

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (March 10): **Jesus fasted forty days and was tempted by the devil**

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:1-13

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit 2 for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" 5 And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 6 and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours." 8 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" 9 And he took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,' 11 and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" 12 And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Meditation: Are you ready to follow the Lord Jesus wherever he wishes to lead you? After Jesus' was baptized by John the Baptist at the River Jordan, he withdrew into the wilderness of Judea

Why did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into such a lonely place - right after Jesus was anointed and confirmed by the Father for his mission as Messiah and Saviour? Jesus was following the pattern which God had set for Moses and for Elijah - both were led on a forty day journey of prayer and fasting to meet with God on his holy mountain (Exodus 24:18 and 1 Kings 19:8 God had given them. Jesus likewise went into the wilderness to prepare himself for the mission entrusted to him by spending forty days and nights in solitude and prayer to his Father in heaven.

Jesus tempted by the devil

Luke tells us that at the end of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness one visitor came out to tempt him. Luke describes this tempter as the *devil*. Why did Satan tempt Jesus at the end of his lengthy period of fasting? Satan knew that Jesus was embarking on an important spiritual mission for the kingdom of God. Perhaps Satan saw an opportunity to strike while Jesus appeared more vulnerable in his physically and emotionally weakened condition due to his prolonged fasting and inner struggle over his particular call and mission. Satan's first temptation appealed to Jesus' physical desires and hunger. Jesus was very hungry and physically weak at the same time - he hadn't eaten anything for forty days. Did the Spirit lead him into the wilderness to die? When the people of Israel were led into the wilderness for forty years without any natural source of food, they complained to Moses that he was punishing them with starvation – a very painful way to suffer and die. Moses took the matter to God in prayer. And God intervened by sending them manna – bread from heaven – for their daily provision. Should not Jesus do the same to revive his weakened condition?

Satan tried to get Jesus to turn stones into bread, both to prove his supernatural power over nature and to satisfy his own personal hunger. Jesus chose to use his power and gifts to serve his Father rather than to serve himself. Jesus defeated Satan's snare with the words of Scripture from the Book of Deuteronomy in which Moses warned the people of Israel to never forget God nor his word: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4).

Jesus' second temptation

Satan tempted Jesus a second time by presenting him with the best the world could offer - great riches, privileges, glory and fame, and the power to rule over all the kingdoms of the world - Jesus could claim title and possession to everything he desired. Jesus quickly saw through the trap of placing the world's glory, wealth, and power above the honour, glory, and service that is due to God alone. Jesus saw how easily one's heart can be swayed and even overpowered by what it most treasures.

Jesus' third temptation

Satan's last temptation was to convince Jesus that he should position himself at the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, the holiest place on earth where God dwelt in a special way with his people, and there perform a spectacular sign that would prove beyond a doubt that he was the Messiah, God's anointed Son. Why would this be a real temptation for Jesus? It might be helpful to note that the devil is a Bible expert! He accurately quotes from Psalm 91:11-12, "He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you," and "on their hands they will bear you up, This high corner of the temple served as the "king's porch" on the edge of a precipice which dropped some 700 feet into the valley below. Jesus refused to perform any sign that might put God to the test.

Spiritual preparation in the forty days of lent

What lesson can we learn from Jesus' temptation in the wilderness? How can we hope to fight temptation and overcome sin in our own personal lives?

The forty days of Lent is the annual retreat of the people of God in imitation of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. We are called to journey with the Lord in a special season of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, repentance, and renewal as we prepare to celebrate the feast of Easter, the Christian Passover. The Lord gives us spiritual food and supernatural strength to seek his face and to prepare ourselves for spiritual combat and testing. We, too, must follow in the way of the cross in order to share in the victory of Christ's death and resurrection. As we begin this holy season of preparation and renewal, let's ask the Lord for a fresh outpouring of his Holy Spirit that we may grow in faith, hope, and love, and embrace his will more fully in our lives.

source: www.dailyscripture.net, author Don Schwager

OPENING PRAYER:-

“Lord Jesus, your word is life and joy for me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may have the strength and courage to embrace your will in all things and to renounce whatever is contrary to it.” **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- “Bitterness , Ancient wrongs, Betrayals”

Almighty God, let not the hopes of men perish, nor the sacrifices of men be in vain. Enable us by thy grace to root out from our common life the bitterness of ancient wrongs and the thirst to avenge the betrayals of long ago. Save us from the tyranny of history and set us free in a new obedience to serve each other in the present hour.

Accepting the redemption wrought for us, we believe that all our sins of yesterday are covered by thy mercy; Grant us therefore grace and courage to give and to receive the forgiveness which alone can heal today's wounds. Draw us, O Lord, towards loving kindness and guide us into the way of peace. **Amen.**