

Gifts of the Dark Wood

Sunday, April 2



The gift of temptation may bring images of resisting evil -- sometimes in seriously dangerous forms or as seemingly benign as the pastry in front of you. But instead, the temptation for this week is following the “shoulds” dictated only by logic, outside expectation or shiny “rewards” instead of following the path our intuition and imagination suggest is right for us -- the path that helps us bring the best of our energy and joy to the world. The gift of temptation invites us to face the temptations that erode our fullness and steal us away from our wholeheartedness.

This week we focus on “The Gift of Temptation”

Prayer

Unexpected Love, enter our lives
and open us to the gifts residing deep within the Holy Darkness of our lives.
Open us to seek your voice from deep within,
for we yearn to feel you moving in us.
In your many names, we pray. Amen.

Bible Readings

Luke 4:1-12 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone.”^[b]”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”^[c]”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”^[d]”

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[e]”

Contemporary Reading

“The Spirit beckons us not to be good, but to be human -- humble, of the humus -- which ultimately means finding your elemental waters, which are connected to God, and living into your fullest energies. You can (and will) do a lot of good by walking the path that brings you most fully alive in this world, but in order to stay on this path, you must learn to say no to doing a great many “good” things.”

~ Eric Elnes (117)

Reflection

You are invited to slowly open to and listen for the intuition, the small voice, inside of you nudging you in the path that brings your life the most fullness. Maybe that's easiest for you to do during some quiet time. Maybe it's out in nature. Find what works for you. Carve out some quality time to spend listening for your soul to reveal itself. It is always speaking to us. Listen deeply.

* All information in this insert is taken from Dr. Marcia McPhee's worship series titled, “Gifts of the Dark Wood.”