

## **Gospel According to Luke**

July 1, 2018

Reading: Luke 4:1-13

### **Battle for Souls**

Sermon #11

Luke 1:1-13

### **Satan Tempts Christ**

This morning we read of Jesus the Christ - Son of God, God the Holy Spirit and the prince of this world Satan in battle for humanity. Jesus said of Satan, **“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”** (John 8:44) This is a clear description of Satan or the devil or the prince of this world. The problem is, we see, although not always clearly, the physical world around us and we forget the real realm of the spiritual world where the battle for mankind and eternity is being fought. Christ might come into our thoughts at times during the day, but Satan rarely does – as the old saying goes, “out of sight, out of mind.” People struggle to see the reality of the spiritual world.

With computer advancements we now have false realities. In movies and computer games it is no longer easy to tell the genuine reality from the computer generated virtual reality. While computers enable people to live in the dream of virtual reality it also effects what happens when one walks away from electronics for they see the real physical world through the lens of the shadow of the electronic world and this colors their own experiences and perception of the real world. Thus the real world is not perceived in its true reality.

The Bible speaks of many things from the distance past – oh, it seems so long ago. What does it have to do with today? The Bible also tells us about the future, but we are not sure of how distant the future it speaks of is. Our human nature, which is tainted by sin, is to live in the moment and forget what the current moment has

to do with eternity. Let me ask, if you were not feeling well and went to the doctor and the doctor ran a series of tests discovering you have terminal cancer with only weeks to live would you want to spend your remaining time by yourself in the electronic world of virtual reality or would you want to be with family? As your time approaches for your life to end would you want your family to read to you about all the latest electronic advancements or would you want to focus on the clear and vivid picture given to us by God of eternity found in the Bible and speak of these important things with those you love? The fog of the unreal virtual world of electronics, the career path that was so important, the things society says are important – these are no longer important and one has to face, maybe for the first time, the truth of God and who they really are or are not in God.

As the fog of the false realities of the world is rolled back and one sees true reality, God's reality, eternal reality one wonders how they could have lived their life in the mortal false reality that Satan places into the world. You finally, as the poet, Robert Herrick (1591-1674) understand, the fleeting time of mortal life and things of importance. Herrick wrote,

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may  
Old time is till a-flying;  
And this same flower that smiles today  
Tomorrow will be dying.”

We might say today 600 years later. “Stop and smell the roses.” As one approaches death they see the world as the creation of God, the forests, mountains, valleys, canyons, rivers, deserts, all the variety – the animals and even the bugs. They realize not only did they not see these as God intended but they also did not see, the corruption, the poor, the hungry and those taken advantage of for another's gain. They did you not see the dove that descended upon Jesus, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus sent God the Holy Spirit into the world to spiritually strengthen his children, but the Holy Spirit has little to do with those of the world. They do not notice the Spirit but they also do not see the crouching lion bent on destroying the world.

The world does not take heed of what Peter wrote so many years ago, “**Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**” (1 Peter 5:8) With ones approaching death, one may finally awakened to this very real spiritual battle between the eternal life giving Dove, the Holy Spirit, and the lion, the devil who brings eternal destruction.

I want to proclaim to all who hear this message, awake, awake from the illusion of virtual reality, awake from stupor of the world, push back the fog hiding the true world laid down by Satan to see the worlds as they really are. Did I say worlds – plural? Yes, the spiritual world and the physical world. Strip away whatever has desensitized you and is swallowing up your attention. Recognize the urgency that has detoured you from God’s calling in your life – I want to bring you to the reality of God the Father and Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit who are eternal reality. I want to examine Luke chapter 4 and see Christ in battle. It is the battle for souls. This week we will see Jesus prepare and engage Satan and next week we will examine the battle.

### **Christ Engages In Battle**

Since the fall of Adam there have been a few brave people in every generation who seek God, they are the remnant. There were so few at one point, just 8, so God flooded the world. This slowed down the corruption of mankind, but did not stop it. There was only one eternal solution, God’s solution planned before Adam ever was – the Messiah!

