

LED BY THE SPIRIT

GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

MARCH 1, 2020

Led by the Spirit

SCRIPTURE READING **MATT 4:1-11 (ESV)**

“1 ¶ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

4 But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple

6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.””

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7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

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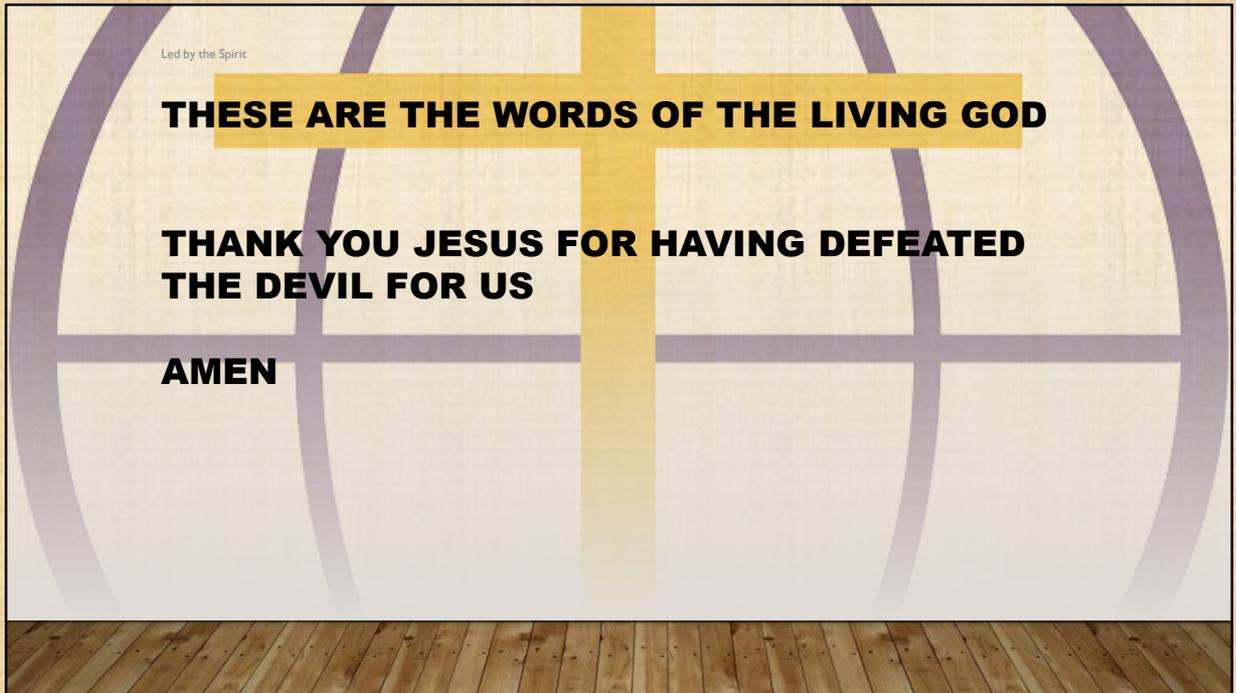
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9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.””

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11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.” (Mt 4:1-11 ESV)



During today's sermon, we are going to stop and think about how Jesus was tempted in the desert and how Satan was thwarted and frustrated in his efforts.

There are also lessons we can learn from Jesus' experience.

Looking at the context in Matthew 3, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. After his baptism, Jesus went up from the water and the heavens were opened.

John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God descending on him like a dove.

He then heard a voice from heaven who said, **"This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased"**.

In Luke 3:21-22 we read that after his baptism, Jesus was praying. **The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased"**.

The next verse tells us much about Jesus.



The words that we read of Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness tell us much about the humanity of Jesus and about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. He is the one who leads Jesus in the desert to face an archenemy Satan, also called the devil and the tempter.

Satan is an **"adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act)"** (Strong's concordance)

The devil is also translated in other verses as **"false accuser"** and **"slanderer"**.

Jesus fasted for 40 days. Fasting is not a means to manipulate God into doing what we want. Fasting is a discipline that helps us purposely become closer to God. It helps us to grow in our relationship with him. As we seek God through fasting, he helps us to grow in relationship with him and he helps us discern his will for us.

It is certainly a good way to prepare for the celebration of the holy week coming soon. This year, Good Friday is on the April 10 and Easter on Sunday, April 12.

JESUS: 7BEING BORN IN THE
LIKENESS OF MEN.
8 AND BEING FOUND IN HUMAN
FORM (PHILIPPIANS.5)

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Reading the fact that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit shows us clearly that he set aside his divine prerogatives to live fully as a human being.

