

Small groups: Bible Study

Luke 4: 1-13

“Led by the Spirit into the wilderness”



Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” ⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” ⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’ ¹¹and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” ¹²Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Beginnings

The passage begins with Jesus being ‘led by the Spirit in the wilderness’. Look at where this passage comes within the narrative of Jesus’ life.

1. Why might Jesus be led by the Spirit in the wilderness at this particular moment in his life?

Unmasking the temptations

One way of thinking about the temptations is that they are different expressions of power. The first is the **power to exploit the land** for our own profit (turning the stone to bread), the second is the **power of domination and Empire** (authority over all the kingdoms of the world) and the third is the **power of entitlement** (God will protect us whatever we do). Jesus unmask these as ‘false’ powers.

2. What do these temptations look like today? What are we, as individuals and as the Church, tempted by?

Wisdom of the old

Three times Jesus replies “It is written...”. He is rooted in ‘the old Story’ of his people and draws on scripture to reject the temptations of the Devil.

3. Where do we draw our strength from in the wilderness? What are we rooted in?

Lenten journeys: looking ahead

4. We are at the beginning of the period of Lent. Do you have any particular ways of ‘journeying’ through Lent? Is there something you would like to try to do differently for the next few weeks, to live out your faith?