Luke has taken us on a whirlwind of Jesus’ life. In chapter 3 is recorded Jesus’

baptism at the age of 30. Reading from chapter 3, verses 21-22, “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’ ” Here were people repenting and John baptizing them. It had some impact, but many came to watch, repentance was not their reality, but someone else’s. These precious few, those of the remnant were searching out God.

Suddenly they had the Messiah, the Christ as their Commander and General to lead them into battle and equip them spiritually to for battle – battle both spiritually and physically. Jesus brought the battle out into the open and Satan was exposed revealing to the remnant the corruption of the world. When Jesus returned to heaven he left the Holy Spirit to lead people in this continued battle for eternal truth. This remnant knows that when Jesus returns again from heaven to earth, as John saw, “behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.” (Revelation 6:2) Jesus will bring the battle will come to an end, history will end and eternity for mankind will begin.

Luke assures us that Jesus has this right as the One, the Sovereign, to led the battle for eternal truth. Jesus’ Messiahship is confirmed by his conception in chapter 1, verse 35 and through the testimony that Jesus is the Messiah by the shepherds, angels, magi, Simeon and Anna in chapter 2. By the testimony of the prophet John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit and God the Father at Jesus’ baptism and the fulfillment of God the Father’s promise in the 2 lineages of King David of chapter 3. Jesus is the long awaited Messiah to lead the faithful, called by God, into battle against evil.

Do you realize what was at stake? Jesus is about to be tempted and if he were to

fail – he would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> failed Adam and mankind would remain separated from God. Remember we just heard Peter’s warning, the *adversary of mankind, the devil continues to prowl around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*” (1 Peter 5:8) The devil continues to devour the world through corruption until Jesus’ return. The first Adam had a unique relationship with God in that he was created directly by God and God breathed life into him, but Jesus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, has the greater relationship with God for he is uniquely fully God and fully human. Adam was the father of mankind who fell into sin affecting all generations. Jesus came and created a new relationship for people with God – one through him, who knew no sin, a relationship no longer corrupted by sin, but a relationship of salvation through his atonement. Jesus is the new Adam. Jesus is the new Adam who does not fail and does not give into temptation. Jesus conquers sin and creates a new humanity that is redeemed forever. Jesus defeats death. The battle rages on but victory is assured when he returns with the host of heaven at the end of time.

When we look out at the world around us we must understand what Jesus has accomplished. If he had failed, all would have been lost. But Jesus did not fail; so all the world has hope of eternity. Unfortunately, not all of the world will walk out of the false reality, out of the fog of the fallen world and see the truth. Many will continue to seek the virtual reality that Satan entices the world with, a reality that either has one seeking their own pleasure or blinds them to the problems of the world around them. The world thinks the solutions to its problems are money and power and freedom from all rules and boundaries. The truth is found in the love and grace of Jesus, which comes with rules and boundaries, which in eternal truth and brings freedom.

## Clash Of Two Worlds

Jesus engages in spiritual battle and we are to emulate him. Let us begin in chapter 4 and see Jesus in action. Reading at verse 1, “[And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness<sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days.](#)” Here is what we know; Jesus is 30 years old, his public ministry has just begun, there will be 3 years of increasing conflict between the Messiah’s call for people to return to God and the corruption of the world. Jesus is well aware of the future ahead of him including his betrayal, trial and crucifixion. Verse 1 and 2 tell us 4 important things.

