

Luke 4A

- One day many, many years ago – in just a brief moment – all of history was both changed and established by the choice of one man
 - a very real man, a man who lived in perfect surroundings
 - His name was “earth,” pronounced Adam in Hebrew
 - And without provocation, without threat or temptation, he made a simple decision – a decision to disobey the only authority he knew, breaking the only prohibition he had ever been given
 - And when he did, thousands of years of misery, suffering and death were immediately set in motion
- And the God who gave Adam that freedom could have judged his mistake at the very moment
 - But there was only one penalty possible for Adam’s mistake
 - Adam brought sin into his body, and that body would forever contain sin within it, so it could never again be in God’s presence
 - And to make matters worse, God had directed Adam to be fruitful and multiply
 - And because all his descendents must share in the nature of Adam, all men would share the same condemnation
 - So the only penalty God could employ was eternal separation for all mankind – eternal death
 - But God did not desire to see mankind suffer that penalty, though they deserved it
 - So He chose to respond with a plan of that can only be described as amazing grace
 - God would start the human race again – through a new Adam, but this new Adam would not fail in the way the first did
 - And God would allow this new Adam to multiply as well

- And His descendents would share in his perfect nature rather than in the nature of the first Adam
 - This new line of humanity would be able to enter God's presence since it was born of a perfect, sinless man
 - These would be God's adopted children by faith
- Jesus was sent to Earth to be that second Adam – the one who not repeat the mistakes of the first Adam but rather obey His Father in all things
 - And we would be His children, the ones who could be born again, separating us forever from our earthly father Adam
 - And giving us a new birth in Christ,
 - That brings us to our passage for today...

[Luke 4:1](#) ¶ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

[Luke 4:2](#) for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

[Luke 4:3](#) And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

[Luke 4:4](#) And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

[Luke 4:5](#) ¶ And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

[Luke 4:6](#) And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

[Luke 4:7](#) "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

[Luke 4:8](#) Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

[Luke 4:9](#) ¶ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

[Luke 4:10](#) for it is written,

'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,'

[Luke 4:11](#) and,

'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP,

SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

[Luke 4:12](#) And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

[Luke 4:13](#) ¶ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

- In the last chapter of Luke, we witnessed the Spirit descend on Jesus to anoint Him for His earthly ministry
 - We said last week that He was so much a man that He shared the limitations of a man
 - He felt the emotions of a man, the temptations of the flesh, and knew the compelling nature of physical pain
 - He was also limited by His physical nature in that He relied on the Spirit to guide Him, comfort Him, strengthen Him and even provide Him with the supernatural insight to know men's hearts and to know the Father's will
 - So at the beginning of Luke's 4th chapter, Jesus is following the leading of the Spirit to enter into the wilderness and wander for 40 days
 - As the text tells us, Jesus ate nothing during that time, which we know would put a man near the end of his ability to survive
 - During this time as well, Jesus was encountering temptation by the devil
 - This was in addition to the three tests presented to Jesus later in the text
 - In Mark's account of this same scene, we are told that Jesus was tempted by Satan throughout the 40 day period, leaving the three specific incidents to the end
 - We don't know what kind of temptation Jesus was suffering through, but I imagine it was designed to probe His every weakness as a man
- Since we know that the Spirit was responsible for leading Jesus to this place, it raises a number of questions for us
 - First, why put Jesus through these temptations? In fact, why tempt Him at all?
 - As we listen to the story in Luke, we can't help but notice some interesting parallels to the past

- For example, wandering in the desert for a period of 40 days seems remarkably similar to the Israelite's 40 years of wandering in the desert
- And the temptation to eat in the face of hunger also seems to connect Jesus' circumstances to the temptation in the garden to eat the forbidden fruit
- Is God trying to show us something here – well, most certainly
- First, let's take note of the entire scene provided by Luke and appreciate Jesus situation
 - After 40 days, Jesus is at His lowest point
 - Without the strength of the Spirit, He probably couldn't even stand
 - If you've ever experienced real hunger, perhaps in a fast or in wilderness training, then you might understand a little of what Jesus was experiencing
 - In my experience, I've fasted – no food only water – for 24 hours on many occasions, but I took it to 48 hours on one occasion
 - The hunger pangs has subsided mostly, but I felt very weak and fatigued
 - I couldn't concentrate easily or think clearly at times
 - On the morning of the third day, I woke up stood up and nearly fell over
 - In my days in the military, I experienced a week of food deprivation, where I had only a couple of meals during that time,
 - I remember spending most of my waking hours thinking about and searching for food
 - As I sat with friends we talked about what we would eat when we got back – describing in detail the toppings on that pizza
 - You can't appreciate the way your body will focus all thought and attention on food as it begins to starve

