

Testing in the Wilderness

Luke 4:1-13

Oscar Wilde once said, "I can resist anything but temptation." Ha! Part of the human experience is being tempted. It comes in many forms, but we are ALL familiar with the deep, compelling pull to prioritize ourselves over others and distrust God by seizing what we want for ourselves rather than obeying Him. Jesus too faced temptation. Luke 4 describes one of these occasions in vivid detail. What we find is that Jesus not only proves to be an example worth emulating in our struggles with temptation, He offers us something even better!

Thinking It Through (agree/disagree, consider/contemplate)

"Sometimes I think that Jesus watches my neurotic struggles, and shakes his head and grips his forehead and starts tossing back mojitos." Ann Lamott

"The long painful history of the church is the history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross, being a leader over being led." Henri Nouwen

"(Sin is) unwillingness to trust that what God wants for me is only my deepest happiness." Ignatius of Loyola

"It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." C.S. Lewis

Working It Out

1. Read Luke 4:1-13. What stands out to you in this story? What do you observe about Jesus? About the devil?

Summarize what you believe to be the primary point of this story.

2. What do we learn in this story about the nature of temptation?
3. Matt mentioned three things about the example of Jesus as He faced temptation. What are they? (hint: look at the bulletin outline)

Which of these three aspects of facing temptation is the easiest for you to ignore in your own struggles? Why?

4. Why must we see Jesus in this story not only as our example but as our Savior?
5. What is one thing from this message that you need to apply to an area of your life right now? Be specific.

Prayer Points

- Pray for your group, that God would strengthen you as you face temptation and that you would resist the devil, standing firm in the truth.
 - Pray for our church, that we collectively would not allow the devil to deceive us into compromising our integrity or the mission that God has given us.
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