

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 23 January 2022
Service:- Across the Diocese
Series: As Luke begins
Title: Jesus was tempted as we are
Passage: Luke 4:1-15
Outline:

1. **Doubt God**
 2. **Test God**
 3. **Abandon God**
-

INTRODUCTION

- No doubt you will have heard this account of the temptation of Jesus many times.
- In fact some of you may remember that we looked at the Matthew version – from Matthew 4 – in the bishop’s sermon series in Lent last year... and some of the material today will be the same or similar...
- **Why** look at it **again?** /
- because we are reminded that in Jesus... we have someone who **knows** us... he knows our **experiences...** knows our **temptations...** he’s not **remote** or **distant...**
- AND – **because** of that – he is able to **help** those being tempted...

Can I remind you of Hebrews 2:17-18 – *[he was made] fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he **might make atonement for the sins of the people.***

That’s such wonderful news isn’t it? – that we have atonement for sin **through Jesus!** //

But there’s **more!**

See the next part of the verse: ***Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*** //

- He’s able to **help** those being **tempted!** //
- Isn’t that **wonderful news too!?**
- And then from Hebrews – chapter 4: *For we do not have a high priest who is **unable** to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been **tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.***
- Tempted in **every** way!!
- So we are reminded that Jesus was a **real person...** he wasn’t some sort of ghost or spirit, but had a **real human existence...** he went from the **womb** to the **tomb** – just as we will – he had the same **physiology** and the same **psychology.** //
- This **Jesus** was a **real man**, facing **real temptation!**
- ...but with one huge difference.... *tempted in every way, just as we are—**yet he did not sin.*** //
- **every** force of evil was **thrown** at him... more than we will **ever know...** and yet he did not **sin...**! //
- now – you’ll remember from last week in Luke ch 3, that Jesus has been **baptised**, the Spirit has **descended** on him... and a voice from heaven said, *“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”.*

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- Well, you'd expect Jesus was on a **high** after that... **this is it!** ...
- "...I've been preparing for this moment for **30 years** – the baptism, the descent of the Spirit was a **great launch** – now – **here we go...!**" //
- And **yet** – and **yet** – **God** has other **plans...** /
- Please look with me at Luke 4:1 – where we read: *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted[a] by the devil.*
- Jesus was **FULL** of the **Holy Spirit...** and then **led BY** the **Holy Spirit**, into the **wilderness...** /
- And in this **unimaginable** place – **sand hills** and outcrops of **limestone everywhere** – Jesus went for **40** days **without food...**!
- And then will you look with me at what Luke tells at the end of v2? *He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.*
- **He was hungry!**
- **Why** tell us **that**?
- In case some people think – well – you know, he's **God** – wouldn't matter if it was **40** days or **400** days... - makes no **difference...** //
- And Luke says – no – no – let's be **clear** – he was **hungry...** //
- **YOU** try going without food for forty days and tell me how **you** feel...!!
- Jesus would have been **gaunt** – he would have been **pale, weak, grey... struggling...** no **energy...** //
- And in that great moment of **weakness**, the evil one **steps** up and says – "I'd like to **talk** to you about a number of **things!**"
- So let's look at the temptations Jesus endured:
The temptation to:
 1. **Doubt God**
 2. **Abandon God**
 3. **Test God**

1. DOUBT GOD

- Have a look with me at v3 – what are Satan's opening words?
- **IF you are the Son of God**
- What had the voice from heaven just **declared**? "**You are my Son**"
- **Immediately** the evil one wants to sow seeds of doubt... just as he did back in the garden... remember the **serpent** to **Eve**? "Did God **really** say??" //
- Jesus goes out into the wilderness and begins a **cosmic struggle** which will end with him on a **Roman cross!** //
- The whole of his life was a conflict between **light** and **darkness** – between **truth** and **error** – between **heaven** and **hell...** //
- "**IF** you are the Son of God..." Satan says.
- Do you have your **doubts** Jesus? //

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- “If you were **really** the Son of God, don’t you think things would be going **better** for you than they are currently?
- “here you are in the **wilderness** with **no food** and **all alone**!
- “My suggestion is that if you really **are** the Son of God you take a stone and tell it to become **bread**!”
- Jesus was being tempted to doubt that his Father **loved** him and **cared** for him... here in the most **devastating** of **circumstances**... **forsaken**... **hungry**...
- **Tempted** to take matters into his own **hands**... //
- “Why put up with this Jesus when with one authoritative **word** you can **change** it!?” //
- How did Jesus **answer**? v4 – *It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone’.* //
- Jesus was not dependent on **bread** for his sustenance – but on **God**...!
- ...on his **Word**... on his **promises**... /
- “He’s led me into this wilderness... he can provide for me and lead me out! I will not do as you say!”
“My Father knew I would be without food... knew that I would be famished... If I was to do as you suggest, it would be an act of **insubordination**... a lack of **faith** towards my **Father**!” //
- Jesus would later say to his disciples... “do not **worry** about what you will **eat** and what you will **drink** and what you will **wear**...” // He learnt this in the **wilderness**!
- Sometimes we are tempted to say to God – “you don’t **know** what I’m going **through**... Look at the **wilderness** my **property** has **become**... look at the **mess** my **life** has **become**... look at how COVID is impacting us all - I’m on my **own**...!”
- And Jesus says – “no you’re **not**...!
- “I know what it’s like to go **without**... to struggle... for **6 weeks**!” ///
- **This** is the Jesus we **meet**...
- He reaches out when we are tempted to **doubt** God... when we feel no one **else** understands... and he says “**I understand**”... /
- If you think no one else has been where you are before... Jesus says “**I’ve** been there... and if you **cling** to **me**... I will be there **with** you...” //
- Are you tempted to doubt God right **now**?