- Hunger is quite a test of the will over the flesh – more than any other test you can devise
- When scripture speaks of crucifying the flesh, it's talking about this struggle – the struggle to resist what the body will want by its nature and to listen to what the Spirit directs
 - Scripture tells us that the struggles of living a godly life come down to a fight within us between the sinful body we still occupy, and the new Spirit we've been given by God
 - And it is a fight...one we can win but we have to make an effort to train ourselves – this isn't magic – this is hard work
- Paul uses the comparison to an Olympic race to explain how we should do this

[1Cor. 9:24](#) ¶ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

[1Cor. 9:25](#) Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

[1Cor. 9:26](#) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

[1Cor. 9:27](#) but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

- Paul uses a wonderful analogy – a sports analogy
 - When runners race, they know that the person who finishes in second place is called a loser
 - Only first place is considered the winner
 - And to ensure they reach the finish line first, the sensible athlete works hard before the race to discipline the body – to make it respond to the athletes will
 - The body is not naturally lean and strong, fast and able to burn oxygen easily
 - Those traits don't come naturally
 - The natural body is slow, lazy, soft and out of shape
 - Paul's analogy works in a spiritual context too, though

- If we expect to win all our spiritual battles merely by desire, merely by wishing and hoping – then we’re being just as unrealistic as that athlete who thinks wishing will get the job done
 - There is a training process – and not just a training of the mind (Bible studies, prayer life, etc.)
 - Paul says he disciplined his body, because there was a war underway between the spirit and the body and he was determined not to let the body’s desires get in the way of him winning the race he was running – to win an eternal crown
- So by delivering Jesus over to this harsh, almost exaggerated time of bodily discipline – a 40-day fast – The Father was placing Jesus in a position where His reliance on the Father and the Father’s Spirit was clearly evident – it was undeniable
 - Jesus’ body – though it had no sin – it still had normal fleshly desire for food – but even in that Jesus disciplined his body to obey His spirit
 - Our culture – including our church culture has lost an appreciation for the connection between a regular discipline over the desires of the body and our spiritual walk as a Christian
 - Hear Paul’s words again:

[Gal. 5:16](#) ¶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. [Gal. 5:17](#) For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

[Gal. 5:18](#) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

[Gal. 5:19](#) Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

[Gal. 5:20](#) idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

[Gal. 5:21](#) envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[Gal. 5:22](#) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

[Gal. 5:23](#) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

[Gal. 5:24](#) Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

[Gal. 5:25](#) ¶ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

- So we can understand the Father's desire to place Jesus in a place of deprivation and require Him to display amazing self-control, especially in the face of Satan's temptations
 - He was demonstrating His willingness to rely entirely on the Spirit rather than satisfy the urges of the flesh – which is the struggle of every believer of all time
 - But Paul also says that this struggle as it plays out for Jesus is intentionally designed to compare with the experiences of the Jewish nation in the desert
- From the earlier passage in 1Cor, I ended at the conclusion of Chap 9, but listen to what Paul says in the very next verses in Chap 10:

[1Cor. 10:1](#) ¶ For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;

[1Cor. 10:2](#) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

[1Cor. 10:3](#) and all ate the same spiritual food;

[1Cor. 10:4](#) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

[1Cor. 10:5](#) Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

[1Cor. 10:6](#) ¶ Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

- Jesus' time in the desert is intended to evoke a memory of the Jews in the desert on the issue of temptation
 - In fact when we look at the three specific temptations taught by Luke, we see lessons that connected with the Jewish people in the wilderness
 - For example, in Exodus, God calls Israel His Son, His firstborn when speaking to Pharaoh – just as Jesus is God's Son
 - God has often used periods of 40 for testing or trial
 - Like Noah in the ark, Moses who fasted for 40 days in the desert himself, and of course the Jews who wandered for 40 years in the desert

