

Luke 4:1-15 Three big temptations of life

Introduction to series

- Over the next few months we are going to be working our way through chapters 4-9 of the gospel of Luke. So then let's just start with a little background to the book and why we are looking at it.
- So, a bit about the book
 - It is written by Luke. But who is Luke?
 - Luke is a trained physician (doctor) who travelled with Paul. Unlike the other three he wasn't personally connected with Jesus
 - He wrote the book of Luke for gentiles, people who didn't have a Jewish background which is why he includes the genealogies to help them understand who Jesus is.
 - Luke carefully researched his material, interviewed eyewitnesses and listened to the apostles and from all that along with inspiration from the Holy Spirit wrote the gospel account so that its readers might have an accurate and orderly narrative of the life, ministry and message of Jesus.
 - Not that the other three gospel accounts aren't accurate, but Luke is writing from a different angle.
 - The book itself is split into 2 parts really, 1-9 the birth of Jesus and who Jesus claims to be (the coming of Jesus) then at the end of chapter 9 we get this switch and 10-24 focus on Jesus heading towards the cross and then departing back to heaven (the going of Jesus).
 - So in December as the lead up to Christmas we will cover Luke 1-3 (the birth of Jesus) but for now we will focus in on chapters 4-9 where Luke presents Jesus, the compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them and die for them.
 - Through these chapters we will meet individuals from all different walks of life as well as crowds, men, women and children, poor people, as well as rich people and sinners and saints.
 - Along the way there will be someone you can align with
 - Luke's focus is to show that the gospel of Jesus is universal, it is for everyone.
 - So, the big question over the next few months is
 - Who is Jesus to you? Is He who he claims to be?

With the intro done let us look at the passage we heard read earlier. Right before this section we are looking at Jesus has just been baptised by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit has descended on Jesus in the form of a dove and God the father has spoken those amazing words, this is my son whom I love. Just the words any kid wants to hear. Then straight after that we arrive at chapter 4v1 with Jesus being led out into the desert where he will face these three temptations.

We all understand what temptation is right? To make sure this illustration will help us.

There is a story told about a little boy in a grocery store standing near an open box of cookies. "Now then, young man," said the grocer as he approached the young man. "What

are you up to?" "Nothing," replied the boy: "Nothing." "Well it looks to me like you were trying to take a cookie." "You're wrong, mister, I'm trying not to!" That's temptation!!

Whether you are a Christian listing this morning or not you know that temptation is real. You can think of times or circumstances in your life where you have been tempted to do the wrong thing and you have either done it or resisted it. Well temptation comes from Satan trying to get us to do things that God does not want us to do, and here is the thing, Satan is a master at tempting us and he does it in four stages.

- 1) First, he lays out the bait and like a master fisherman knows what bait to catch a certain fish, Satan knows just the right bait for you.
- 2) Second comes the appeal. You see Satan doesn't have the power to make us do the wrong thing, but he makes it seem really attractive, so we begin to toy with the idea and maybe think we can get closer to the temptation without falling.
- 3) Then third the inner struggle begins. Our desires want to fall into the temptation but our conscience fights against it and warns of the danger. Our conscience may even show us the dangers of the temptation, but we still want it.
- 4) Then finally all temptations end with a response, we either resist or we yield. Resisting brings a sense of freedom, giving in may initially bring pleasure but it will always end in guilt and hurt.

Well that's the background to Luke and temptation now let's look at the temptations of Jesus and how it applies to us.

The three temptations of Jesus

1. Temptation to turn stone into bread (v3-4)

- The devil knew exactly who Jesus was and the power He has. The devil knew Jesus could have easily told the stone to become bread and it would have.
 - This would not be a temptation if Jesus was not the son of God.
 - If the devil said to me turn stone to bread it would not be a temptation since it is impossible for me.
 - But it's a temptation to Jesus because he could do it and he was hungry having not eaten for 40 days.
 - It is almost an innocent temptation – come on your hungry and you can do something about it so get yourself some food.
 - But it's not innocent to Jesus. Suggesting that He could simply invoke his supernatural powers to meet his own need.
 - Satan is trying to get Jesus to believe a lie that his father doesn't care about him which is why he is hungry and so it's ok to feed yourself because your father has abandoned you.
 - Satan was tempting Jesus to disobey the Father's will by using his divine power for his own purpose. Essentially Satan is saying to Jesus take matters into your own hands and take care of yourself. It is a test of Jesus faith in the Father as the provider.
 - Jesus came to live on this earth as a man just like me and you. We don't have the power to turn stone to bread so even though Jesus

had the power, as he is also fully God, he couldn't use it without disobeying the Father.

- How does Jesus answer?
 - With a verse from the Bible, Gods word.
 - Man won't live by bread alone but by the word of God.
 - Jesus doesn't try and fight the temptation in his strength but turns to the truth of the Bible.
 - His answer is saying I'm not going to complain about being hungry and I won't take matters into my own hands but instead I will trust in my Father and his word because he says he is my provider and he will provide.

2. Temptation to worship Satan for power (v5-8)

- So, if the first temptation was a test of faith of God as provider this is a test of faith of God as sovereign ruler.
- What the devil claims has partial truth but not full truth. Satan has some power but not unlimited power. God is ultimately in control, but he has given Satan power over those who reject God.
 - It's a kingdom that doesn't require sacrifice or hardship in the short term but it sure does in the long term.
- Entry into Gods kingdom comes at the cost of Jesus death.
 - Satan is offering Jesus his kingdom which comes without the cross.
 - Why go to the trouble and pain of the cross to win the world when I am offering it to you now with no suffering or sacrifice.
 - But a kingdom without a cross would mean no forgiveness for our sins.
- Jesus answers again by quoting scripture.
 - He refuses to bow to anyone other than the one true God.

3. Temptation to test God (v9-12)

- Satan changes tact this time. Twice Jesus has quoted scripture at him as answers, so Satan tries to tempt Jesus through quoting scripture. He quotes part of Psalm 91.
 - But unsurprisingly he misuses scripture and misquotes it.
- This becomes a test of Jesus trust in scripture and obedience to God.
- Satan quotes a scripture that promised Jesus angelic protection and challenged Jesus not just to trust in it but to give evidence of his trust by acting upon it.
 - A very subtle temptation.
 - The bible says that faith without deeds is dead, so Satan is challenging Jesus to prove his trust in the Bible.
 - It would have had a powerful attraction.
- But Jesus sees through the devils lies and sees that this temptation is in fact a challenge not to trust God but to tempt him, not to prove his sonship but to abuse it.
 - Jesus has received no instruction from God to jump off the temple and neither God's work nor human need required him to do so.
 - The only motives Jesus would have had for jumping would have been vainglory or the desire to test God to see if he would keep his promise.

- Jesus in his answer again answers with scripture and shows that scripture forbids the second of these reasons.
 - Do not test the Lord your God.
 - God is not on probation, there is no doubt about his faithfulness that has to be cleared up by putting him through a test.
- Jesus would also have known that had he have jumped and been saved it would have proved he was the messiah to all the Jews by the promise of protection being fulfilled and it would have been a shortcut to the cross. The father had much more work for him to do so he resists.

The application of the temptations to us

- All of the temptations Jesus faced were unique to him since they were temptations relating to the fact that He was the son of God. But they do point to general types of temptation that we face.
- The temptation to turn stone to bread for us is the temptation to not trust the providence of God and take matters into our own hands. We believe the lie that God does not provide for our every need and doesn't care for us so instead look to ourselves as the provider.
- The 2nd temptation to bow to Satan for us is to take the easy way out. The Christian life is hard and involves sacrifice and hardship. It means saying no to what the world says yes to. It means denying the sinful desires of our flesh that seem so appealing. The world is full of things that give immediate pleasure, but they have no long-term satisfaction. Seek after heaven and eternal fulfilment. Why do it? Because in the longer term it may be hard now but there is freedom at the end.
- The 3rd temptation is to put God to the test. We may not do it by jumping from the top of a cathedral to see if God will catch us, but we do it in other subtle ways. We know where God sets the line on sin but we see how far we can push the limits and choose our own path but then get mad at God when things go wrong.

Jesus faced these temptations straight after his baptism, whilst he was physically weak and alone. Temptations for us often come at the same times in life. Often after a spiritual high we will be tempted, when preparing people for baptism I always warn them that serious temptation may follow. When we are physically or emotionally weak, when we are exhausted or emotionally spent and don't have it within us to fight the temptation like we normally would. And third the warning is to not live life alone. Its why church community is so vital to living the Christian life.

How do we resist temptation?

Temptation is real and will come upon you. So how do you resist?

1. Know the word of God.

- a. But don't just know it apply it to your life
- b. If you don't know truth you won't spot lies and deception

2. Be prepared

- a. Temptation will come your way are you ready
- b. See how the passage finishes
 - i. Realising he is getting nowhere he leaves Jesus alone until an opportune time
 - ii. Satan won't just come one but will keep on coming your whole life.

3. Don't live the Christian life alone.