

Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness for forty days...

S1: Jesus is tempted by the devil in the desert

Introduction: The three temptations of Jesus... The devil, Satan, Lucifer is a created being, there is only one of him, he is a fallen angel opposed to God, His purposes and people.

What was the purpose of Jesus going to the desert?

It says the Spirit led him there. Everything Jesus did on the earth was because he desired to do his Father's will.

It was the fulfilment of all that had been said about him, following in the footsteps of Israel; 40 days and nights were no accident. In understanding the bible we have to realise that what was, 'Concealed in the old, is revealed in the new.'

Jesus was taken to various places in these temptations, we can only assume it was through transportation, like the angels.

Matthew 4 vs 1-11

The devil twisted scripture out of context. Most people who do not know God's word and understand it will often quote things out of context or even make it up; often best to ask people to show us the scripture. Jesus on the hand replies to the devil every time using scripture and using it appropriately. We need to know God's word, not what people have said about it. It needs to be embedded in our hearts and there is effort and discipline involved in doing that.

Jesus lived God's word, if we have it in us, we will live it.

The devil starts each temptation with the words, 'If you are the son of God...' immediately questioning His identity. The devil used the same words of doubt he had said to Eve in the garden, 'Has God said?' and that still ring true today.

S2: Why Jesus came

Luke 4 vs 18-19

Jesus came to reverse all that had been stolen at Eden. He came to give us life, life in all its fullness, now and into eternity (**John 10 v 10**). The life we were made to have before it went wrong. The enemy was not unaware of this. The three temptations were aimed to take Jesus down from the start of his mission. The three things contained in these temptations are at the core of how we see ourselves as fallen people. They echo throughout scripture and throughout history in how people have lived their lives and taken the decisions they have. These three areas are the three things we can get most caught up with, that can take our focus off the work of God's Kingdom.

S3: Three...

Henri Nouwen explains how Jesus, in his temptations, in the desert faced three classic lies of humanity which veil our true identity:

Three temptations

1. "Turn these stones to bread!"
2. "Throw yourself from the Temple and the angels will catch you!"
3. "Worship me and I will give you all the kingdoms of this world."

Three underlying lies

1. 'I am what I do or achieve, I can do it my way.'
2. 'I am what others say about me.'
3. 'I am what I have.'

Three responses to the lies-What Jesus did

Pattern of three...in scripture, I think God is telling us something here...

1. Genesis 3 v 6, They were the things that caused Adam and Eve to fall and because Jesus came as the new Adam he had to put this right from the start.

- Looked good to eat; what I can do
- Pleasing to the eyes; what I can have
- I know the difference between right and wrong; pride, what I know

2. How evil is represented in the world: 1 John 2 vs 15-17, 'Do not love the world...flesh, eyes, boastful pride of life....'

3. Ephesians 2 vs 1-2-Paul's trifecta of enemies of our soul:

The world- '...you followed the ways of the world.'

The flesh- '...Gratifying the cravings of our flesh.'

The devil- 'The ruler of the kingdom of the air.'

S4: 'Turn these stones to bread....'

TEMPTATION: Change these stones into bread. Jesus was hungry it says after 40 days, not surprising.

LIE: I am defined by what I do and my abilities. Reliance on ourselves and our own ability rather than trust and rely on God. Not needing God. Jesus could have turned the stones to bread, he had that ability as the son of God but he didn't because this is not what his father wanted. He wanted him to rely on him for life. What he could do was brought under his Father's control. What we do need to be under the Lordship of Jesus, not going our own way or doing our own thing. Jesus wants us to rely on him and grow in faith in him as we do.

It is not what we do, it is who we are that is more important. We can do a lot of things but do we do what God wants of us? How we use what we've been given is important. '**Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Jesus will last.**' What we do is important but it does not define who we are, sometimes these can get mixed up. Work can give us status, importance and friends. I've met far too many people who, when they have lost their career or come to retirement and they are lost, as their investment is about their work and what they do. What we do must be in balance to what God says we are and do for him. That way everything has purpose; work or not.

RESPONSE: Man does not live by bread alone but by the word of God. To Jesus his relationship with his Father was the source of all he did and the decisions he made. He used what He had been given for the purpose for which he came and never used his power for his own benefit or to coerce and control others. What we do has to be in context to our primary relationship with Jesus, otherwise it becomes our god and the reliance on doing to get what we want.

S5: 'Throw yourself from the temple because the angels will catch you...

TEMPTATION: Jump and guess what? God will save you. People will love you, you will get all the attention.

LIE: I defined by...How I look to others. Can we be attention seekers to get approval or a sense of worth from others rather than God? It is not what others think of us that defines who we are; it is what God says about us that is true. We are pressured in the age we live, to give a good impression, it is all marketing of the world system or empire that wants us to live in the untruth and a life of fantasy. God sees right through this deception, in us not being real. People's opinion of us can change in a heartbeat as did the crowds with Jesus. What people think of us, we can't control, it is in fact none of our business. If we live always trying to make everyone like us and make everyone happy, we are doomed from the start. We can't make people do anything.

RESPONSE: You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Jesus never sought or was flattered by others attention or adulation of Him. He referred them to God or to the enquiry of their own hearts. Jesus never allowed flattery to seduce Him. He knew what God His Father thought of him, '**...in you I am well-pleased.**' God smiles and rejoices over us (**Zephaniah 3 v 9**). It is about trusting what Jesus thinks of us, is important.

From 'You say,' by Lauren Daigle, sum this these thoughts:

'I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough

Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up.

'You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing

You say I am strong when I think I am weak

***And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, You say I am Yours.'***
***'And I believe
What You say of me
The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity.'***
Lauren Daigle, 'You say.'

S6: 'Worship me and I will give you the Kingdoms of the whole world...'

TEMPTATION: 'I will give you all the kingdoms of the world, 'if...'. The devil had the power to do that, he had been handed dominion at the fall. For us each time we sin, we hand over dominion to the enemy where he can manipulate and control us.

LIE: I defined by...What I have

All we have own and possess can give us status and prestige and some can get defined by what they have, even looking down on others who have less. Greed can set in. This is not kingdom thinking.

RESPONSE: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve. Anything that is more important to us than God is idolatry. We can put things (possessions, wealth, status, education, friends/family etc... in the place of God. 'Do we have possessions or do they have us?' All we have and 'own' is on loan. Materialism is not the answer to a full life in God. We cannot serve God and mammon. Jesus calls us to seek His Kingdom first, not what we want and the comforts we can gain.

Jesus lived simply, he had few cloths, probably hired a house and slept alone and outside for some of the time. When he died he had one garment to his name. Where were his priorities?

S7: Living life to the full... above the lies...'

Living above the three lies: Living in who we are in Jesus

- **Who or what do we allow to define who we are?**
- We need to live in life and not death and make daily choices to live by the Spirit and not be drawn by what we see and hear, what the flesh, the seat of our desires us saying and not by the messages of the world or the lies of the devil.
- Anything that **steals, kills or destroys**, we need to be aware of and walk away, so we can live the life we were meant to live.
- Let's be real., not based on what we do or achieve, not the person others want us to be, not what we have or own.
- He just wants us

Henri Nouwen:

'As long as we continue to live as if we are what we do, what we have and what other people think of us, we will remain filled with judgements, opinions, evaluations and condemnations. We will remain addicted to the need to put people and things in their "right" place. To the degree that we embrace the truth that our identity is not rooted in our success, power or popularity, we can let go of our need to judge because the judgements you give are the judgements you will get.'

(Matthew 7 v1) From 'You are the beloved,' page 326.