1. **Jesus is filled with the Spirit.** This is part of the great mystery of the Trinity and how each person of the Triune God relates to each other – we are awed by it and do not fully understand it. What we do understand is that even though Jesus is God and is filled with the Holy Spirit it does not cancel out that he is also fully human. As he is tempted he is just as we are affected by temptation and reliant on the power of God the Holy Spirit. He is empowered by God’s love, grace and mercy – just as we are when we surrender our lives to Christ. The difference is Jesus did not sin and all people do. We marvel at this many faceted plan for salvation of God that no man could have dreamed up. With this 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam goes the hope and destiny for eternity. We too must seek to surrender our lives from this false reality the world gives and fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit so we can see true reality.
2. **Jesus spends 40 days in solitude.** Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit leads Jesus into solitude for 40 days. Jesus separated himself from family, friends and the influences of the world in the desert for 40 days. Today that would

mean no radio, TV, computers, billboards and the thousands of worldly bits data bombarding us every day. Jesus had to prepare for battle and this is not the only time he prepares in this manner. As Jesus' ministry drew larger and larger crowds and the conflict intensified Luke tells us, [“he would withdraw to desolate places and prayed.”](#) (Luke 5:16) It appears to me that preparing for ministry requires significant amounts of time spent in solitude focused on God. Ministry is battle and every believer is called to ministry for the kingdom. In order to prepare as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 10 to 20 concerning putting on the whole armor of God one must come out of the fog and false reality of the world and seek the true reality of God. I get up at 4:00 on Sunday mornings because these hours from 4:00 to 7 are critical as I prepare my mind and soul by seeking God to do battle of ministry each Sunday here among you my most precious beloved brothers and sisters. Mondays to Thursday I study and pray, but Fridays and Saturdays are times of solitude; time spent in prayer, meditation and as much as possible apart from the world. Finding a pattern of solitude in your life is important, regular times apart from the false virtual reality of the world and its influences. If you do not have peace, if you have stress, whether mental or physical, seek solitude with God and be empowered by His Spirit.

3. **Jesus fasted for 40 Days.** During these 40 days Jesus ate nothing as he fasted. Why? Jesus was God and the fruit of the earth surely belonged to him. As Paul wrote to Timothy, it is [“God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”](#) (1 Timothy 6:17) If God wants us to enjoy what he has created and provides, why should the perfect and sinless Son of God do without? The answer is, to demonstrate to us that he was not enslaved to anything but God his Father. This

convicts me! We fast to also separate ourselves from the world and spend time with God. Your spiritual power and mine will be weakened to the degree that we cannot say no to bodily cravings. Physical appetites are not evil; Jesus was hungry and ate to satisfy his hunger. But if his hunger usurped the rule of his mind over his body his ability to be empowered by the Spirit would have been affected. Paul understood this concept, writing; **“I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”** (1 Corinthians 9:27) Jesus disciplined his body for 40 days in preparation to do spiritual battle. Jesus demonstrated that his desire of human needs - food and pleasure and companionship would not rule him and give Satan a foothold in his life. Do you let the desires of your body and things of the world rule you and give Satan a foothold in your life? Jesus made clear what must be the prime directive of his life and ours, **“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.”** (John 4:34) It is obvious to those who believe in Christ as the Messiah that God had a purpose for his life, but what about your life? All believers have a purpose and calling by God, for why else would he have saved you? It is by the mastering of your body and mind, separating yourself from the things of the world, spending time in solitude with God that you will discover your calling. It takes hard work because Satan works hard at keeping believers in the world and unbelievers from knowing God. Paul speaks of this, **“do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, (Paul is not saying do not drink, but to have control so one is able to seek the Spirit)** <sup>19</sup> **addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,** <sup>20</sup> **giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,** <sup>21</sup> **submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”** (Ephesians 5:18-21) My beloved how are we, you and I doing? Are we gaining control

over our bodies? Are we submitting to God, submitting to the leadership of our church, are we submitting to each other for the good of the body of Christ? Are we using our resources, our money, as God has commanded? Are we willing to do without material things - bigger house, newer and more expensive cars, the latest TVs and electronics to save money for God's work of ministry? Are we fasting not just from, the most obvious; food, but also from the ways and things of the world to be able to seek God and be empowered by the Spirit. Are we prepared and ready for spiritual battle?

