

THE HARDEST PART

An Opportune Time!

SERMON NOTES
MARCH 9, 2025

The First Sunday in Lent
Scripture: Luke 4:1-13

LUKE 4:1-13 (NRSV)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' ⁴Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."'

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' ⁸Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", ¹¹and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

¹²Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

"We, like Jesus, are given the presence of the Holy Spirit to face temptation, and with God's help, remain faithful to God's will." Are you (we) trying to live what Jesus is teaching?

I. " ONE DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE..."

- A. Immediately following his baptism by John, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, is led by the Spirit in the wilderness...where for forty days he eats nothing.
- B. The number forty recalls Moses' forty days on the mountain without food (Ex. 34:28); Elijah's forty-day journey to the mountain of God (1 Kings 19:4-8); and Israel's forty years in the wilderness (Deut 8:2-6).
- C. Israel's forty-year trial (disobedience and struggle in relationship with God) in the wilderness is the immediate context for Jesus' temptation...and Jesus references Deuteronomy three times in his response to the Devil.
- D. Scripture characterizes the power of evil in the world in many ways. The Devil, slanderer, or adversary (a fallen angel) is a cosmic power, and organized forces that stand in opposition to the will of God in the world. It is both within us and outside us!
- E. The Devil does surely choose an "opportune" time to test Jesus, before he has preached, taught, healed, or cast out demons...on the brink of ministry...he is hungry and alone...what will be the shape of his life and mission?
- F. "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread," the Devil says to Jesus. Jesus responds with Deut. 8:3, "one does not live by bread alone."

II. "WORSHIP THE LORD... SERVE ONLY HIM..."

- A. Jesus' response is one of humility and thoughtfulness, "one does not live by bread alone" ... and alludes to the rest of the verse in Deuteronomy 8:3, "but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."
- B. The Spirit, through the Scriptures, is the available power of God in the time of trial! Notice the implications for each "temptation". Jesus is tempted to do, only what is within his power...the first is a SOCIAL trial...if he can turn one stone to bread, imagine what he could do by turning many stones into bread for the world!
- C. The Devil's next assault is "temporal" (in a moment) as Jesus is shown all the kingdoms of the world and hears, "to you I will give their glory and all this authority...for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours!"
- D. Imagine the impact Jesus could have if he submits and "rules" the world. This second temptation is POLITICAL...what new world order for good can Jesus achieve if he "worships" the ruler of this world?
- E. Jesus again responds with God's Word, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him (Deut 6:13)." Jesus finds strength and direction in his Scriptures and chooses to be obedient to God's will!

How are we facing our trials and temptations?

III. "DO NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST!"

- A. The Devil's third attempt to sway Jesus is RELIGIOUS in nature. From the top of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Devil again says, "if you are the Son of God...throw yourself down from here," and he himself quotes Scripture saying, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you, and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone (Psalm 91:11-12)." Will Jesus, with a superhuman display of power win over people to belief in who he is?
- B. Jesus' final response, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test (Deut 6:16)' confirms, that in this time of testing, Jesus chooses to be obedient to God's Word and will for his life.
- C. Jesus is full of the Holy Spirit and armed with Scripture in his time of trial. He has rejected any way other than that which God wills!
- D. The Devil departs from Jesus for now, but this will not be the last time that Jesus is tempted to forego God's will and his mission in the world...Jesus will again be tempted on his last night on the Mount of Olives.

Within your power, with what are you being tempted?

In our times of trial, does Scripture comfort and inform our decisions?

Are we asking the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us?

How will you prepare for your "opportune times" of temptation, and seek to be obedient to God's will?