It's important when talking about Jesus and when we worship him to not forget that the Bible calls Jesus the descendent of David, the Son of man and the man Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul refers to him as being the man Christ Jesus, our mediator. **"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," (1 Ti 2:5 ESV)**

While Jesus lived on the earth, he lived as a man. He did miracles that other men did also.

For example, Jesus walked on water. The apostle Peter also walked on water.

Jesus raised the dead. He raised Lazarus from the dead. He also raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow at Nain.

Other of God's servant also raise the dead.

In 1 Kings 17:17-24, we read how God worked through the prophet Elisha to raise the widow's son. **"20 And he cried to the LORD, 'O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?' 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, 'O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again.' 22 And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived."** (1 Ki 17:20-22 ESV)

God work through Peter to raise Tabitha, also called Dorcas, a faithful disciple of Jesus who was known for her good works and acts of charity. When she died, the widows present in her home were expressing their grief at such a precious loss of life.

Peter told her to step outside and then he **"knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.'** **And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."** (Ac 9:40-42 ESV)

Obviously, God worked through Elijah and through Peter to raise people from the dead.

However, Jesus living on earth as a man like us, did so many more miracles than any who had preceded him as he was led by the Holy Spirit.

"30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (Joh 20:30-31 ESV)

"Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (Joh 21:25 ESV)

As we read in Philippians, although Jesus was also the Son of God, while on earth, **"did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant..."**

As we read the Gospels, we are not to minimize the humanity of Jesus. He lived as a human led by the Holy Spirit. He lived a perfect life never once having sinned.

Therefore, while Jesus was fully God with all of the attributes of deity, he limited their use so that he could fulfill the promises of God sending a very human messianic deliverer from the line of David. He lived the same kind of life that you

and I live, but he did so perfectly because he was perfectly obedient to the will of the Father in the power of the Spirit. The beginning of Jesus' public ministry was marked by the Spirit's coming on him at his baptism (3:13—17), and it was the Spirit who led Jesus immediately to be tempted (4:1). Wilkins, Michael J.. The NIV

Application Commentary: Matthew (p. 164). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

We also need to remember that Jesus did things that other men never did during his ministry on earth. For example,

- he forgave sins which only God can do;
- he also accepted worship (Matthew 2:8; 14:33).

SATAN THE DEVIL IS REAL

- **“in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—” (Eph 2:2 ESV)**

What is a prince?

That word is found 37 times in the New Testament and it means **a ruler, commander, chief, leader** (Strong's Concordance).

Consequently, Satan being a ruler, has an untold number of fallen angels like him and under him. Jesus was very clear about how evil he is when he described him to the Pharisees. He said to them, **“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (Joh 8:44 ESV)**

The devil is a tempter. The way he operates is that he tries to manipulate people to take things in their own hands and to act apart from God's will.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

- **Changing stones into bread;**
- **Testing God;**
- **Receiving the kingdom of this world in exchange for worship of the devil.**

Satan does not attack Jesus directly. He wants Jesus to prove to him that he is the Son of God. Of course Satan knows that he is the son of God.

Jesus, at his baptism, had already received the powerful testimony that he was the beloved Son of God. There were no questions in his mind about his identity.

He knew he was loved.

He knew who he was.

1) Jesus was very hungry. There is nothing wrong in eating bread. What is wrong is the way Satan/the devil wants Jesus to do it.

Jesus came to undo the sin of Adam. He also was a Jew, a descendent of Israel. He responds to the devil by quoting Deuteronomy in the three temptations presented to him.

When Jesus said that ***“man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”***, he was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3.

That is a common way of the Prince of the air to function. He tempts by making people think that it is okay to function outside God's will.

There is nothing wrong in eating bread in and of itself. The devil tried to get Jesus to not rely on God the Father to provide for him. The temptation was presented to Jesus to do things on his own way.

The temptation is real, but the good outcome is assured as the Son yields to the leading and the power of the Spirit in accomplishing the Father's will. As Jesus is led away by the Spirit into the desert, Satan will try to get the Son to go contrary to the Father's will, but that very temptation is used by the Father to establish the Son in the Father's will. (Wilkins, Michael J.. The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew [p. 156]. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

That is the way the devil works with all temptations. The way he presents temptations is that they are not necessarily evil in themselves. He often tries to entice people to fall or use good things for a bad purpose.

There is nothing wrong in working and receiving money to sustain one's family or personal needs. It becomes wrong when one begins to place his or her trust in money. This can give a false sense of security. Money can also be used to manipulate people or to reach fame and or power. It can also be used for very selfish reasons.

Money is not wrong in and of itself. It is wrong when we trust it rather than God.

Food is good and restaurants are good. However, if one goes to a restaurant so often that he puts himself or herself in debt which cannot be repaid, then it becomes a bad thing.

Another example, **sexual relationships** are good but the devil convinces people that sexual intimacy is okay in any relationship. Jesus clearly teaches us that sexual relationships are meant for a committed marital relationship.

