

## **A Study in Luke**

Week Seven

Luke 4:1-30

### **Day One**

4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 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 does not live on bread alone.'"

v. 1 – The Spirit didn't lead Jesus to a synagogue or to some other public ministry setting. He led Him to a desert area. Jesus had just heard the Father's voice saying how pleased the Father was with Him and now He must go be alone for 40 days. It's difficult for me to get an hour alone and Jesus did it for 40 days. Is there too much "noise" in your life? Then perhaps it is time to spend time in the desert. Why not start today with 30 minutes of solitude—no phone, no email and no other people?

v. 2 – The Spirit set up an encounter with the devil in the wilderness. On top of that, Jesus was fasting. He ate no food for 40 days! When was the last time you fasted? Is it time to go without food? I'm not talking about a meal here and there, but a time of hunger when your head hurts, your breath smells bad and your stomach growls. The first three days of a fast are the toughest; after that, it becomes a bit easier. Why not look at your calendar and do some fasting soon.

v. 3 – The devil spoke to Jesus. That means that evil isn't a force or some psychological aberration in man. Evil is an intelligent being who knows the Bible, can carry on a conversation with man in any language, and is committed to see God's people failed, because he failed. I hear people taunting or belittling the devil. I will never do that. He is a powerful being, much smarter and "spiritual" than I am (I don't mean holy, but he is a fallen angel and has been in the presence of God).

This first temptation tried to get Jesus to use His powers to serve His own needs. He refused to use His relationship with God to minister to His own needs. How often do you attempt to do that? Is your prayer life more about you or others?

v. 4 – After 40 days without food, this temptation would be serious. But Jesus countered the devil's words with a verse from God's word from Deuteronomy:

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet

did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you" (Deut 8:2-5).

If you are in a time of lack, can you see God's' hand in it, to train you and teach you the ways you should go?

### **Day Two**

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

v. 5 – The second temptation was for Jesus to take a shortcut to glory. The devil offered Jesus a deal to deliver the land of Judea, which was under his control, to Jesus. I assume that the devil did not fully understand what Jesus was about to do, but did know that He had come to sit on David's throne. Thinking it was a literal kingdom that Jesus was after, the devil offered that kingdom to Him on the devil's terms.

Yielding to this temptation would have perverted Jesus' purpose. Sometimes if the devil can't keep you from knowing your purpose, he will then try to distort your perspective of how you are supposed to fulfill that purpose.

v. 6 – Obviously Satan had given these kingdoms to Herod and the Romans. Now the devil was willing to cut them out of the deal and put Jesus over it all. In a sense, this would have fulfilled God's promise for David's throne to be filled with one of David's own, which Jesus was. I have found that I am never tempted with bizarre stuff, like robbing a bank or stealing a car. Temptation always has some root in reality for the person being tempted. Since Jesus had come to rule, His temptations were related to His purpose.

v. 7 – This tells me that Satan is interested in being worshipped. He just doesn't want people to mess up; he wants their spiritual allegiance. Idolatry is his aim, wishing to divert to himself the worship due God. That is why I don't taunt the devil. He is too crafty.

v. 8 – Jesus countered again with a verse, this time from Deuteronomy 6:13-14. It is interesting that Jesus was able to ward off temptation using the Old Testament. This proves that the Old Testament is the inspired word of God (since Jesus used it as such) and that the Old Testament is to be studied and applied in our daily walk. If it was good enough for Jesus to use, it should be good enough for me. Do you read and study the Old Testament? Your daily readings should include healthy portions of Old Testament food.

### **Day Three**

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." 12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

v. 9 – I don't understand how the devil transported Jesus to Jerusalem and to the highest point of the temple. But I do think I understand that this temptation was to do something spectacular that would attract a lot of attention. As one who does some public ministry, I have been tempted at times to draw more attention to myself than I should. But it's not about me or how "anointed" or spiritual I am; it's about the will of God and what He wants me to do with my purpose.

vs. 10&11 – While Satan quoted Scripture, it was a perverted quotation of Psalm 91:11. The devil is a liar even when he speaks God's word! Look up that verse and see what he left out. God has promised to take care of His servants, but not those who go out of their way to do bizarre things.

Adam Clarke stated in his commentary about this verse:

This quotation from Ps 91:11, is a metaphor taken from a nurse's management of her child: in teaching it to walk, she guides it along plain ground; but, when stones or other obstacles occur, she lifts up the child, and carries it over them, and then sets it down to walk again. Thus she keeps it in all its ways, watching over, and guarding every step it takes.

This is the tender care that God provides for us. This promise does not cover someone who would choose to walk on dangerous ground and force God to protect him from his stupidity.

v. 12 – It is arrogant to think that God will cover you in whatever you do. There are times when God will lead you into danger and then you must trust Him. The Apostle Paul faced danger and avoided it when he could. When he could not, he trusted God for protection. It is really gambling—assuming that everything will turn out—to go out of your way to do something foolish and expect God to protect you. That also goes for gross sin. To feel that you are so special that God will cover you no matter what is testing or tempting God, and that is foolishness. Are you doing something foolish and counting on God to "cover" you? If so, please stop.

### **Day Four**

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. 14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him

spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.

v. 13 – The significance of Jesus’ temptations for us is explained by the writer of Hebrews:

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16).

