

## Luke 4.1-14 – The Word

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.' "

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' "

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. For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you carefully;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

## Luke 4 explained

Jesus was tempted by the evil one, satan. Jesus was hungry so he was in a weakened state. I get hungry after missing a meal for half an hour, so can't imagine how hungry Jesus was! But we must be very careful as satan often attacks us when we are weak or vulnerable. Maybe you're tired, cold, a bit fed up, lonely, feel unloved, or even when we've just done something amazing for God. (see Elijah in 1 Kings 19 where he got scared of one woman right after he'd called fire down from heaven and defeated all the evil prophets of Baal). Satan knew Jesus was weakened and tried to attack him right at that moment.

But Jesus had a powerful weapon. In different places in the Bible, the Word of God is described as being powerful, like a 2 edged sword, a weapon.. Jesus used the Bible as a weapon to defeat Satan. In a spiritual sense, he slashed the evil one with the sword and sent him packing. Satan tried to get Jesus to do something against the will of God, he offered Jesus power and tempted him. But each time, Jesus responded with the classic words, "It is written.."

How did Jesus know this? Did God implant a microchip into his head that downloaded the whole Old Testament into his memory banks? Nope, sorry. Jesus learned the Word. In Luke 2.40, the Bible says *"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."* Then in Luke 2, they'd all been to Jerusalem for a holiday – the Passover Feast. On the way back, Joseph and Mary thought Jesus was with them but he wasn't. They even looked for Jesus in the wrong place (the people travelling back to Nazareth), rather than Jerusalem, where he was. It took them 3 days..

**Challenge** – how often do we presume Jesus is with us in what we're doing, when he's not. Clearly God is always with us by the Holy Spirit in us but Jesus is not always 'in' what we do! Let's always look for Jesus in everything we do, before we go ahead and do anything! Let's make sure we look for Jesus in the right places too – in the Bible, in prayer and other Godly people. It took Jesus' parents 3 days to find him. It's better that we start out with Jesus, rather than spend time finding him. We must follow Jesus, he doesn't simply follow what we do.

Back to the plot, in Luke 2, Jesus' parents went back to find him. Where was he? In the temple of course – Jesus was studying and learning!

"After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."  
"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them."

Then in Luke 2.52, again we learn that, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." The only way to grow in God is by getting to know him through his Word and this takes time, study and effort. Jesus had learned loads of the Scriptures. We need to do exactly the same thing – memorise the Bible!! As we learn the Word and as it lives in our hearts, we are protected, good things happen, we're encouraged, we can hold on in difficult times, we're changed and we see change around us.

This is what Jesus did when satan attacked him and he won out! We need to do the same whenever we're attacked. The outcome will be the same!

## The Word in 2 Timothy 3.16

There is a story of a Chinese woman who founded a church. Such was the great success of this church, that other churches were formed from this first church. One day something amazing happened – someone brought the woman a complete Bible. You see, the whole church had been founded on John 3.1-21, as that was the only part of the Bible they had. The woman had read this, got saved and gone on to start a church. When a friend was in Rwanda, people travelled for miles to hear the Word of God.

This is the power of the Word!!

In 2 Timothy 3.16, the Amplified Bible says: Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action)

**The lesson is simple: if we want to be filled with God, we need to breathe the same air that God has breathed. The Bible tells us that every Scripture is God-breathed, so if we want to be full of God, we need to be full of the Word.**

2 Timothy 3.16 alone makes it clear that if we know our Bibles (as individuals and as a church), we will be instructed, be convicted of sin, corrected in error, disciplined into obedience, trained in right living and doing things as God does them. If we don't spend time reading and learning, thinking about the Word of God, these things won't happen – we won't get instructed, won't be convicted of sin, won't be obedient, won't live in the right way. So it's incredibly important we do read the Bible and let God speak to us through the Bible.

But we must speak the Word and live the Word. A teacher could have read all the books on discipline, done behaviour management courses, but unless they speak to a class, most classes won't behave well. What the teacher does is to draw on the knowledge and experience they have learnt, and then verbalise it. That way, the message is communicated and there is more chance students will respond!

There is a very simple, yet profound message for us in the way that Jesus answered the evil one. Over 30 years, Jesus had learned the Scriptures, memorizing them and speaking them in daily life. What about us?!!

How can we respond to the trials that come at us, how can we understand what is happening in the world, unless we know the Bible? How can we speak from the Word, if we don't know it? If I was asked to give a talk on hip-hop culture, I would need to read about it, learn about it and immerse myself in the culture. Only when we know the Bible can we speak it.

Romans 10.14-15: How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!

In the same way as people won't hear the good news about Jesus, unless it is spoken to them, so we can't speak and know Bible unless we learn it.

There were several complaints that British troops did not have the proper gear and equipment for operations when they were in Afghanistan. There was no doubt this is true, despite what the MOD said! There may be good reasons, but in many cases, UK troops and pilots don't have the same equipment and protection of their US and Dutch counterparts for example. But if you are not equipped effectively, how can you fight effectively?

So as a person, as a church – what do we do when the enemy comes against us or we suffer hardships in life? Where do we turn for comfort, healing, the way through? Psalm 119:105 – *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* When the enemy came at Jesus, he fought back with the Word. When the enemy comes at you, how will you fight unless you are armed?

**Get into the Word and get the Word into you!!**