4. **Jesus spent 40 days of combat preparing for battle with Satan.** Reading verses 1 and 2 again, “**Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit ... was led by the Spirit in the wilderness<sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil.**” Notice verse 2 does not say Jesus was tempted just at the end of the 40 days but during the 40 days. Jesus did battle with the evil one for 40 days while he ate nothing. Jesus' human nature had to deal with the fiery darts of Satan all alone and hungry but he did not give way to this as Israel did in the wilderness with their complaining against God. When their backs were against the sea, Israel cried out, “**Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?**” (Exodus 14:11) Because Jesus did the will of his Father – this is why Satan attacked. Jesus prepared himself for battle and he is God. If you give yourself to the work of God, if you seek the Lord you will be attacked. If you have no spiritual warfare in your life – you might ask yourself, why not? If you discipline yourself to separate from the false reality of the world and embrace the work of the gospel, Satan will spend enormous amounts of energy to destroy you as a soldier of Christ. If one is not sacrificially living for Christ, then they are no threat to Satan and Satan will want that person to live with ease

so they will not seek God.

### **Followers Engage In Battle**

Reading at Luke chapter 4 beginning in verse 3, “The devil said to *Jesus*, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ (*Matthew adds, “but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4 quoting Deuteronomy 8:3*)<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’<sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”’ (*Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:13. Matthew omits verses 6-8*)<sup>9</sup> 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,<sup>10</sup> for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,”<sup>11</sup> and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”’<sup>12</sup> (*Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12*) Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ (*Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16*)<sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.” *Matthew and Mark add, “angels came and ministered to him.” Mt. 4:11 and Mk. 1:13*)

These temptations are relevant to our society this very day. Notice Satan skips over the temptations of murder, adultery, stealing, lying and fornication for these are too obvious and these he leaves to his demons. When Satan wants to attack a person sold out to Christ he uses religion and he makes the Bible his playbook of strategy. See if this does not sound familiar to what you hear in what is called the

Christian Church. If you are a child of God why are you suffering and doing without? If you belong to God he will bless you and give you everything to meet your needs. If you will give to my ministry God will bless you 100 times over. If you are a child of the King claim your blessings! If you are truly saved your life will be filled with blessings beyond count! You must learn to claim your blessings. Have you heard such sayings and others like these? Some things never change. Are not these temptations the same as those Satan used against Jesus? They are just dressed up a little different, but in essence they are the same. In fact, Satan did not want Jesus to suffer in the wilderness. What? You say. Satan was willing to let Jesus have all the glory and authority of a world ruler in order that he would not suffer. Satan offered things to alleviate Jesus' suffering in hope of taking his focus off of the ministry God has called him to. Satan does not want lukewarm Christians to suffer in order that they will worship the things of the world instead of God.

### **The Cost Of Engagement**

Matthew records this very problem. Jesus said to his disciples that he was getting ready to go to Jerusalem where he would suffer and be killed. Peter responds saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." <sup>23</sup> But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." (Matthew 16:22-23) Satan's plan in the wilderness was to keep Jesus from suffering. Why? Because for Jesus to suffer and die meant the beginning of the final destruction of Satan, his hold on mankind was ended and salvation would be available through Jesus. Satan's goal for the church through the centuries and to this very day is to hinder you and me from following Jesus. Jesus says to each believer and to the church, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself

and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (Luke 9:23-25)

Some might be thinking if Satan is real, why are we not seeing more spiritual battle within the church in America? Well, my thought is this, Satan has such a great influence within the church, for the church has material comfort and wealth and it lives in the virtual false reality of society instead of being soldiers of Christ doing battle. So Satan is not going to attack and risk waking up the church and have the church enter the battle. As they say, “Let sleeping dogs lie.” I think the greatest fear of Satan is for the church to spiritually awaken and see true reality as Paul did in his desire for “the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, <sup>20</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.” (Philippians 1:19-22) I say, Awake! Like the watchman on the wall, I am sounding the alarm, “Awake!” The enemy is here! The enemy is among us! Awake! Leave your comfort that has placed you in a stupor. Follow Christ, separate from the virtual reality, the fog Satan has placed in this world. Enter the battle of good verses evil and take captive the enemy by the name of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit and free people from the false reality of this world enabling them to see the true reality of Christ. Christ calls us to battle.