

## Daily Reading & Meditation

# Jesus Fasted Forty Days and Was Tempted by the Devil

GOSPEL READING: Luke 4:1-13 SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2022

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 - a vast and mostly uninhabitable wilderness full of danger. Danger from scorching heat by day and extreme cold at night, danger from wild animals and scorpions, plus the deprivation of food and the scarcity of water.

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 tested Moses and Elijah to prepare them for a prophetic mission - to speak God's word (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 18:15; 34:10) and to lead God's people into the way of holiness and righteousness, a way marked by love of God and love of neighbour. While Moses and Elijah each prayed and fasted in the desert wilderness of Sinai, God fed them with his life-giving word. Their time of solitude with God enabled them to be renewed in faith, hope, and love for the call 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.

### ***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? When Jesus went out into the wilderness to fight temptation by the devil, he was led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not rely

on his own human strength and will-power for overcoming temptation. He relied on the Holy Spirit to give him strength, wisdom, courage, and self-control. The Lord Jesus knows that we cannot fight temptation on our own. We need the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us. The Lord Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness (Romans 8:26) and to be our guide and strength in times of testing (1 Corinthians 10:13). The Lord gives grace to those who humbly acknowledge their dependence on him (James 4:6) and he helps us to stand firm against the attacks of Satan who seeks to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8-10; Ephesians 6:10-18). The Lord Jesus is ever ready to pour out his Spirit upon us that we may have the courage we need to repent of our sins and to turn away from them, and to reject the lies and deceits of Satan. God wants us to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:12) with the strength and help which comes from the Holy Spirit. Do you seek God's wisdom and guidance for overcoming sin and avoiding the near occasions of sin?

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.

**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:- "World Peace"**

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men were created. **Amen.**