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**Message Series: 40 Days | Seek. Ask. Fast.**

**Message Title: 40 Days of Victory**

**Scripture: Luke 4:1-13**

Most of the decisive moments in our lives don't happen when someone is watching. The deepest battles we fight aren't about behavior, they're about identity. Who am I? What do I trust? Whose voice gets the final word?

The Lord promises in Jeremiah 29:13, "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*" Throughout this 40 Day series, together as a church, we are committing to three actions:

**Seek:** intentional attention. To seek is to choose to direct our attention toward God deliberately.

**Ask:** prayerful dependence. To ask is to pray with trust, naming our need before a good Father.

**Fast:** sacred subtraction. To fast is to remove something good so we can make room for something greater.

**What is Fasting?**

- Luke 4:2 states that Jesus fasted for forty days and became very hungry.
- In Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the Synoptic Gospels), fasting appears in both the teachings of Jesus (Mt 6:16–18; 9:14–17 // Mk 2:18–22 // Lk 5:33–39) and in the practices of Jesus (Mt 4:2; Lk 4:2).
- Jesus encouraged the ongoing practice of fasting, especially as it exemplifies a posture of humility and conscious dependence on God.
- Fasting removes food, a basic human need, to magnify our spiritual hunger, which is found only in God. Fasting, abstaining from food or other things, allows us to hunger for God and be satisfied by God.
- In *The Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes, "More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus. We cover up what is inside us with food and other things."
- Both Moses and Elijah fast forty days, and in Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke, Jesus fasted for forty days. As we seek to become like Jesus, fasting is a practice that shapes us more into the image of Jesus.

**Jesus Follows Israel into the Wilderness**

- Matthew and Luke explicitly state that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness after his baptism to be tempted by the devil. This echoes the story we've been tracing all through this 40 Days series.
- Israel passed through the Red Sea and entered the wilderness. Israel spent 40 years in the desert.
- Jesus passed through the water of baptism and entered the wilderness, where he spent 40 days.
- Israel failed repeatedly. Jesus will be victorious, not by flexing his divine power, but by living in full, faithful human obedience.
- Jesus fulfills the story of Israel through his victory in the wilderness. Jesus defeats temptation as a real human, who is filled with the Spirit and grounded in the Word of God. This means that his victory isn't just impressive, but it is representative of all humanity and available to all who follow him.

### **The Temptation of Appetite (Luke 4:3-4)**

- Jesus' first temptation targets appetite, not just hunger for food, but the deeper hunger for relief, comfort, and control.
- The devil began the attack on Jesus' identity, "*If you are the son of God...*" Why would Jesus not use his identity as divine to miraculously transform stones into bread? What was at risk was Jesus' solidarity with humanity.
- Jesus answered from Deuteronomy 8:3, "Humanity does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." His answer is about the human condition and vocation. Jesus needed to be a human to choose to live in the day-to-day dependence of God's voice, which is the way for all humanity to live.
- Jesus refuses to let appetite become authority. This is where temptation often begins for us, too (James 1:14-15). Not with evil desires, but with good desires elevated too high.

### **The Temptation of Allegiance (Luke 4:5-8)**

- According to tradition, Jesus was most likely in the Judean desert in central Israel, to the west of the Dead Sea and east of Jerusalem, during his temptation. A large mountain west of Jericho was most likely the scene of the second temptation.
- The devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (John 14:30) in exchange for Jesus' worship.
- Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, which emphasizes the exclusivity of worship to Yahweh. Israel failed to worship Yahweh alone (Exodus 32), but Jesus achieves victory through obedience to the Word.
- Every temptation asks the question, "Who is really in charge?" Temptation hinges on allegiance. I am loyal to my appetites, the appetites of the world, or am I allegiant to Yahwah and his will?

### **The Temptation of Ambition (Luke 5:9-12)**

- The devil and Jesus move from the wilderness to the Temple in Jerusalem. Again, the temptation centers on Jesus' identity, who is tempted to use his divinity to bolster his confidence in God and to demonstrate God's hand of protection.
- Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, implying trust over testing God. Faith does not manipulate God but trusts God. Ambition becomes dangerous when we try to secure outcomes God has not yet promised.
- The devil left Jesus "until the next opportunity came." Luke states that this was not the only time Jesus was tempted. Jesus faced these temptations throughout his life and faced every temptation we face (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus achieves victory through:

1. Knowing his identity. Every temptation as a believer questions our identity as a child of God.
2. Relying on the Spirit. Victory is not possible on our own (1 Corinthians 10:13)
3. Speaking the truth of Scripture. Three times, Jesus answered by quoting Scripture.

Victory over temptation and sin is possible because Jesus was victorious and revealed that being fully human is living in submission to the power of the Spirit and the Scriptures.

This week, pursue victory through the Lord.

SEEK: Take your hunger to the Lord daily through reading his Word.

ASK: Pray for the Lord to help you to be victorious over temptation and to memorize scripture.

FAST: Choose one day or one meal this week to fast as a way of practicing trust and dependence