

The Rock: 01-09-2022

A year with the Master

First reading: Hebrews 4:14-16

Title: The temptations

Scripture: Luke 4:1-13 (black bible Pg. 80)

Theme:

Jesus shows us how to overcome temptations and how to walk in victory in this world with all of its challenges and concerns.

Introduction:

I come to this passage in Luke and this message this morning having chosen our opening reading purposefully for us. It's hard to understand sometimes how Jesus can be God and man all at once.

It's not for us today to figure that out in any deep way, but it is true. Jesus, as God the Son, has always existed. Jesus, the man, lived at a specific time and place for a season, and His life ended. That was until He rose and changed the paradigm.

Why? Because He was tempted in every single way we can be, and did not sin.

So, we come to this text this morning which has us at the very beginning of Jesus public ministry we find him being tempted with everything we are.

We see:

Hunger: (4:1-4) and that self-provision (Self-made and sufficient men and women)

Power: (4:5-7) Self-elevation (Pride of station)

Faith and belief: (4:9-13) Self-doubt in protection and provision (trusting God when challenged by foolishness.)

That is what we will circle around today as we unpack things. Because Jesus answered each challenge in the way we can. He did it through the power of the Holy Spirit. We see that in verse one.

It is strange how we like to say: "God would never give us more than we can handle." Or, "God would not, does not want us to go through trials.

Strange because the Bible is so clear that trials are a guarantee of the Christian life. It never says He won't, but that He has provided a way through to the other side.

That is what Jesus did. That is what is being shown to us here, and we discover

that each challenge was refuted with God's word. "It is written."

So much so that the devil spins the story and used that against Jesus in a last-ditch effort to get Jesus to comply:

-Luke 4:10a (ESV)

"...for it is written."

To which Jesus responds in verse 12:

-Luke 4:12a (ESV)

"It is said..."

These are not mere words on a page -No - God spoke and men wrote. There is something so powerful and different about this book.

A book that far too many people feel is just full of fairy tales and hateful things, and at the same time fights like crazy to rid the world of its presence.

Here it stands though, stubbornly surviving all the challenges of the ages as kings and kingdoms come and go -The Word stands.

Peter, quoting the prophet Isaiah says:

-1 Peter 1:24-25 (ESV)

"All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass

withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you."

The Story:

Here is Jesus, the God-man, led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted. A miniature version of the wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel.

They had spent 40 years wandering in the desert because of their unbelief and lack of faith in the promises of God.

They were provided for the entire with Manna (the bread from heaven) and quail. That can be found in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11.

But they grumbled, they complained, they struggled with disbelief. Jesus, well here in Luke 4, he is going to walk the road they wouldn't in a way that shows all that they could have.

You see, this concept, this truth that because of Jesus's faithfulness to God's covenant -His promise to His people -we inherit and receive freedom. We are given a new identity, and we are put on mission in the world.

Freedom-Identity-Mission. The same as the people of Israel. Jesus is going to literally walk this out at the very beginning of His calling, to let everyone know that as human beings, we have the capacity and ability for faithful obedience as well.

We must receive Jesus and walk as He did, in the Holy Spirit's power. Here he is led by the spirit:

-Luke 4:2-4 (ESV)

"...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, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

Hunger is an insatiable desire. Anyone who has experienced hunger, wither by fasting, or as is in my case and perhaps some of yours -you simply did not have food for days -will understand the power of this temptation:

Self-provision. The hunger pains in one's belly will cause people to do things they perhaps wouldn't under different circumstances.

It is no surprise that the devil attacks Jesus there. He is weakest there, most vulnerable to attack and failure there.

You're starving! Son of Man! What kind of father allows his kid to starve? Implying what? Lack of care, lack of love, lack of faithfulness.

Afterall, this worked the last time the devil tempted God's people. They grumbled to Moses not even two months into their new found freedom:

-Exodus 16:1-3 (ESV)

"They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

They complain -God provides. That's grace, that's mercy. Let's not miss this.

God is always grace-filled toward an ungrateful people.

Jesus, however, sees what's happening here. But He remembers, He trusts the Father, and remembers what He said:

-Luke 4:4 (ESV)

"And Jesus answered him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

Strike one - for the devil.

