

Jan 21/24 – Small Groups - Luke 4:1-15 “Good Fruits of Temptation”

Read Luke 4:1-15; Deuteronomy 7:6-9; 8:1-3

1. What are the connections between Luke 4 and Israel’s time in the desert? (Consider both the Deuteronomy reading and what your group knows of the episode in the life of Israel). What do you think Luke, the Holy Spirit, is desirous to show us with these connections?

The Greek word that is here translated temptation is the word *peirasmos*. It is used to refer to the challenging life circumstance that can either be a test, that is proving one’s character and in so doing improving it. It can also be a temptation, enticing a person to sin, dragging them down in some way. Whether the *peirasmos* is test or temptation depends on who is behind it, and our response to it.

2. We pray into this reality every single Sunday. In the Lord’s prayer we pray – “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (the evil one)” In this we are praying: Lord, as I navigate the *peirasmos*, the circumstances of life, may they be used by the Spirit to test, to prove and improve my character. Let it not be used by the devil to tempt me, to entice me to sin, to drag me down in some way. Discuss.
3. Can you think of a situation in your life that depending on your response is either test or temptation?
4. As we seek to live into the new life Jesus has won for us, as we live into the patterns of the kingdom, we’re going to have to deal with three things – the world, the flesh, and the devil. How do each of these pull us away from the way of Jesus?

The last thing that Jesus heard from his father was – “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased”. These phrases are quotations from scripture. ‘This is my beloved son’ is a quote from Psalm 2 that speaks of a messianic King who will rule over the earth with peace and justice. ‘In whom I am well pleased’ is a quote from Isaiah 42, where Isaiah is beginning to speak of the suffering servant who will be bruised for our iniquities, crushed for our transgression, who by his wounds we are healed. He is being commissioned as Messianic King and suffering servant. The one who will bring about a kingdom of justice and peace by way of laying down his life for the sake of others.

5. In what ways does the devil seek to chip away at that call at every turn?
6. What was the Holy Spirit’s goal in this “testing” of Jesus? What do you believe the devil’s goal was?
7. How does Jesus respond to temptation? What does this reveal to us about how our *peirasmos* can be test and not temptation?