

## Women's Bible Study, May 23, 2025

### Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church

#### Luke chapter 4, part 1

(Notes for verses 1-13 this week:)

#### 1. Luke 4:1-13, The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness

##### a. Purpose of Jesus going into the wilderness to be tempted:

1) "Final episode in the preparation of Jesus for his ministry" (TPB p.41)

a) "full of the Spirit... led by the Spirit" (v.1) -- Luke reminds us of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Baptism (3:21-22) and reinforces the prominent role Luke's Gospel gives to the Spirit. Luke emphasizes the Holy Spirit not only in his Gospel, but also in Acts (where the Spirit is mentioned 57 times). (TLSB 4:1; CSB 4:1)

b) "for forty days" (v.2) -- The forty days and the location (the wilderness/desert) is reminiscent of the forty years and the wilderness in which Israel wandered. His forty days here is for Israel's and for our benefit (as we will see below). Note: "The 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert are the origin of the 40-day period of Lent." (TPB p.42)

c) "being tempted by the devil" (v.2) -- After identifying with sinners in baptism, Jesus then identified with them (with us) in being tempted. (EW 4:2) *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. So let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:15-16).

\* Note: Both "the devil" and "Satan" are used through this account. It is interesting to note that "devil" means "slanderer." (The devil is also called "the tempter" in Matthew 4:3.) And "Satan" is the name given to him (Matthew 4:10), which means "adversary." (TLSB Matthew 4:1)

d) "he was hungry" (v.2) -- We can't imagine the level of that kind of hunger, and the sort of weakness that would cause. (I'd be very prone to cave to temptation under those circumstances!) Yet, while Jesus was hungry, he remained "full of the Spirit" (v.1).

i) It seems that sometimes we experience just the opposite – having full stomachs and empty spirits. (Perhaps it is during "fasting" times in our lives that, while we are weakened in our bodies, the Lord strengthens us in our spirits by His grace...

ii) 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, *"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, ...hardships, ...calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* (Strong in the strength of the Lord alone.)

2) Jesus is our substitute. He resisted temptation and fulfilled the Law for us, we who have failed to resist temptation (Romans 3:23, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*). (30-Minutes in the NT, 1517 podcast, Luke 4:1-37 [Episode 135])

a) Adam & Eve failed. And because they caved to the temptation of the devil in the Garden of Eden (destroying that perfect fellowship they had with God), all people inherited their sin-stained nature and were held in bondage by the devil. (TPB p.41; SG p.14)

i) *"...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."* (Romans 5:12,19, ESV)

ii) *"Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."* (Hebrews 2:14-15, NIV)

iii) Jesus succeeds for our sake. Where Adam & Eve (and all humanity) failed, Jesus (the "second Adam") succeeded in resisting the temptation of the devil in the wilderness. (Wilderness is representative of a fallen world.) The \*second (or last) Adam, who is Jesus, did in a wilderness what the first Adam could not do in a perfect garden. (TLSB 4:2; 30-Minutes in the NT [Episode 135])

\* *"So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living natural being.' The last Adam became a Life-giving spirit"* (1 Corinthians 15:45, EHV).

b) God's chosen people failed. The nation of Israel constantly caved to the temptations of the devil, the world, and their sinful flesh. They failed to love the Lord their God. They were an adulterous, idolatrous people:

1) They followed their own self-seeking desires and chose not to trust in God alone;

2) They went after their own deceitful alluring gods, serving and bowing down before them;

3) They constantly put God to the test.

Note: These three categories of sin are the three that the devil used to tempt Jesus. Satan tried to get Jesus to do the very things that Israel ended up doing all the time. (30-Minutes in the NT [Episode 135])

\* *"We all have gone astray like sheep. Each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has charged all our guilt to Him."* (Isaiah 53:6 EHV)

c) Jesus succeeds for our sake. At each temptation the devil presented to Jesus, Jesus responds by quoting Scripture, from Deuteronomy, the same word that God gave to Israel at the end of their 40 years of wandering through the wilderness, before they entered the promised land. Jesus did in the wilderness what Israel could not do. In resisting all of the temptation of the devil, Jesus became their (and our) perfect Substitute. All this Jesus did for our salvation. (30-Minutes in the NT [Episode 135])

3) Jesus "steadfastly resisted and defeated Satan by using God's Word (see Ephesians 6:17 [the sword of the Spirit])... He knew and applied the Scriptures, showing us how we can overcome all temptations as well." (SG p.14)

"Notice that Satan approached Jesus in the same manner as he did Eve: through the needs of the body [and human desires]. Satan casts doubt on the validity of God's Word or our understanding of it ('Did God actually say?' [Genesis 3:1]). The same happens today... In contrast to Eve (and Adam), however, Jesus resisted Satan's temptation by faithfully applying God's Word." (SG pp.14,81 [#22])

b. vv. 3-4, Temptation of turning stone to bread:

1) What's the devil doing?

a) *"If you are the Son of God..."* -- This means "Since you are the Son of God..."

