

030622 Luke 4:1-13 "Led by the Holy Spirit"

As we celebrate the first Sunday of Lent, today's Bible verses tell us about the three temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness while fasting for 40 days. This story is written in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, and there is a difference. The order of the 2nd and 3rd tests is different, but the content is the same in the end. The world we live in today is often called a wilderness world. Hopefully, we too will be conscious and discerning of the spiritual trials that are taking place in this wilderness like world, so that we will now be able to overcome it by being led by the Holy Spirit.

Before starting his public ministry, Jesus was tempted by the devil while fasting for 40 days in the wilderness. These three temptations have a connection with the temptations Adam and Eve received from the serpent in Genesis. Genesis 3:6 says, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate;" The content and order of the temptations are in fact consistent with the temptations Jesus was subjected to in the Gospel of Luke. In other words, they are not temptations that only Adam, Eve, and Jesus experienced, but temptations that people can face while living on this earth.

In both the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, the first temptation was to 'turn stones into bread'. In verse 3, "The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." Let the stones become bread? It's a food issue. Now Jesus had fasted for 40 days. Have you ever fasted all day? It's really hard. But now Jesus fasted for 40 days. If there was anything he yearned for the most at this moment, it was to eat. While living in this world, people are often tempted because of eating and living. Here, the word temptation can be interpreted as indulging in the idea of making a living and at the same time turning away from God. But, think about it. Sometimes people fall into temptation because they

have nothing to eat, but there are also many cases where people fall into temptation because they have too much to eat.

This prayer is found in Proverbs 30:7. “Two things I ask of you; do not deny them to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, or I shall be full, and deny you, and say, “Who is the Lord?” or I shall be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God..” Hopefully, you will not be put to the test because of the matter of eating and living, but go forward with thanks to God through your daily bread.

The second temptation was, 'Bow before me, and I will guarantee success while on earth!' To bow down here is not just to bow down, but to regard some as our master whether it be power, fame, etc. In other words, we are bound by it. The Bible tells us that we become slaves to them. Of course, success in life is important, but we become enslaved by the idea of it that we are consumed by it.

The third temptation was 'Jump down from the castle.' This temptation tries to lead us down the path of thinking, "Try jumping off the cliff! People will think you are amazing and your fame will go up. What's in it for obeying God's Will? We are already busy doing what we want in life."

The Bible refers to the devil as "king of this world" (John 12:31) or "god of the world" (2 Corinthians 4: 4). If you look at this, you see that the Devil's authority in this world, until the final judgment, is somewhat but certain. There is a battle between good and evil in this world. Forever? No! Until the Second Coming of Jesus. So, the Devil will try to get rid of one more soul until then. The result of that effort is to get people away from God.

Look carefully at the two temptations that Jesus faced. "If you are the son of God?" 'If you are a son of God, can you make a stone out of bread?', 'If you are a son of God, can you jump off a cliff and live?' The questions can be quite deceiving. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Son of God, the only begotten Son. In other Bible verses, we can tell that even though people didn't know Jesus, the Devil knew Jesus from the beginning. Therefore, the Devil is not asking the question because he doesn't know who Jesus is...

The temptation given by the Devil to Jesus is this: to prove that Jesus is the Son of God by His own strength whether by making a stone into bread or jumping off a high tower and surviving! If he can't do either, then bow down to the devil and try to prove to others.

Would it be difficult for Jesus to prove it? In the Bible, Jesus performed many miracles. Can He prove it? Isn't it good to prove it? You may think that, but what really is the devil's question? Those things that the Devil tells Jesus to "try" are missing the meaning of the Will of God who sent Jesus. This is the difference between doing what the Heavenly Father wants us to do and doing what I want!

What we must prove as Christians is to live our lives faithfully in front of God wherever we may be. God allows us to have success and fame in life and wants us to glorify God and love our neighbors through that success and fame. However, we should not be enslaved by that, because once we chase after success and fame, those things become the masters in our lives. Even we are successful, we must stand faithfully and even when we fail and lose, we must also stand faithfully in front of God.

In a sense, our lives are like climbing a rugged mountain with a burden on our backs. However, the difference in weight of the burden depends on what that is. The things that we carry with love are not burdens but rather good company. The

things that we carry out of duty is not joyful but rather a burden. True love is unending care, but it is weightless. If you are feeling pressure on your family and friends right now, ask God's help. Love is giving. Love is sharing. Love is caring. If you love, it is not burdensome, rather you want to be with them more.

Returning to the message today, what was Jesus' answer to this devil's test? "People do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'

What do these answers say about Jesus? Jesus was thoroughly about putting the Heavenly God first! He had the power to do whatever He wanted, but He put himself in the position of the one who was sent! Making bread out of stone is a piece of cake and Jesus can jump from the tallest building easily, but that's nothing to do with what God wants. He can dominate all the powers of the world, by mobilizing the angels, but it is also irrelevant to what God sent Jesus to do. To save us from our sins, Jesus walked the path of the Cross one step at a time.

The apostle Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Galatians 2: 20-21).

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, during this season of Lent, let us examine our faith. And ask God's help and live a life led by the Holy Spirit. "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."
Fairfield Grace, May God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.