

The Gospel of Luke 4:1-13 | Temptation

Discussion for week of March 7,, 2021

the gospel according to

LUKE

Begin with Prayer

Beginning with silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time. Consider Mary's prayer: **"I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled"** (Luke 1:38).

Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a few minutes to briefly check in with one another. Suggestions:

- *It's been a year since COVID-19 turned our lives upside down. What is one lesson you believe God has taught you through the pandemic?*

Listening to God's Word

Jesus' first apprentices knew something about falling into temptation (see Luke 22:40). Later in his life, the apostle John wrote about how the world claims to satisfy our physical cravings (pleasure), our desire for the approval of others (praise), and our obsession with getting our own way (power - see 1 John 2:16). We may think that our challenges with these temptations are unique to us, but the apostle Paul wrote, "If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different than what others experience" (1 Corinthians 10:12-13a). So where do we go for help? Is there anyone who knows how to overcome temptation? Scripture would point us to Jesus, "for he faced the same testings we do, yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Today, we get to observe Jesus as he goes toe-to-toe with the enemy of all humanity, and stands firm.

Option I: Lectio Divina

Leader: Slowly lead your group through this meditative exercise. DO NOT RUSH. Leave a few periods of silence (i.e. >30 sec) *between each sentence* of these instructions. Before you begin, have the group open their Bibles to **Luke 4:1-11**.

1. **Ready:** Spend a few moments in silence. Let it be long enough to let your mind, breathing and heart rate slow down. Pray silently and simply, in 2-3 words expressing your desire to hear from God. (~ 2 minutes)
2. **Read:** Have someone read **Luke 4:1-11** slowly, out loud. (~ 3 minutes)
3. **Ruminate:** Individually, silently, slowly and prayerfully re-read the text. (~ 10 minutes for this section)
 - *What word, phrase, image or character catches your attention?*
 - When something in the passage catches your attention, ask God: "Why do you want me to hear those words?"
 - Then be still and listen. *What ideas, memories, hopes, faces, feelings emerge?*
 - When something comes to mind, ask God: "Why did you want me to pay attention to this Scripture and these thoughts/feelings?"
 - Then be still and listen. *What insight (idea, feeling, principle) emerges?*

Pause to Share: *Invite all to briefly share what they heard in this time.*

4. **Respond:** Invite each person, if they are comfortable, to express a brief prayer of response to the insight they sensed – ex. thanksgiving, praise, confession, repentance, request, desire, love.
5. **Rest:** Sit silently in the quiet. Feel God's loving gaze on you. He is happy to be with you. (~2 minutes) Close with a simple, "Amen."

Option 2: Small Group Discussion

Read **Luke 4:1-11** twice. Then discuss together:

- **What is your first thought when you read through this passage?**
- *Why was the Holy Spirit's first ministry assignment for Jesus time in the wilderness? What was being "tested"?*
 - **Clue:** The Scriptures that Jesus appealed to were all from Deuteronomy (8:3, 6:13,16). This was the history-reviewing, covenant-renewing teaching that Moses delivered as wilderness-weary Israel got ready to establish a new kingdom centred on Yahweh. *What does this tell us about what God is about to do through Jesus? Why is it important for Jesus to do this?*
- Reflect on each of these three "archetypal" temptations. *In your own words, what real-life testings in our lives do these three temptations represent?*
- *Why do you think Jesus used these Scriptures to defend against the devil's challenge?*
- *What can Jesus' strategy for resisting the devil's temptations teach us about being prepared for our own testings?*
- *What are the costs of enabling or falling to these temptations, especially for Christians?*
- *How do you experience the temptations Jesus faced in your life (private, family, work, leisure, etc.)?*
- **Read Hebrews 4:14-16.** *Why is Jesus uniquely qualified to help us in times of temptation? How do we receive his help?*
- **How is God speaking to you in this Scripture? How do you intend to respond?**

Resisting Temptation – Confessing Sin

James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (NLT). We are often most vulnerable when we are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired (HALT), and thus somewhat self-absorbed. An important way to combat the power of the enemy's temptation is by inviting others to help us.

- Currently, who are the 2-3 people with whom you have the ability to bring into the light the temptations you typically face and sometimes fail to beat?
- If you don't have anyone like this, why not? How does this make you more vulnerable? Is there anything you're afraid to bring out into the light? Compare the true cost of hiding it with the true cost of bringing it into the light and getting help.

One of NLCC's key strategies in developing these kinds of relationships is the idea of an Apprentice Group. You can find more information about starting an Apprentice Group by visiting www.nlcc.ca/agroups.

- If you have not connected with your A-Group recently, schedule a connection.
- If you aren't part of an A-Group, prayerfully consider who to ask to form one with you.

Caring for One Another

- *What help do you need to overcome anticipated challenges in doing this practice?*
- *Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?*

Using **Luke 1:38** or **the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.