You must keep in mind that temptation isn’t sin. I have found many people under condemnation because they were tempted, but even Jesus was tempted. It isn’t temptation that is wrong, but when you yield to temptation. And the devil waits for opportune moments for he is a formidable spiritual adversary. We can only resist temptation with God’s help:

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:12-13).

v. 14 – Jesus did what He did in the power of the Spirit, just as you will do what you for God. There were no shortcuts in Jesus’ life, nor did He do the things He did because He was God. You must grasp this truth, otherwise you will dismiss Jesus’ deeds as the work of the Divine and consider yourself unable to do the same type of things:

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him (Acts 10:38).

Is God with you? Prove it! Do the things that Jesus did!

vs. 15&16 – Jesus became an itinerate preacher, traveling from town and town to speak and minister. It was Jesus’ custom to attend synagogue. If Jesus attended public worship services, we should too! And it seems that no matter how controversial a teacher was, he was still permitted to read and speak at the synagogue. Notice too that Jesus “stood up” to read the word of God. I don’t believe a Jew was even permitted to lean against

anything when reading the Word. His being was to be at full attention. I wonder if we haven't gotten too casual when we come to God's word? What do you think?

### **Day Five**

17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

v. 17 – It is my theory that everyone has a passage of Scripture that helps describe his or her life purpose. If Jesus had one, you will have one too. Do you know yours? Mine is Genesis 1:2, which helps describe my purpose to bring order out of chaos.

vs. 18&19 – Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1, stating that He was the Christ, which means the anointed One. But He was not anointed to rule as David ruled the nation; His anointing was to set people free and declare the jubilee year of God's freedom. There is no better summary of Jesus' earthly ministry than in these two verses. If you don't know your passage, be aware as you read the Bible that you have one and be looking for it. The Spirit will help you see where it is.

vs. 20&21 – I can almost feel the silence and power of God in the synagogue that day. It was the power of purpose. People cannot help but be attracted to you and what you are doing when you are functioning in your purpose. Every eye was fixed on Jesus as He sat down. Do you know your purpose? Can you describe it in one short phrase? Do you have a Bible verse or verses to go with it? I urge you to make this a matter of priority and that you seek the Lord until you have both. This has made all the difference in my life and I know it will in yours as well. If you need help, go to my website, [www.purposequest.com](http://www.purposequest.com), and you will find a lot of resources to help you in your search.

### **Day Six**

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. 23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

v. 22 – The people were obviously surprised in Nazareth because they knew Jesus’ family and didn’t expect such power to come from his ministry. It is sometimes hard to see what God is doing in someone’s life when we have known them previously. Paul warned us about what took place in this verse:

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer (2 Corinthians 5:16).

Is there anyone in your life now that you are disregarding or not taking seriously because you have formed a judgment about that person? Can you release them from that judgment today?

v. 23 – The gracious words weren’t enough for the people. They wanted to see miracles, but Jesus seldom performed “on demand.” It is of note that the people never said this, but Jesus knew their heart. That is why we are told in John:

But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man (John 2:24-25).

Keep your expectations in God and do not put them in man. You will almost always be disappointed if you do not keep your focus on God.

v. 24 – As stated above in verse 22, it is hard to accept spiritual things from someone you know well or grew up with; that is especially true for a family member.

vs. 25-27 – It seems that Jesus expanded this theme that no prophet is welcome in his hometown to include his home country. He began to reference times when the prophets of Israel ministered to Gentiles and not Jews. This of course is something that Jesus began to do and eventually, so did His disciples. The Jews in Nazareth felt that they would automatically be the recipients of God’s blessings just because they were Jews. Jesus was telling them, in so many words, that God was bigger than Israel and that Jesus had other interests beyond Nazareth, which included the Gentiles

### **Day Seven**

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

v. 28 – The people were furious at what Jesus said in verses 26 and 27. They understood what He was trying to say and they were insulted. This revealed their hearts. Wherever Jesus goes, He reveals what is in men’s hearts. Do you remember what the angel told Mary?

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:34-35).

This visit to Nazareth is the first public ministry that Luke reported and Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy that Simeon made 30 years earlier!

People can behave well until Jesus gets specific and starts speaking. Then the reality of their heart will be revealed. Is Jesus revealing any reality in your heart? Don't run from it; face it and allow Him to heal it or deliver you. The Nazarenes heard Jesus' gracious words, but then when those gracious words indicated that God loved the Gentiles, those same Nazarenes became vicious and murderous!

Maybe what Nathaniel said was true: "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked (John 1:46).

v. 29 – The Nazarenes wanted to kill Jesus, not just shut Him up! They tried to murder the Son of God because of what He said in verses 24-26. Can you imagine the hatred and prejudice that was in them? I have found in my experience that religious people are the most difficult to deal with for they hide their hatred and sin so well. Paul referred to these people when he wrote:

Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them (2 Timothy 3:5).

Jesus did what Paul recommended before Paul wrote about it: He had nothing to do with them. You would do well to do the same.

v. 30 – Jesus was not going to die until it was the proper time. He somehow moved right through their midst and went on His way. This tells me that Jesus had a countenance that was ordinary; He was able to pass through the crowd, with the Spirit's help, unnoticed. Our times really are in God's hands. He can cause us to be unnoticed in danger or exposed in fame. Paul said:

'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring' (Acts 17:28).

And

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:3-4).

You are in Christ. For something to get *to* you, it has to get *through* Him first. That is why you can do what Paul instructed:

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Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Can you give thanks in your circumstances today; not *for* them, but *in* them? I trust that you can, seeing that Christ is involved in them with you.