



“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21

First Sunday of the Holy Great Fast

A knight in full plate armor is shown from the chest up, holding a shield. The shield is decorated with a blue map of a landmass. The background is a dark, stormy sky with a bright lightning bolt striking down. The overall mood is dramatic and intense.

# Mental Warfare: The Warfare of Thoughts

Spiritual Warfare

Part 1

# Rules of Warfare

- It affects everyone
- Occurs in all areas of life
- Lasts a lifetime



# Rules of Warfare

- ▶ For those who trust in the Lord, the fight becomes His
  - ▶ **“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”** (Ephesians 6:10)
  - ▶ **“Take the whole armor of God.”** (Ephesians 6:13)
  - ▶ **“Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”** (1 John 4:4)
  - ▶ **“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”** (John 16:33)
- ▶ Our thoughts shape who we become
  - ▶ **“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”** (Proverbs 23:7)
  - ▶ **“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”** (Romans 12:2)



## Thoughts

- "The first stage is simple temptation; the second, communion; the third, consent; the fourth, captivity; the fifth, struggle; and the sixth, either passion or the will, according to the state of the soul."

(St. John Climacus)

# Stages of Sinful Thought

1. The Initial Suggestion (Provocation)
  2. The Engagement (Communion)
  3. The Consent
  4. The Action
- ➡ *"It is not in our power to determine whether we are disturbed by these thoughts, but it is up to us to decide whether they will linger within us or not." (St. Evagrius)*

# Why this matters?

- ➔ **"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2)**

A man in a white lab coat stands in profile, looking down at a glowing, ethereal digital figure that appears to be composed of particles and light. The figure is positioned in the center of the frame, with a bright, jagged light bolt extending upwards from its head. To the right, a dark, mechanical-looking creature with glowing orange lights is visible. The background is a dark, starry space with a blueish glow. A large, dark, semi-transparent arrow shape points from the left towards the center, containing the text.

# Origins of Mental Warfare

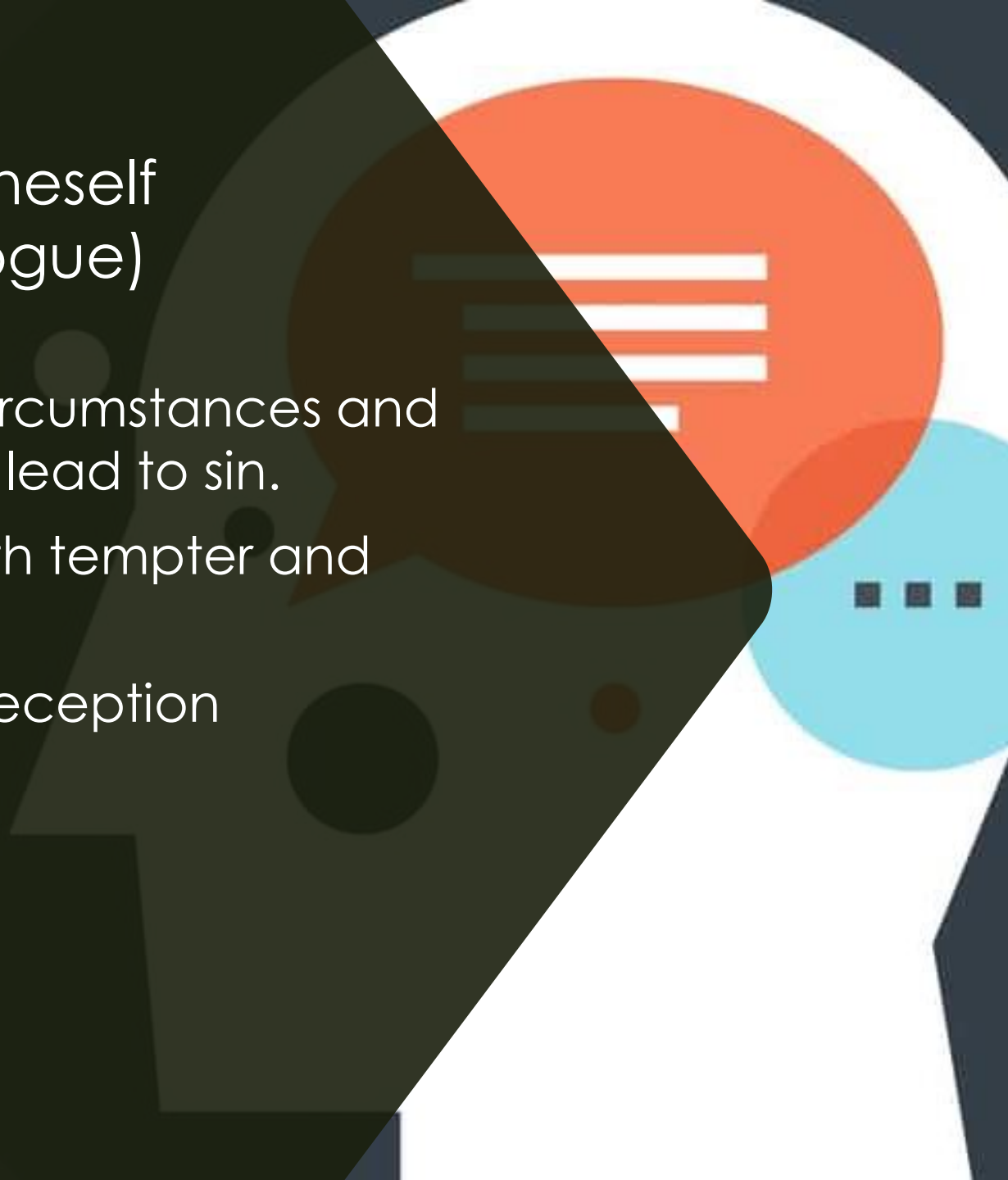
# Dialogue with the Devil

- **"Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'"**  
(Matthew 4:3)
- *"The demons do not come to us in their true form, for they know we would recognize them. Instead they put on the appearance of reason, of wisdom, and of virtue, so that we mistake their whispers for our own thoughts."*  
(St. Anthony the Great)



## Dialogue with oneself (Internal Monologue)

- Recalling past circumstances and interactions that lead to sin.
- We become both tempter and tempted
- Beware of self-deception





# Dialogue with Others



## Fuel for these thoughts

1. Eavesdropping
2. Gossip
3. Criticism
4. Comparison
5. Social media influence
6. Flattery

# The Senses

- ▶ *"The eye is the window of the soul. When it is unguarded, it admits a crowd of impure thoughts into the mind, and from those thoughts, the soul is quickly defiled." (St. John Chrysostom)*
- ▶ **"I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1)**
- ▶ **"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness." (Matthew 6:22-23)**



# Common Types of Thought Sins

- Judgment
- Lust
- Daydreaming
- Pride of life
- Anxiety

