

Sunday 6th March 2022

First Sunday of Lent



Our Gospel reading this week is about what Jesus did after his Baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, when a voice had confirmed that he was God's Son. Jesus needed time and space to think about how he should proclaim his message of God's love, so he retreated into the desert wilderness.

Luke tells the story of what happened next. You can listen to the reading, or read it in today's Order of Service.

The voice of temptation is at work in Jesus, as he considers how to approach his ministry. We hear how he overcomes three temptations.

Firstly, after 40 days without food, Jesus was absolutely starving. Anything was going to look to him like something to eat...even the stones on the ground. They reminded him of bread and he knew that he could misuse the power he had to turn the stones into bread, to satisfy his own hunger. Did he do this? No. Jesus knew that, as humans, we need more than physical food to live. His message would be that we need emotional and spiritual nourishment too. We need the love of God, found in God's Word – the Scriptures. Jesus knew the Scriptures well and was able to use the Word of God to resist this temptation:

"One does not live by bread alone."

Wandering in the desert, hungry and alone, Jesus came to a high place, where he could see for miles. It was as if he could see all the nations of the world laid out before him. Jesus knew that, if he chose a bad way of being a leader, worshipping power, bullying people and serving the forces of evil, he could rule over many people.

Again, his knowledge of the Scriptures helped him to do what was right:

“Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”

Jesus knew he had the power to do all sorts of things that would prove just who he was. He imagined himself right at the top of the Temple and knew that, if he threw himself off, God would protect him. After all, it said so in the Scriptures!

“He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you”, and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”

But Jesus knew that testing whether God would save him would be wrong and wasn't the right way to bring people to God.

He recalled another verse:

“Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Jesus finished his time in the desert without giving in to the temptation to do things the human way. He would go about his ministry in God's way.

We can learn from Jesus about doing things the heavenly way, rather than the earthly way. We are all human, but when we are tempted to do things we know are wrong, we can ask for God's help.

We keep the 40 days of Lent to try and grow closer to God ourselves, as we prepare for Easter. Many people learn more about God during this time by reading the Bible and spending time in prayer.

 What will you do?

 How about:

Learning the three Scripture quotations in red above, to remind you of the temptations of Jesus?

Reading the story of Jesus in your Bible during Lent? You can find this in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You might find the Gospel of Mark shorter and most fun to read!

Trying to spend a short time every day talking to and listening to God (clue: we have two ears and only one mouth, because we learn more when we listen!)

🙏 A prayer for this first week of Lent:
 Father God, help us to turn to you and to your Word when we are
 tempted to do things that are wrong which might hurt others. Amen.

BibleWise

Jesus Begins His Ministry
 —Luke 3, 4

Wilderness Maze

After Jesus was baptized, He went into the wilderness for 40 days. There, the devil tempted Him three times, but Jesus did not give in.

Find the path that takes Jesus through the devil's temptations and out into the world to begin His ministry. Write the words you find along the path in order on the lines below to find two responses Jesus made to Satan.

(Luke 4:8, 12)

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A picture to colour:

