**Tempted**

**6-28-20**

So we are in a series of messages on the practical implications of walking in the Holy Spirit that I’m calling “The Breath of God”.

* I call it that because both the Greek and Hebrew words for “spirit” can also be translated “breath” or “wind”, and the Scriptures themselves play on these forms.
	+ So in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit comes upon the early church in the sound of a “mighty rushing wind”.
	+ And in John 20:22, we are told that Jesus *breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”.*
* But while the subject of the series is the Holy Spirit, what we are discovering is that the subject of the Holy Spirit is Jesus.
	+ In John 16:13-15, Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit…

*14 …will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* *15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he [the Holy Spirit] will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

* + - Thus we find that the third person of the Trinity submits to the second – functioning on this earth as Christ’s presence and voice and power in the world and His Church.
		- Never “going rogue” or off script – at least off Christ’s script – but implementing the will and the word of Jesus on this earth.
			* Just as Jesus never went rogue or “off-script” of the Father’s will and work.
		- Yet, there are some in the church today that sometimes have difficulty accepting this submissive reality within the persons of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
			* But this is how Jesus regularly describes their roles and relationship in this mission to rescue humanity.
				+ We just read it in vs. 15 of John 16.

*15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he [the Holy Spirit] will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

* + - * + The Son submitted to the Father and during the time between Christ’s ascension into heaven and his return in glory, the Spirit submits to the Son.
		- The subject of everything the Holy Spirit does is Jesus.
	+ But what about during the time period previous to that one?
		- The time between Jesus’ first coming and his ascension into heaven.
			* The time of the Son’s incarnation – God’s becoming fully human and dwelling among us.
				+ The conception, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
			* What was the working relationship of the Son and the Spirit during the time of the Gospels?
	+ That is the question we have been investigating during this series, and not just because it would be interesting to know.
		- But because it may be a model for us as to our relationship with the Holy Spirit as we walk this earth as followers of Jesus.
* For what our Biblical investigation is revealing is that between Christ’s Advent and His Ascension, the days of His incarnation, the Son of God – because of his human limitations – had to submit to the leading and power of the Spirit of God in his life…
	+ JUST AS WE DO.
	+ Meaning that if we wish to learn to walk in the Spirit in our lives, it may be very helpful for us to take a look at how Jesus walked in the Spirit in His life.
		- For though He was the Son of God, he took on human flesh – not just in form, but in fullness.
		- In Philippians 2, the Apostle Paul said he *emptied himself* of his divine power and privilege.
		- Meaning that everything he did in the flesh, he did in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.
			* From His conception, where the Holy Spirit initiated his human life without the stain of Adam’s sin.
			* To his baptism at age 30, where the Father anointed him with the Holy Spirit and commissioned him for service as the Christ – “the anointed One”.
			* To today’s topic, where we find the Spirit leading him – even driving him – into the desert to work out this new commission and do battle with Satan who will seek to disfigure it.

So let’s go back to today’s passage and see what the Spirit is doing in Jesus and see if there is anything there that would apply to our journey with the Breath of God in our lives. (Luke 4:1-2)

*And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil.*

* In case you missed it, Luke mentions it twice in the first verse of this passage – Jesus is functioning, not in the power of his own divinity, but under the influence and leading of the Holy Spirit.
	+ He is described as being *full of the Holy Spirit*, just as the disciples would be later in the book of Acts.
		- Having just been anointed with the Spirit at his baptism.
			* You’ll remember the Spirit visibly descending on him like a dove.
			* And John the Baptizer’s testimony that the Spirit not only descending upon him, but it remained – it stayed upon him and took up residence in him.
				+ This is how John knew that Jesus was the Messiah – the Lord’s anointed”.
	+ So with the Spirit now living in him, Jesus goes back to Galilee where the Spirit leads him into the wilderness.
		- Or as Mark’s gospel describes it, the Spirit *drove him into the wilderness*.
			* The point being that this was no subtle nudge, but rather an undeniable compulsion of the Spirit.
			* I would say “irresistible”, except that Jesus could have resisted it – even as we can when we experience the Spirit’s leadings or “pushings”.
				+ He could have decided that he had more important things to do that go on a desert retreat with God.

After all, he had just returned from a trip to Judea to be baptized.

* + - * + Or he could have decided that he didn’t need this “retreat”.