Jesus understood that if it is God who has put Him there He is purposeful in His intent and God will ultimately provide.

Jesus trusts His father and is rewarded - even if in the moment He is living on the promise by faith. (His word)

Alright, regroup and let's try a different angle here. We'll play on His pride, after all it worked in the garden:

-Luke 4:5-7 (ESV)

"And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

Everything is yours, if you will bow to me! God had already given us everything once before, and Adam and Eve were told to have it all, but stay away from the one thing: The tree of Knowledge of good and evil.

-Genesis 2:15-17 (ESV)

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Then the devil shows up:

-Genesis 3:1-5 (ESV)

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes

will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

God’s holding out on you. Not just “everything”, but ALL. As soon as their foolish pride falls for the lie of the devil, they lost everything, because they wanted the one thing.

Pride and power and control. How humanity struggles with this! Even in the building of our own tiny little kingdoms, where we rule and reign as we want.

Forgetting all too often that:

-James 1:17 (ESV)

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

He doesn’t change.

Jesus here, sees this for what it is, a power grab. Jesus is being tempted to think that if He does it His way, the world will be His.

But the lie is the same, you don’t gain it all, you lose it all, because pride demands our way and not God’s way.

Jesus is showing us all God’s way. It is humility, submission and obedience to the call. In following that road, we gain

everything. It may not be the easiest road, but ultimately the reward is eternity.

It's the upside down and backward way God does things.

Serve the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength -He alone is God, He alone knows what's best for you, He alone is worthy of our praise and worship.

-Matthew 16:26 (ESV)

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

I am convinced that true happiness is found in our striving for holiness before God in how we fulfill our own callings.

Drop and stop the comparing. Put aside the endless striving to be like (you fill in the blank). Stop thinking you deserve this or that, or being angry because someone else has, or is, or can be..

Do you see how this spirals out of control into self-elevation and greed and ultimately pride?

Jesus says no. Serve God -everything else is added if you get that right. It is no

accident. I see it all the time and especially in these last two years.

Your faithfulness in doing and giving (yes, we still need volunteers) but, being faithful in the little -God has been faithful in the much.

Tithes

Serving

Sunday attendance and prayer

When we learn to get out of our own way and seek first the Kingdom of God - looking to reach people with the gospel of Jesus -God blesses that faithfulness. Why? Because we are worshiping God and serving Him and in doing so, we are served.

Strike two then - Alright, one more go at this. Let's test His faith, let's see how strong His belief is:

-Luke 4:9-11 (ESV)

"And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

How they got there I don't know, whether in the body or out of it, I am unsure. But here we are and notice a subtle shift in what the devil says.

We've talked on this before, right at the beginning of the message, but it's a good reminder -the first two times were challenges: If you:

If you are the Son of God -in other words: prove yourself.

If you will worship me, it's all yours. In other words: What's your worth?

This time, he tries a different angle, "it is written". He uses Jesus's words against Him and uses God's word for his benefit.

Don't miss this manipulation, as this is one of the biggest dangers the Church faces. People playing fast and loose with the Bible, changing things which they don't like or find offensive. Simply ignoring the hard things our using it in such a way as to get what they want out of it.

I've said it before and it bears repeating, that there are things on these pages which I do not like. They make me uncomfortable and put me in conflict with people I deeply love.

Yet, here it sits, stubbornly saying what it has said forever. It doesn't change, as we saw in Peter quoting Isaiah. We must change, not it.

That is how Jesus flips the script on the devil. Ok, you want to quote a word hate to suit your purpose and your evil intent

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-Luke 4:12 b (ESV)

"It is said, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

It is said..

God spoke, God speaks, man wrote. His breathed out word.

In the beginning God..

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God..

Jesus, the word embodied in a person was tempted in every way we are, and is without sin. Right at the outset of His ministry he was tried and tested in the field of God's providence and came away victorious.

In the power of the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit lives in you, and me, if you are in Christ. That means no temptation is beyond our ability to withstand it:

-1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

The Key? God's faithfulness! Jesus has provided the means, the way and the victory.

Now we are set, Jesus has been tested and is ready to step into the calling and mission.

Next week, that mission is defined, and it isn't received as well as one would have hoped.

-Prayer