- Jesus' period in the desert also includes temptation, just as Israel experienced temptation in the desert, but we need to remember that though God will test us, James 1:3 tells us that He never tempts us
 - In fact, it is man who tests and tempts God to action in the face of our disobedience
 - But Temptation is the calling card of Satan
- Jesus' first temptation from Satan was over the issue of food
 - Naturally, Satan was going to attack at Jesus' weakest point
 - And Satan uses an old trick, one he has used ever since the garden
- Satan begins by tempting Jesus to use His supernatural power to turn stones into bread, something that only the Son of God could do
 - Satan is actually appealing to Jesus' flesh on two levels
 - First, he obviously is trying to get Jesus to break His fast – the fast that the Spirit has directed Him to undergo – by making for himself food
 - The way it's worded leaves us with the impression that Satan is asking Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God
 - But the statement in the Greek in verse 3 is expressed in the first class condition (You are the Son of God, therefore tell these stones...)
 - If Satan had been in doubt, the Greek phrase would have communicated uncertainty – something closer to “If you were the Son of God, you could tell these stones...”
 - The point here is that Satan is not only appealing to Jesus' need for food, he is also seeking to enflame Jesus' pride
 - You are the Son of God – you don't' need to suffer like this
 - You could make your own food anytime
 - Satan is trying to place some doubt in Jesus' mind over the Father's love by the fact that Jesus is being deprived of His honor

- This is the old ploy of pride, the same one he used on woman
 - And the same one the Jews in the desert experienced
- God reminded the Israelites of how He gave them a similar test while they were in the desert

[Deut. 8:3](#) “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

- God humbled the Jews and allowed them to be hungry
 - Then He provided a food that no man before had ever known
 - A perfect food from God, so that they might understand how absolutely dependent they were on Him – so much that their very lives came from him and not from the bread they make for themselves
- But remember how they responded back in that day

[Num. 11:4](#) ¶ The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat?”

[Num. 11:5](#) “We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

[Num. 11:6](#) but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.”

[Num. 11:18](#) “Say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, “Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt.” Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat.

[Num. 11:19](#) ‘You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days,

[Num. 11:20](#) but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?””

- The Israelites mistakes were instigated by greedy desires – but it can also be translated as lustful desires – sinful in other words
 - They rejected God by the nature of their grumbling

- It wasn't just complaining, but rather it revealed a heart that didn't trust or love the Lord – an unbelieving heart
- Similarly, had Jesus given in to Satan's trick and satisfied his own greedy desires, He would have been denying the sufficiency of God – but He wouldn't do that
 - Jesus quotes Deut 8:3 which we read earlier – further demonstrating the connection between His experience here and the one the Jews had in the desert
- Satan doesn't give up, of course
 - He next appeals to Jesus in a new way
 - He takes Jesus – how we aren't sure – but he places him at a vantage point where He can see all the world's kingdoms
 - And he promises Jesus He can have all that He sees
 - This is an interesting offer, isn't it?
 - Specifically, Satan says that all that Jesus sees belongs to Satan – it was handed over to him – and he can give it to whom he pleases
 - Is he lying again?
- Not exactly. When Adam sinned, he lost dominion over this world
 - Hebrews tells us that through fear of death, which was introduced because of sin – Satan has control over all unbelievers in this world
 - Paul even calls Satan the prince of the power of the air
 - And Satan could give Jesus that same power if He only agreed to Satan's terms – to worship Him rather than the Father
- This is a powerful temptation for Jesus – probably more so than you may realize
 - Because at first you might assume that Jesus would have no interest in this offer
 - Why would Jesus even consider such an offer by Satan

- Because Jesus had come to earth to gain exactly what Satan was offering
- Jesus came to redeem, to purchase, to gain control over the world
- But the Father's plan for how He would obtain those things involved an excruciatingly painful torture and death before Jesus would inherit His kingdom
- Satan was offering the world to Jesus without need for any of the suffering – and Jesus' flesh must have cried out for the opportunity to save itself from that suffering
- Jesus responds with words from Deut spoken to the nation of Israel
 - Jesus' choice of scripture reflects another poor episode in the history of that nation
 - God warns the nation to seek after Him alone, and not to mix with the people they find in the land
 - He tells them that these ungodly people will pollute them and draw them away into idol worship – to worship Baal, Satan himself
 - Of course, Israel ignores the warning and they fall just as God warned
 - Likewise, we so often are drawn away in a kind of worship of the ungodly culture around us too
 - Satan uses the appeal of the ungodly world to pull us toward other idols – thing we are willing to put our trust in rather than the Lord
 - And while as Christians we have the Spirit to prevent us from straying to the point of unbelief, we can still suffer many of the same penalties of living a life devoted to pursuing things that are not of God
- Finally, Satan must give one last try to bring Jesus down – to corrupt Him
 - Satan again moves Jesus to the top of the temple, probably 60-80 feet overlooking the temple mount