That’s he’s **there**; that he’s for **real**? That he’s **FOR** you? That he knows what you’re **going through**?
- Jesus was **tempted to doubt God**... and **because** he was **without sin**... he is able to **help** those who are being **tempted**. ///
- Well, the **second** temptation was to:

2. ABANDON GOD

- Let’s look at vv5-7 – *The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 If you worship me, it will all be yours.*
- Now – what Jesus was promised... would one day he his in any case – all the kingdoms of the world... you remember what the angel had said to Mary back in ch 1?? - *You will conceive and give birth to a*

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.

- And what Satan is saying here is – abandon God and worship me – and I'll give you all this now... we can take a shortcut and even bypass the cross.
- the temptation we face is to abandon the worship of God and worship someone or something else thinking we'll get some prize which is better than what God can bless us with...
- and notice of course that Satan – the father of lies – cannot be trusted – what he offered Jesus was not his to offer and he could in fact never have delivered on it!
- The **same** temptation comes our way all the **time**.
- To abandon the worship of God for the worship of a substitute who or which offers a promise that cannot in fact be kept!
- That's the **temptation**... and Christ **endured** it... responding with – look with me at v8 "*worship the Lord your God and serve him only!*" ///
- Jesus was **tempted to abandon God**... and because he was **without sin**... he is able to **help** those who are being **tempted!** //
- **Finally** we look at the temptation for Jesus to:

3. TEST GOD

- Have a look with me at v9 – *The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here.*
- The devil quotes from Psalm 91 – that if the Lord is your refuge, then angels will protect you so that you will not be the least hurt...
- Notice again – the **doubt** he tries to cast in Jesus' mind – **IF** you are the Son of God...
- He's saying – "if you are **so** committed to **obeying** God and **trusting** him; why don't know you show how **trusting** you really are by throwing yourself from the pinnacle of the temple!? // You're a man of faith aren't you Jesus??" //
- But Jesus responds with '*don't put the Lord your God to the **test***'. //
- Why **this** response? Jesus had had **no** word from his Father directing him to do a **swan** dive from the **top of the temple!**
- This **wasn't** from **God!** There wasn't to be some sort of **side show trick!**
- Jesus is saying "you're not going to get me to put God to the test... I'm not going to **force** my Father to **act** on my **behalf**..." //
- Jesus would face the same temptation when he was on the **cross**... "**Save yourself**" they would yell at him... "let him save **himself** if he is the **Messiah**..."
- **THEY** wanted Jesus to **show** he is the Messiah by coming **DOWN** from the **cross**...!
- **HE** will show he is Messiah by **REMAINING ON** the **cross**...! ///
- If you **trust** God, you don't need arbitrary **tests** for **God** to see if he's **worthy** of our **trust!**
- You just **trust** him! ///

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- Are you tempted to **test God**?
- To be **reckless** and see if God will **protect** you?
- To abandon **prayer** or reading His **Word** and see if anything **happens**?
- To push the **boundaries** of what is **ethical** or right and see if you get **away** with it?
- Even to sin **boldly** and test if there's a **reaction**? //
- Do you ask him to **keep** you from sin, while all the time exposing yourself to things which will lead you **astray**? //
- Do you ask for the blessing of **health**, while not living **healthily**? //
- Are you tempted to **do** something which would require God to **prove** himself to **you**? //
- Do not put the **Lord** your God to the **test**! //
- He sent his **Son** to die and rise for you – he couldn't be any **more** on **your side** if he **tried**!! //
- And he will **protect** you just as he promised; without **any tests** or **prompts**...
- And even in **illness** that leads to **death**... even should you contract COVID and along with it, complications, he will take you safely **home** into his **presence**...! ////
- Jesus was **tempted to test God**... and because he was **without sin**... he is able to **help** those who are being **tempted**! ////

- Let me close quite **briefly**... /
- Jesus was tempted to
- **Doubt** God
- **Abandon** God
- And, **test** God
- He **endured**... he was tempted in every way as **we** are, yet he remained without **sin**... ///
- And will you notice what happened as Jesus continued to resist?? //
- We read in v13 - *When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him.* ///
- He left him!
- The **brother** of our Lord Jesus, the apostle **James**, assures us of just that in James 4 vv7-8 - **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** AND // ⁸ **Come near to God and he will come near to you.** ///
- Jesus emerges **victorious** /// **despite** all of Satan's **attempts** to overturn the **plans and purposes** of **God**... //
- ...and **friends**; we who **belong** to **Jesus**... are on the side of **victory**...!! //
- **Run** to Jesus when you face **temptation**.
- **Look** to his **example**
- **Draw** from his **strength**...
- And **claim** his **promise**... that he is able to **help** those being tempted... ///

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- To **him** be the **glory!**

Really loved and was inspired as I prepared, by a sermon by Alistair Begg. I have used some words and phrases from that message.