be the Lord of my life.*
- XIV This surrender of my life does not mean that circumstances will be any more perfect, nor does it mean that there will be more excitement or pleasure.
- XV What it does mean, is that I will have a personal relationship with the Living Lord, joy and a Friend who will never betray me, or abandon me or disappoint me.
- XVI Life in the Lord's lane leads to eternal life.