

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 14th February 2016

LENT ONE – FAITH AND TEMPTATION

As we Gather

Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah, but the people misunderstood their own religion. They worshiped the righteousness of the Law and so rejected their Saviour / the righteousness of faith (Isaiah 29:13 + 16 Romans 10:1-4 + 8b-13)

Reading Scripture **LUKE 4 : 1 – 13**

Thinking Together

The Holy Spirit does not always lead us 'beside still waters'. Sometimes He leads us into difficult situations / desert places; but believers focus on God, His Word, His promises and His blessings (Deuteronomy 26:7-11 Psalm 91:9-16 Matthew 6:13).

When a child of God is in the will of God, that child can claim the Father's protection and care (Psalm 91:1-2).

What is the history of your relationship with God? Discuss

List God's blessings that are your source of encouragement and strength? Discuss

Jesus' temptation in the desert was the most important of all the milestones in His life

- His realisation in the Temple at the age of 12 that God was His Father in a unique way
- The coming of John and God's approval of Him after His baptism by John
- Now the Holy Spirit leading Him into the desert to commune with God and choose the method He was going to use in His ministry to reconcile people with / to God
 - = rejection of power and glory (reliance on faith / trust and hope)
 - = acceptance of suffering and the cross (the way of love)

Even at this time Jesus must have been aware / conscious of having exceptional powers.

From the Luke reading, what was Jesus' relationship with God? Discuss

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted? Discuss
(see Hebrews 2:16-18 & 4:14-16 Romans 5:12-20)

Often temptation comes after a spiritual or ministry high point (1Kings 18:2a-9 Luke 9:37-40). Always when we are vulnerable / our guard is down, Satan will use our weakness / strength in subtle ways. Very often what the temptation is, in itself, is not wrong, but the motive behind the act is wrong. To know and obey God's word is an effective weapon against temptation (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Satan tries to tempt us to doubt Christ's true identity.

- In Jesus' first temptation the Devil suggested that He use His divine power for His own benefit (disobedience to God)
 - if God supplied manna (bread) to the people, why could Jesus not turn stones into bread in order to feed His hunger
 - Jesus should bribe people with material gifts to follow Him.

Satan's motivation was to separate the physical from the spiritual (1 Peter 2:2-3).

If we label areas of our lives (physical, spiritual, financial, material) we leave God out of some areas.
God / Christ must be first in everything (1 Corinthians 10:31).

What is the task of the Church in bringing people to Jesus? Discuss
(see **Matthew 16:24-26** **Revelation 5:8-10**)

- Secondly, Satan suggested that Jesus should enjoy the glory of the world without the suffering of the cross. He should compromise, and he, Satan would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him, Satan, just once. Satan has always wanted to receive worship – to take Gods place (Isaiah 14:12-15).

We suffer the constant temptation to compromise Jesus' standards / values with those of the world.

Jesus knew that what we worship, we serve (John 12:23-33).

What are your compromises / your idols? Discuss

- Finally, Satan questioned the Father's faithfulness when he tempted Jesus to jump from the Temple. He suggested that Jesus should give the people displays of His power.

Sensationalism does not last. Service and suffering lead to the cross which results in the crown of glory. When faced with temptation we have access to the same spiritual resources that Jesus had

What are these spiritual resources? Discuss
(see **Luke 3:22-23** **Luke 4:1 + 4a**)

In Closing

Temptation is Satan's weapon to bring out the worst in us / to defeat us. God uses different experiences / temptations as the tool to put the best in us / build us up (James 1:1-8 + 13-17).

Jesus balanced Scripture with Scripture to get the total expression of God's will. False cults / teachers isolate verses from their context to prove what they want their listeners to hear / know (Romans 10:17)

PRAYER

God of wilderness and water, your Son was baptised and tempted as we are,
Strengthen us to persevere as we embrace the struggles of life on the way to
the cross, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen