

Members Notes #22

Luke 4:1-13

Change these stones into bread!

The Temptation of Christ part 1

TONIGHT'S PURPOSE: In this first of a three part series on the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, we want to learn that our self-preservation "instinct" can hinder trusting God during times of intense testing and cause us to get a bad attitude or worse; take matters too much into our own hands and make a mess of things.

The "wilderness" setting is clearly intended to bring to mind the parallel situation of the nation of Israel which wandered in the wilderness. Israel was in the wilderness 40 years, even as our Lord was in the wilderness for 40 days. Israel hungered even as our Lord did. In both cases God was testing man. In the case of Israel, they also put God to the test, demanding to be fed, and sometimes threatening to return to Egypt. Our Lord is the antitype¹ of Israel (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15), fulfilling the will of God where Israel failed. Jesus deals with His situation in the light of God's Word.

Change These Stones into Bread

On the surface, it might seem that Satan was advocating self-indulgence here but if that were the case, he would have called for "steak and lobster," not mere bread. Bread was a basic essential of life, not a luxurious food item. It is not self-indulgence then, it is self-preservation, which Satan is seeking to persuade our Lord to accomplish through His divine power. Jesus had the potential to starve to death and He needed to trust that the Father would help him. After the temptation Jesus' trust paid off with the Father sending Angels to minister to him as told in the parallel passages in Matthew 4 and Mark 1. Self-preservation is a basic human instinct, but also one that is often contrary to trust in God. Throughout the Bible men got themselves into trouble by trying to save their own "necks" for instance Abraham, in an effort to save his life, twice put his wife in the position to have been sexually violated (Gen 12, 20). His son Isaac did the same to his wife in a woeful attempt to save himself (Genesis 26).

Q1 Self-preservation is a strong instinct whether it be our physical life, job, reputation or financial security. God uses "death" or "near death" of these four areas as well as deprivation experiences to test our faith. The verse which immediately precedes the words cited by Jesus, "And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has lead you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not" (Deut. 8:2). Many times God took the children of Israel to the brink of disaster to test them. Just before He was going to bail them out, they would blow it by _____ instead _____ for the solution.

¹ Antitype = One that is foreshadowed by or identified with an earlier symbol or type, such as a figure in the New Testament who has a counterpart in the Old Testament.

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Have you ever gone through a time where you have a death or near death experience in the area of job, reputation, financial security or relationships?

Did you whinge, complain and fret?

Were you tempted to do something ungodly in order to “save” yourself or the situation?

A1

Testing through deprivation and “death experiences” is often God’s preparation for future blessing and promotions. In Deuteronomy God is referring to the lessons that God has taught Israel in order to prepare her for the blessings of the land. If Satan was subtly suggesting that hunger was inconsistent with divine presence and blessing, Jesus knew from Deuteronomy that it was the evidence of divine love and care, in preparation for blessing. God made it abundantly clear to Israel that when they complained about their circumstances, they ultimately complained against _____, for it was He who led them.

Q2 What do you think the root problems might be that would cause us to fall to these kinds of temptations?

A2 The only motive for turning the stone into bread would have been _____ regarding the Father’s goodness (wanting the best for me) and the His power (the ability to deliver what’s best for me). Ultimately, the only reason for Jesus to give in to the temptation (turning the stone into bread) would have been unbelief—distrust of the Father’s care, of His goodness and of His divine ability. It has been said that unbelief is the _____ of most, if not all, disobedience. Satan caused Adam and Eve to doubt God’s goodness and to disbelieve His word concerning judgment for eating of the forbidden fruit. Israel grumbled against God in the wilderness and demanded that God prove Himself because they doubted His goodness and abilities.

SUMMARY

Jesus was trusting that the Father would come through for Him and He wouldn’t die of starvation. Maybe he had the same attitude as the three Hebrew Children who were about to be thrown into the fiery furnace. They were believing that God would save them but their attitude was that even if God didn’t deliver them, He was still worthy of their loyalty (Daniel 3). Jesus victory over the 1st temptation shows us that our dying to the “right” of self-preservation in all areas of life is the way to victory. The Bible teaches that we must daily “take up our cross” (Luke 9:23), that is, we must die to self-will and self-interest. The way of life is death to self. It is the way of the _____.

WORKS TIME

Remember to pull out your *Book of Life*. Ask “what’s new with your Oikos?”

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Don’t forget make your announcements)

- Don’t forget to signup for church Camp 2011 “A Fresh Encounter” at the Welcome Desk this Sunday.
- Next Spiritual parenting seminar Six hours spread over 2 Saturdays August 27th and September 3rd. 9:00AM – 12:30. Spiritual parenting is foundational to the life of ACF. We’re believing that 100% of the congregation will be Book of Life carrying spiritual parents.