

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

4:1-11

Thursday Morning Bible Study
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Wauwatosa, WI

1

A quick look at Luke 3:23

- Jesus was "about" 30 when he began his ministry.
- Herod died in 4 BC, so the birth of Jesus could not have been later than 6 BC
- He was baptized during the 15th year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius Caesar, which was 28 BC, so Jesus would have been 34.
- He died at age 37. Significant because Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac when he was 37.

2

The Temptation of Jesus

- 4:1 – Jesus is now entering into the role of the Messiah. Like many prophets of old, he needed time and space to sort out the implications of what his destiny was all about.
- In the Bible, when an individual needed clarification, they went out into the wilderness.
- Jesus goes out without food or water, so he is relying on God alone. It was a time to experience God.
- The Messiah is like Moses who was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights.

3

The Temptation of Jesus

- This 40 days of fast also invokes the story of Elijah, who travelled to Mt. Sinai to seek direction from God.
- But this time in the wilderness, this time for seeking clarification, also makes him vulnerable to the Tempter.
- Jesus is also reliving the 40 years that Israel spent in the wilderness relying on God. For Matthew, Jesus is Israel reduced to One.
- Just as God tested Israel in the wilderness, so Jesus is also tempted, only He did not give in.

4

The Temptation of Jesus

- The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness so that Satan could tempt him. Why? See Mark 1:12
- Someone had to conquer Satan.
- The crucial question: Could Jesus have given in to these temptations?
- What does it mean that he was "like us in every respect"? (Heb. 2:17-18)

5

The Temptation of Jesus

- The name "Satan" means "adversary", "opponent", "accuser", "prosecuting attorney."
- In the book of Job, Satan appears as the accuser who brings accusations in God's court.
- Paul calls him the "prince of the power of the air." (Eph 6:12)
- He confronts us when we are most vulnerable.

6

The Temptation of Jesus

- Jesus is fully human. The temptations are at the core of him being like us. That is why we have a "high priest who can sympathize with us."
- The attempts of Satan are attempts to stop Jesus from going to the cross. That is what is behind every temptation.

7

The First Temptation

- V 3 – "Since you are the son of God . . ." The temptations are messianic specific.
- Satan seeks to bring doubt in Jesus' mind, just as he did with Adam and Eve. How can he be sure he is who God has said he is?
- As the chosen messiah, he has the potential to change stones to bread. Can he do what Moses did?
- This temptation is to assure himself that he is the Messiah.

8

The First Temptation

- Jesus answer: Deut. 8:3
- "The man (Messiah) does not live by bread alone"
- Jesus interprets this passage as prophetically applying to him. He "fills" the passage full.
- He knows he is the Messiah, and thus needs only to follow the Word of God.

9

The Second Temptation

- V. 5-7 – The temptation to perform a spectacular miracle which would bring him the public acclaim and following that should rightfully be his.
- Satan quotes Ps. 91:11, but it is a manipulation of God, misusing God’s promises for his own purposes.
- Answer: Deut 6:16 – It is not for us to put God to the test, which is exactly what Jesus was going through.
- But faith is enough, not “proof”

10

The Third Temptation

- An appeal to power and wealth – something that tempts all of us in one way or another.
- Could Satan deliver on his promises? He is the “father of lies.”
- The temptation was to turn his back on the cross.
- The answer: Deut 6:13 – He resolves to follow God, not the tempter.
- “A more opportune time” – The Garden of Gethsemane.

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