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Lent Day 30: The Fast

3-4 minutes

Matthew 4:1-11 (ESV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You

shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Here, we learn about three specific ways that Satan sought to tempt Jesus, each one more significant, by challenging his desire for food, urging him to display power sensationally, and encouraging him to use political power to establish God’s kingdom. In this third instance, he was tempting Jesus to bypass the cross. The devil was more than willing to give us all back to Jesus, if only Jesus would worship him instead of God. Skip the suffering, save the people, deny God, do it the easy way. For each response, Jesus relied on Scripture, the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17), to resist.

These temptations occurred following Jesus’ baptism. Right after Jesus was anointed for ministry, the Spirit led him into the wilderness for 40 days and nights of fasting “to be tempted by the devil.” Jesus’ time in the desert reminds us of Moses fasting for the same period on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28). After Moses’ 40 days and nights, God gave him the Ten Commandments for the Israelites. Thus, here we see that Jesus is the new Moses come to fulfill the law that Moses was given.

Prayer

Gracious God, we praise you that you know what it is like to be tempted in every way, as we are. Thank you for showing us how to resist temptation and thank you for enduring the cross and for fulfilling the law, for our sakes, on our behalf. In Christ’s Name, Amen.

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