- This Satan tries to use Jesus adherence to scripture against Him
- He quotes Psalms 91, a Messianic psalm speaking of the coming Christ
 - The psalm declares that the Father will always care for His Son to ensure He is able to complete His assigned mission
 - He takes scripture and misuses it in an attempt to give his cause legitimacy
 - He doesn't need scripture, necessarily, but his goal is always the same – twist truth into a lie, as he is the father of lies
 - And when he is dealing with someone who respects the authority of scripture, then it will be scripture that he uses to make his case
 - Of course, Satan appears to be using scripture appropriately, but in fact He is misusing scripture
 - The psalm declares that the Father will ensure that the Son will not fail in anything He has come to do
 - And it says that the Father will protect the Son in this way because of His love and obedience

[Psa. 91:14](#) ¶ “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him *securely* on high, because he has known My name.

- So, ironically, if Jesus had followed Satan, he would have been contradicting scripture and therefore, He would not have been obeying and loving the Father
 - And so the Father would not have upheld Him
- But of course, none of those “ifs” were to happen
 - Jesus responded to Satan and to us that we are not to test God to prove that he will keep His promises
 - Jesus again quotes Deut 6

[Deut. 6:16](#) ¶ “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

- And here we see Jesus making another reference to the Jews experiences in the desert
- The Jews tested God when they were thirsty and found no water
 - Though God was prepared to provide it as He had in the past, they continued to grumble and question His faithfulness
 - Through their complaints they essentially declared that God could not be trusted
 - The story is in Numbers, but Psalms 95 summarizes it succinctly

[Psa. 95:6](#) ¶ Come, let us worship and bow down,
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

[Psa. 95:7](#) For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.
Today, if you would hear His voice,

[Psa. 95:8](#) Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

[Psa. 95:9](#) “When your fathers tested Me,
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.

[Psa. 95:10](#) “For forty years I loathed *that* generation,
And said they are a people who err in their heart,
And they do not know My ways.

[Psa. 95:11](#) “Therefore I swore in My anger,
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”

- When we begin to insist that God give us proof that we can trust Him, we anger Him
 - We are provoking Him, because we are showing a lack of faith and we are forgetting who we are and who God is
 - Jesus wasn't about to show a lack of faith or to anger God
 - And so Satan failed again
 - Jesus had endured 40 days of physical trial and then constant temptation by the enemy, and He showed himself worthy to be the new Adam

[Rom. 5:19](#) For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

- Now Satan withdrew, because he decided his best hope was to bring Christ down through evil men
 - Of course little did he know that Jesus' death was all a part of God's plan
 - And that even in going to the cross, Jesus was demonstrating the greatest of obedience to the Father
- And consider the lengths the Father went to demonstrate the superiority of His Son over the first Adam
 - Adam lived in ideal conditions, without deprivation
 - Adam had only one rule to follow
 - Adam was never tempted by Satan, he only had a simple offer to eat what his wife gave him
 - And Adam couldn't obey
- Jesus endured a very different test
 - He was starved nearly to death
 - He was surrounded by harsh conditions
 - He was constantly tempted by Satan
 - His obedience required the greatest of efforts
 - And He couldn't disobey
- And now it's our turn
 - We can't tell God that our test is too difficult
 - That we are facing physical conditions too difficult to overcome
 - That our circumstances in life make obedience impossible
 - That we face unreasonable temptations
 - That the devil made us do it

- That our effort isn't able to match the test
- That we can't obey
- Because our Lord has been there before us
- And the same Spirit that gave him strength through his ordeals is in each of us
 - And if we are willing to discipline the body, then we can be led by the Spirit as He was