

LOOKING AT LUKE
WHEN TEMPTATION CALLS

Wednesday, August 19

Reading: Luke 3-4

Luke 4:1 *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry. 3 The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"*

The following story appeared in Reader's Digest. "While my wife and I were shopping at a mall kiosk, a shapely young woman in a short, form-fitting dress strolled by. My eyes followed her. Without looking up from the item she was examining, my wife asked, "Was it worth the trouble you're in?"¹

Sin always looks appealing and desirable. If it weren't we wouldn't be tempted! However, the "trouble" it brings with it is not worth the momentary pleasure it might bring. Satan always wants to draw our eyes off Jesus and put them somewhere else. Some temptations we bring on ourselves by being somewhere we shouldn't. Others come by chance as we go through life and temptations emerge along the way. Sometimes, God allows temptation to bolster our faith and make us trust Him.

That Jesus was tempted proves that being tempted is not wrong. It is giving in to the temptation that produces sin. Satan's temptations could have sounded appealing to Jesus. Satan said, "You're hungry - why not create some delicious bread? You want to avoid suffering and the cross - bow down to me and I'll give you a shortcut to becoming King. You want people to follow You - throw Yourself off the Temple and let them see God send His angels to rescue You. Then they'll follow!"

However, each temptation failed! Jesus would not allow Satan to draw Him away from the path the Father had designed. Jesus did not use any "special powers" to defeat Satan. He used the same resources that are still available to believers today. First, we read that Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit into the wilderness." When the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives, temptation cannot get a grip on us. It is when we rely on our own strength and abilities that we fail. As one elderly saint once put it: "When Satan comes knocking, I send Jesus to answer the door."

The second resource Jesus used was the Word of God. Each time Satan tempted Him, Jesus responded with "It is written..." (Interestingly, all three quotes are from the book of Deuteronomy). It is important that we study, memorize, and apply the Word of God to our lives. If our daily life is directed by God's principles temptation has a hard time getting a foothold. The Spirit can use those verses that we've learned to make temptation flee.

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path.

Luke tells us that Satan left Jesus "until an opportune time." This reminds us that Satan doesn't give up! As Satan would continue to tempt Jesus throughout His life, so He will return to tempt us as well.

Will you be able to resist when temptation calls?

¹ quoted from - <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/t/temptation.htm>