Loving self is not a bad thing in itself when rooted in Christ. It becomes a bad thing when it becomes a source of selfishness and disregard for others.

Feelings are not a bad thing but when they formed the basis of belief they are being misused.

For example, there is an advertising that says, "**feeling is believing**". God never says that. On the contrary he tells us to believe in him first. Belief is an expression of the mind first.

Satan can use any aspects of life to tempt us and to rob us of the joy of the Lord.

2- Satan the devil then brought Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple. He tempted him to test God. He basically told him to throw himself off the temple. He quoted Ps 91:12 rightly but in a wrong context in an effort to get Jesus to tempt God.

Satan is able to twist Scriptures for his own ends trying to deceive us about what the will of God is.

Again Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16, **“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.”** (De 6:16 ESV).

The history behind that verse refers to Israel while in the wilderness, in the desert.

The people quarreled with Moses because they were thirsty. They wondered if God was really with them. The name of that particular place was called **Massah**, which means testing **Meribah** which means quarreling. The Israelite became angry with Moses and tested God by saying. **‘Is the Lord among us or not?’.**

We can certainly test the Lord when, rather than being patient, we want our own way to shortcut what we want in life rather than waiting patiently upon the Lord.

Jesus was not going to consider the devil's manipulation.

3- The devil tried to work out a deal with Jesus. If you worship me. I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. **‘8 For the third test, the Devil took him on the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth's kingdoms, how glorious they all were. 9 Then he said, “They're yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they're yours.”’** (Mt 4:8-9 Message)

Eventually, the devil's goal was to have Jesus worship him. He also wanted Jesus to sidetrack the will of God the Father without going through the ordeal of the cross.

His intent was to give him the kingdom of this world as a free gift without all that effort and suffering. It was the Father's will that Jesus die on the cross in our place to secure our salvation through faith in him.

Temptations are always deceptive and seducing. Satan will go to any length to try to get us to walk outside of God's will. He will try to tell us that we do not have to deny ourselves and take up his cross.

‘24 ¶ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Mt 16:24-25 ESV).

The pleasures of this world are quite alluring. Out of love, Jesus was willing to lose his life to give us his life. We need to give up our life and completely trust Jesus to give us his.

How Jesus overcame temptation for us

“But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”” (Mt 4:4 ESV)

From: dailyverses.net

We must realize that the real enemy in this world is not other people.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Eph 6:12 ESV)

The devil and its minion are our most important enemies.

He will do everything to cause us to desired things that are not in God's will.

This is what he did with Adam and Eve, our first parents. They fell for the trap of desiring the knowledge of good and evil and to be like God.

The devil will try to make us believe that living in Christ leads to a miserable life.

He will try us to make us believe that God does not love us nor has he called us to himself.

There is a way to avoid the traps of Satan.

Jesus answer about the bread is of utmost importance.

The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the New Testament to write about how to overcome this evil force.

HOW TO OVERCOME THE DEVIL'S LURES AND TEMPTATIONS

- 1. Draw close to God.**
- 2. Being led by the Holy Spirit**
- 3. Know His word and walk in His will.**

1- James, the brother of Jesus, tells us to draw nigh to God and that he will flee from us.

"5 Do you think that scripture is just empty words? The Spirit that dwells in us is passionately jealous. 6 But the grace he gives is greater. As scripture says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Jas 4:5-8 KJV_2011)

"8 ¶ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." (1Pe 5:8-9 ESV)

2- We are told that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (Joh 16:13 ESV).

Just as Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit and empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist the prince of this world, we are empowered by the same Holy Spirit who indwells in us. We are not left on our own. We are not yet perfect in the flesh but one day, we will be.

3 – Know His word and walk in His will.

David, the servant of our Lord, was inspired to write about our attitude in the Lord.

This foreshadowed Jesus, pointed to him, because Jesus willingly and lovingly accepted to suffer. He looked to the joy beyond the cross when the Father would reconcile the whole world to himself in his beloved Son, Jesus. ***“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:2 ESV).***

Like Jesus, while living in the present circumstances, we are also to look forward to the hope that lies before us. It is only by delighting in the Lord that we can experience the joy of the Holy Spirit. No human being can give that joy to us. It is a gift of God.

“1 ¶ ‘OF DAVID.’ Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

7 ¶ Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.” (Ps 37:1-8 ESV)

Let us thank Jesus that he was secure in his Father’s love and being led by the Holy Spirit defeated Satan every step of the way including his final act through his death on the cross and his resurrection.

Let us thank Jesus. He is the way. He has paved the way for all of us. 1 Co 15:57 **But**
thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us believe him and thank him for his complete victory over evil on our behalf. Let us be led by the Holy Spirit walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

Let us pray