

**Fr. Brad Neely**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent, Cycle A**  
**Sppp, Nezperce: March 13, 2011**  
**Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11**

We hear of two arenas of temptation today:  
one set of players take us  
into the realm of death---  
the other Player lifts us out of doom and  
darkness.

These two arenas today  
are the garden of Eden,  
and Christ's desert of temptation.

Just by the fact that we are alive,  
we all understand what it is like to be  
tempted---  
to reach that one nano-second  
where we either resist or succumb—  
that moment when temptation  
really seems attractive,  
even though we know it is not.

Eve, after entering into dialogue with evil,  
embraces the lie that perhaps God  
doesn't really have her best interest at heart.  
The serpent tells Eve,  
“. . . *the moment you eat of it* [this forbidden  
fruit],  
*your eyes will be opened*  
*and you will be like gods*”  
Adam complies as well, in silence.  
**Christ's** response to temptation in the desert  
is to speak with bravery.

His wise responses to the devil  
conquer the devil's lies.  
He receives temptations:  
\*to turn stones into bread to satisfy his  
hunger,  
\*to throw himself off a parapet

trusting that God would catch him,  
\*and being offered the world if he would  
bow to Satan.

To these, Christ replies:

\*“*One does not live on bread alone,*  
*but on every word that comes forth*  
*from the mouth of God.*”

\*“*You shall not put the Lord, your God, to*  
*the test.*”

\*and “*The Lord, your God, shall you*  
*worship*

*and him alone shall you serve.*”

Let's remember that Christ had free-will  
as we ourselves do.

What did HE choose?

One of my favorite Scriptural verses  
popped up this past week  
in Thursday's daily readings.  
It is from the Book of Deuteronomy.  
Moses, here, gives his parting words to the  
Israelites,  
who are about to proceed into the Promised  
Land.

“*Today I have set before you*  
*life and prosperity, death and doom.*  
*If you obey the commandments*  
*of the LORD, your God--*  
*loving him, and walking in his ways,*  
*and keeping his commandments, statutes*  
*and decrees,*

*you will live and grow numerous,*  
*and the LORD, your God,*  
*will bless you.*

*If, however, you turn away your hearts*  
*and will not listen,*  
*but are led astray*  
*and adore and serve other gods,*  
***I tell you now that you will certainly perish;***  
***I have set before you life and death,***

*the blessing and the curse.*

**Choose life. . . . .”**

I mentioned in Thursday’s homily,  
that these words  
are so straight forward and logical,  
I am hard-pressed to think of anything to  
add.

They may be completely logical,  
but we know that we don’t always choose  
the life-giving things of God.

This time of Lent is a perfect time  
to contemplate what we choose,  
and where our choices will lead us.  
Where do we want to go?---  
giving into one temptation after another?---  
or, to seek the wisdom and strength of  
Christ?

In other words, to **choose Life**.