\* The devil is not casting doubt on Jesus' divine Sonship, but is tempting Him to use His supernatural powers as the Son of God for His own ends. The devil and his minions know full well that Jesus is the Son of God (3:21-22; 4:41). (CSB Matthew 4:3; TLSB Luke 4:3)

b) "...*tell this stone to become bread.*" -- The devil's first temptation attacked a basic need. Ever so subtle he makes it seem harmless and makes it appear to be a necessary need. Jesus, after all, was hungry, and He is God, so He could do this. What could go wrong?

2) Jesus' response: what's Jesus' doing?

a) "*It is written...*" -- This response is repeated by Jesus in verses 8 and 12. Here Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3...

b) "*Man shall not live by bread alone.*" -- Note, that unlike Luke's account, Matthew attributes Jesus with adding the rest of the quote from Deut. 8:3, "...*but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4).

i) Jesus is quoting Moses' explanation concerning the Israelites' hunger in the wilderness in which Moses reminded them of the Lord having provided for them miraculously.

ii) Jesus here did not exhibit His own divine glory by performing a miracle but displayed complete trust in the Word of His Father. (Jesus would have failed in His mission if He had used His divine power selfishly for His own purposes to satisfy His earthly needs. He was much more concerned with fulfilling His Father's purpose for Him and through Him.) (TLSB Matthew 4:4; TPB pp.42-43)

c. vv. 5-8, Temptation of worldly political power in exchange for worship of the devil:

1) What's the devil doing?

a) v.5, "*The Devil led him (Jesus) up to a high mountain...*" -- The devil only seemed to be in charge. Ultimately, it was the Spirit who continued to lead Jesus (v.1). (TLSB Matthew 4:5)

b) Satan's climactic temptation (it's actually the third/final temptation in the chronological listing in Matthew. Luke follows a different order to end this account at the temple in Jerusalem): The devil was permitted to create for Jesus a spiritual vision instantly of "*all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.*" An earthly mountain from which one could see all this does not exist. (The nearest high point likely would have been Hebron in Judea.) (TLSB Matthew 4:8; CSB Luke 4:2)

i) The devil said, *"I will give you all their authority and splendor...if you worship me."*

ii) Though Satan has some dominion in this world (Col.1:13; 1 John 5:19), here he offered things that were not his to give. (TLSB Matthew 4:9) The devil was tempting Jesus to avoid the sufferings of the cross, which Jesus came specifically to endure. This temptation offered an easy shortcut to world dominion. The devil attacked Jesus' destiny as the Messianic King, and is trying to prevent this. If Jesus accepted this, our salvation would be impossible. (CSB Luke 4:7)

## 2) Jesus' response; what's Jesus' doing?

a) *"It is written..."* -- Here Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, where Moses admonished the Israelites to fear, love, and serve the Lord rather than idols when they entered the Promised Land...

b) *"You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only."*

i) As the Son of God, Jesus already had almighty power, which He put aside to take on this humble state so that He could walk the way of the cross. In love, He *"did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* (Philippians 2:6-8).

ii) Jesus did all this for the sake of Adam & Eve, for the sake of Israel, and He did this for our sake, because we, too, fail as Adam & Eve did and as Israel did. Jesus continued to fulfill the requirements necessary to be our Substitute, to redeem us and bring us His righteousness so we can have eternal salvation. (TLSB Matthew 4:1-11)

## d. vv. 9-12, Temptation to jump off the pinnacle of the temple, to test God's faithfulness

### 1) What's the devil doing?

a) The devil sought to overthrow Jesus' previous use of Scripture by quoting Scripture himself... a portion of Psalm 91:11-12. He omits a phrase, though, and takes it out of context, of course. The devil was adept at distorting Scripture and using it for his own purposes. This serves as a warning against those who skillfully misinterpret the Bible. (TLSB Matthew 4:6; TLBSB Luke 4:10-11)

b) Again the devil is most likely wanting Jesus to consider that this would be a great event to attract a crowd of fans, as if to be saying, "Go ahead, Jesus; if You do this, then the Bible promises angels will rescue You, and it will be spectacular self-promotion." And in Satan's scheme of things it would also be testing God's faithfulness. (CSB Luke 4:9; EW Luke 9-11)

## 2) Jesus' response; what's Jesus' doing?

a) "It is written..." -- Jesus met this temptation by quoting Moses' in Deuteronomy 6:16 warning Israel against testing God as they had done at Massah (Exodus 17:2-7). (Jesus would have been guilty of the same sin had He felt it necessary to prove God's power and care by jumping from the temple pinnacle in an attempt to gain personal glory and fame.) (TLSB Matthew 4:7)

b) "...You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

e. v.13, "The devil left him..."

