

Weekly Encouragement

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Incorporated non-profit in New Jersey, USA

Winning

By Rev. Peter Eng



Photo courtesy of Savers4free

"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him ..." (Luke 4: 1-3)

Early in the Falklands war, the Argentines lost a WW2 vintage light cruiser. The Argentines then recalled all but one ship to port and they stayed home throughout the war. Two days later, the British lost HMS Sheffield, a modern destroyer. In the days that followed, the British lost four more ships and suffered severe

damage to several more. The Argentinean naval loss was militarily insignificant, but the British losses were severe. Strangely, the Argentines looked at every setback as fatal and lost the war.

On land, about 500 British lightly armed paratroopers attacked the Argentines at Goose Green. The Argentines had the advantage of outnumbering the British about two to one; they were in a secure defensive position, they had better air support, and had heavier guns. They were Special Infantry, just a grade below commandos. At the initial attack, the British lost their commander. There was a standoff as the British could not overrun the Argentinean position. The British acting commander then delivered an ultimatum to the Argentines to surrender or suffer the consequences.

The Argentinean commander surrendered!

He surrendered almost 1,000 Infantry, and over 200 Air Force personnel to the British. As they laid down their arms, even ordinary Argentinean soldiers could not believe how few British soldiers there were, and why

they had surrendered. The Argentinean took a standoff as defeat, and they lost yet another battle. Eventually they lost the war.

When we handle temptations, we can be like the British or the Argentineans. Our commander, Jesus has won, wins, and will win. We will not win every temptation. And when we fail, the devil is there to suggest that our fight is over; that we are what we are; that this is a weakness we just have to learn to live with; or that God has just to put up with our failure.

Jesus shows us the way to win over temptations. He is the commander who does not accept our loss as final. He knows our failures are only temporary and our victory will be in him, and at the latter day, we will stand. The reality that we sometimes give in to temptation is not further license to always lose! Victory is ours when would follow Jesus.

So how did Jesus overcome temptation?

The most compelling reason is that Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit."

Overcoming temptation is a spiritual battle against the devil. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. It is a spiritual battle that requires spiritual resources. We will fail if we pit our wisdom and will against the devil. Temptation is spiritual deception. It is evil masquerading as something desirable. The spiritual equipping we need comes through God's Holy Spirit. Jesus himself was full of the Holy

Spirit when he faced the devil. Can we win if we are not equipped as Jesus was?

When we fall, don't stay down. Try again. See, Jesus has blazed the trail of victory for us, we simply have to follow after him. We can think like the British or the Argentinean commander. We can fight to win even if we do not win every encounter. Or we can just lie down and surrender – to a defeated foe!

Note: The ESV is used unless indicated otherwise.

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Rev. Peter Eng is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.