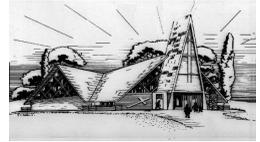




Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon- Sunday Invocavit Man does not live on bread alone!



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Romans 10,8b-13:

- **8b** "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);
 - **9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - **10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
 - **11** For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."
 - **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.
 - **13** For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
- Let us pray: *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, and let us hear Your Word and inwardly digest it and help us to use this Your Word against a deceptive satan, the world and our flesh.*

Amen.

Dear Beloved in Christ!

- Jesus was hungry after not eating for forty days, while He was in the desert. Forty days- that is more than a month without food! And continuously being tempted by satan! Jesus knows what hunger is. And in this utmost vulnerable condition satan tempted Jesus with everything he had, like he tempts us, when we are most vulnerable for his temptations- coward that he is! Jesus did not fall for satan's half-truths and the scaly wisdom he offered, the "help" he gave. If you buy into any of his deceptive half-truths, very soon you would have surrendered to him completely.
- Jesus was hungry, because He was genuinely truly human. He felt the hunger pains from His body. Satan tried to deceive Him into making bread from a stone. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said. In other words as a proof of Jesus being the true only begotten Son of God he should simply convert a stone into bread, to still His own hunger pains.
- Jesus did not follow satan's temptation! It is important to understand why not. He said: ***"It is written, 'Man will not live on bread alone, but on every thing that***

comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.”

- Bread comes from the earth, part of God’s good creation. We need to eat food from the earth which will feed our bodies and keep us alive! Jesus fasted for 40 days, because there is more to life than food and clothing. Man will live on every thing that is spoken into being by God’s mouth. In those forty days Jesus fulfilled that Word of God. His hunger did not determine His actions. Jesus came to fulfil His baptismal ministry. Therefore He willingly would not make use of His godly powers for His own sake. The Word of His Father had a much higher priority than listening to His empty stomach.
- Satan was trying to deceive Jesus into a route without sacrifice, without the cross. Come, do it the easy way, use your powers. Listen to your body. He was trying hard to replace the Word of God with his own version of it, ripped out of context, applied for his own benefit!
- On that day the Son of God, Jesus, fulfilled the Word of God, namely that man will not live on bread alone, but by every thing that goes out of the mouth of God. The Words He received from His Father fed Him and kept Him alive and conquered the devil.
- What Words were those? The very Words He had in His mouth. The very Words He spoke to drive away satan. The very Words He believed in His heart which came forth from His mouth had the power to conquer both satan and His stomach!
- That is why He is alive and well today. He conquered satan and death, hell and all evil. And what’s more, such good news for us, He did it for us. He applied the weapon of God successfully and it works! Satan had to leave Him. He didn’t have anything more to say!
- This takes us to the Epistle reading of today, where the Holy Spirit speaks, through Paul, about this Word in your mouth which is near to you! This Word comes through Christ’s servants through your ears into your heart, creates trust in Christ for all He has done, and then it comes out as a confession against satan, or as a confession to other people who need to hear the Gospel and Truth of God’s Word!
- This very Word, which you hear in Service, which you receive in your devotions is the most potent active weapon against satan! It strengthens your faith and when

it leaves your mouth it drives off satan! By the way, he might not leave immediately- as satan also came back to Christ later on in the garden of Gethsemane, again when He was on His weakest. That is why it is good to be immersed in the Word of God everyday. Holding your devotions at home, speaking the Word of God aloud, at best with others in your house- saying it together with them- is very effective in driving him off.

- We do the same in our liturgy in the Divine Service. We hear God's Word and then we confess it by saying it out aloud and by singing it out aloud. And by this Word we live! This Word is our spiritual food. It keeps us alive. It even assures eternal life for our bodies. Our bodies will be transformed on the Last Day in the twinkling of an eye, should it come in our times.

- This Word, dear congregation, is near to you. It is not far off! It is in your mouth fed by your heart which the same Word has converted! To fight against satan, to confess someone the faith in Christ, you don't need to go into a special state of meditation or trance or experience something extraordinary. No. The most effective weapon is already in your heart waiting in your mouth to go out!

- Very important though, it must be God's Word. Any human based motivational speech or something else won't drive satan off. Neither any fancy rites of exorcism. We need Christ. He is the only exorcist. He gave us His Word, his weapon. That is why we practice it every Sunday as we hear the Readings and Sermons which give us the content and meaning of what we confess. The Readings and Sermons also take care of making us believe the Word. We need to trust it, that it is effective, that it is coming forth from the mouth of God, that we can live by it.

- The Holy Spirit convinces us that we can trust this Word. So, we can say the Holy Spirit puts this Word we hear into our hearts. And from our filled hearts it sort of spills over into our mouths. So, we can see, that as we hear the Word of God it refuels us, it regenerates us, it breathes new life into us again- we live from it, and prepares us to use it again to reach out and to drive off our evil foe and all his comrades, like our old flesh and its desires and the spirit of the times.

- Then we confess the Apostles Creed together and we pray the Lord's Prayer, aloud. That is, we call on the Lord to help us in all areas of our life, including – lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!

- Jesus' victory has become your victory. This is not some motivational symbolic

gesture or saying, which should make you feel better. No, it is the truth. His Word is near you, in your mouth. You know the Word and you know the person who drives the Word, who makes it effective. Even better, He knows you. He has called you, He has united you with Himself. Therefore He gives His Word in your mouth, the sword of the Spirit, the very weapon He used to drive off your evil foe and all his temptations and deceptions.

• So, as He gives it to you, use it during the week! If temptation comes, speak the Apostles Creed aloud, pray the Lord's Prayer aloud trusting in the help of Jesus! The Word is near you in your mouth! Isn't that wonderful!

• Yes, I know, this practice is not something new, it is what our children of the church have always practised in Catechism Classes since the beginning of the church to be able to fall in with the practice of theology on Sundays in the Liturgy. It is archaic, but it still works splendidly! It still works because our Lord Jesus Christ is well and alive and hasn't changed a bit. Neither have His means changed! There are no new measures or new manifestations for our modern times or paradigm shifts etc. change, change, new, new! They are all biting the dust, because they come from the guy who always changes.

• Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. He came to make God's weapon certain on earth, to put into our mouths ready to be used. So Jesus' victory is your victory. Nobody can take that away from you!

• Praise be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! **Amen.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.