1) In Matthew's account (as the order of the temptations differ from Luke's account) Matthew adds that Jesus exclaimed to the devil, "Be gone, Satan!" (Matt. 4:10) ("Go away, Satan!" [EHV]; "Away from me, Satan!" [NIV])

2) Luke writes that the devil left Jesus "until an opportune time." -- "The devil would continue to work against Jesus from time to time during His ministry (see Mark 8:33), but especially in Gethsemane on the night of His arrest (Luke 22:39-46)." (TLSB Luke 4:13) During all these times Jesus continued to do the Father's will.

3) "We find comfort in the fact that although we do at times give in to the devil, Christ did not. He is our champion; by faith in Jesus, we are assured of the final victory over sin, death and the power of the devil. (TPB p.44)

4) Matthew's (and Mark's) Gospels both mention after the devil left Jesus, that "angels came and were ministering to Him" (Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13). Jesus had refused to relieve His hunger with a miracle earlier. Now, miraculously the angels served Him, probably also with food. (TLSB Matthew 4:11)

f. Note for us today (SG pp.15,81 [#23]):

1) "Satan still tempts people to fall into the very sins with which he tempted Jesus" (SG p. 15 [#23a]), as we know from these few Scripture passages:

a) 1 John 2:15-17 -- *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world-- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions-- is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."*

b) 1 Timothy 6:9-10 -- (Desire for riches, love of money easily lead us to fall into temptations, and often bringing destruction, all sorts of evil, and can cause us to wander from the faith.)

c) Genesis 3:1 (also see 1 Peter 5:8-9) -- (The devil is crafty and a deceiver. He misled Eve and caused her to doubt God's goodness for her. "Did God really say...?" He is our adversary, prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking to devour and destroy. We need to be watchful and resist him, staying firm in faith.)

2) As we learn and grow in God's Word, we are empowered in faith by the Holy Spirit. Through God's living Word we receive the help we need to overcome temptations that come our way. (SG p.81 [#23b])

a) Psalms 119:105 -- *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

b) Colossians 3:16-17 -- *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..."*

c) James 4:7-8 -- *"So, submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you."*

3) While we still struggle with our sin nature this side of Heaven, we never forget that because of Jesus' righteousness and gift of salvation, we are righteous in God's sight, *"holy in HIS sight, without blemish and free from accusation"* (Colossians 1:22; see Colossians 1:21-23). What comfort and assurance this gives us in faith to help us when facing temptations. (Pastor Paul Reede devotional May 15, 2025, short article which I've included at the end of these notes [after "References" listing])

g. Devotional moment: "The Holy Spirit leads Jesus and abides with Him through His temptation, affirming that Jesus truly is the Son of God. The blessed Trinity likewise abides with us, that we may withstand Satan's temptation of our flesh, our pride, and our will. Through Holy Baptism in God's name, we are truly His beloved children." (TLBS Luke 4:1-13)

## **References:**

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom): "Luke: To All Nations" Revised from material by J. M. Weidenschilling with contributions by Robert C. Baker. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "God's Word for Today")

TPB = "The People's Bible (Commentary): Luke" 2nd edition, by Victor H. Prange. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988).

TLSB = The Lutheran Study Bible, English Standard Version, General editor Rev. Edward A. Englbrecht. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Published 2009.

CSB = Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version, General editor Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

30 Minutes in the NT, 1517 podcast, Luke 4:1-37 (Episode 135).

Pastor Paul Reede, *Three Important Words in the Bible: "In His Sight,"* May 15, 2025 devotional, Facebook page. (Note: I've included this short article on the last page of these notes.)

\*EW = \*Enduring Word Bible Commentary, Online, for Luke 4.  
(\*Minor supplemental resource only.)

## **Bible translations used:**

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version

## Three Important Words in the Bible: "In His Sight"

by Pastor Paul Reede, May 15, 2025

"There are three words in the Bible that are so important for understanding your relationship with God. Not realizing their importance has for centuries caused arguments, false teachings, and schism in the church. The 3 words are; IN HIS SIGHT. The Bible in various verses says that IN HIS (God's) SIGHT Christians are :

1. Holy
2. Blameless
3. Without accusation
4. Without blemish
5. Righteous
6. Precious and honored

(Colossians: 1:22 "Holy in HIS sight, without blemish and free from accusation." Ephesians: 1:4 "Holy and blameless in HIS sight.")

The question often comes up; Are Christians sinful or holy?

Many churches teach that we are saved by Jesus but need to add good works to be holy enough for salvation. Other churches teach that God has washed us clean by the blood of Christ and has MADE us holy. So they don't sin, they only make mistakes.

So who is right?

Scripture, as Martin Luther emphasized, teaches that we are simultaneously sinners and saints. But saints or holy only IN GOD'S SIGHT. Why does He see us as holy and perfect? Because Jesus was punished for our sin and we have received the righteousness of Jesus through faith. (justification)

So are Christians holy or sinful?

The answer is yes.

Yes sinful. ("All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God")

Yes holy, "IN GOD'S SIGHT". That's the Good News!

You don't have to be afraid of God. You don't have to be afraid to pray.

You don't have to be afraid to die.

IN HIS SIGHT you are perfect. You are the Apple of His eye!

Psalms 17:8"