Had he not just been christened the Christ? (interesting phrase)

He had prepared 30 years for this moment, why would he have to go away with God again now?

* + - * But the second person of the Trinity submits to the third and obediently enters the wilderness WITH him.
* But what is he doing out there?
	+ Well, verse two tells us that he is out there for 40 days, during which he is doing and experiencing at least two things.
		- The most obvious in our English text and the thing this passage is noted for is that Jesus was being tempted by the Devil.
			* Note that we are not talking here about the three specific temptations that come later in the passage.
			* No, vs. 2 simply tells us that during the entire time he is in the wilderness, Jesus is experiencing temptation.
				+ The Greek is clear that it is an on-going thing stretching over the 40 days.
	+ But the other thing that is happening to Jesus in these two verses is not nearly as clear in our English translations:
		- It is actually found in verse one where it says: *he was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.*
			* Now most of us read that as *and he was led by the Spirit INTO the wilderness.*
				+ That is, the Spirit took him out there to do battle with the enemy (and then sat back and watched)
				+ But it doesn’t say that – it says he was lead by the Spirit IN or *WHILE IN* the wilderness.
			* The difference, though subtle in English, is huge:
				+ Jesus is being led by the Spirit CONTINUALLY while he is in the wilderness.
		- The Spirit is leading, guiding, equipping, speaking – all of that – during Jesus’ entire wilderness experience.
	+ Luke then adds another detail at the end of vs. 2:

*2b And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.*

* + - So Jesus was fasting while he was in the desert.
		- Now understand that a Jewish man would not be fasting without praying – the two go hand-in-hand.
			* The purpose of fasting was to create a hunger for God and a sensitivity to our need for Him.
	+ But why would Jesus so desperately need to commune with God at this time of his life that he would go on this extreme fast – eating nothing for 40 days (just drinking water)?
		- (Something he apparently never does again.)
		- Well, what had just happened to him that might cause him to need to spend this intense time with God?
			* He had just been anointed the Messiah!
			* Now we know that before his baptism, Jesus had some sense of his special relationship with God from the story of his hanging out in “his Father’s house” when visiting the Temple when he was 12.
			* But there is no reason to believe that he had a full understanding of just what his mission was prior to his baptism.
		- Again we go back to the fact that until his baptism, Jesus was a fully human, Old Testament person.
			* He was a Jewish man having been brought up in a faithful Jewish home where he had undoubtedly been told by his mother and father the amazing and harrowing details of his birth and early days.
			* But he had, as Paul said, “emptied himself” of his divine prerogatives, taking on the fullness of humanity.
				+ So, without the daily presence of the Holy Spirit in his life (remember, Old Testament), all he had to go on were the Scriptures themselves.
				+ No doubt, his understanding of his person and mission were vague and his earthly parents were probably not all that helpful beyond the story itself.

For later, after Jesus begins to function fully in the presence and power of the Spirit, his family seems to think that he’s off his rocker.

And literally go to get him and bring him home.

They had no more a complete understanding of his person and mission than Jesus likely did at this point.

* + - So, Jesus, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, now goes out into the desert to have an intense “one-on-one” with God and discern just what all of this means.
			* And it is in this whole process that Jesus is tempted by the devil.
			* And who wouldn’t be?
				+ As Jesus begins to discover both the power and the plan that his Father has envisioned for him, who would not be tempted to go about it differently?
				+ Why not wield this power of the Holy Spirit like the world does?
				+ Why not gain build the Kingdom as a living King rather than having to die?
				+ Why not just keep the benefits of this power and position for himself?
* In fact, when we come to vs. 3, we find that these are exactly the kinds of temptations Jesus faces.

Now before we go on, bear in mind that there is nothing in the text that suggests that Satan came to Jesus in a bodily form – not here nor in any other Gospel.

* They have conversation, but it is most likely that this conversation took place in the heart and mind of Jesus, just as we face our temptations in life.
	+ We hear the tempter’s suggestion and we either succumb to it or do battle with it in our own power or the power of the Spirit.
	+ Jesus was no different – THAT’S THE POINT OF THE INCARNATION!
		- He did it our way – but did not sin.
* Now back to the text:

*And when they were ended, he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”*

* + Notice first off how Satan calls into question Jesus’ new-found identity and suggests he prove it by making himself some bread from stones.
		- The temptation would be real, since he is famished from the 40-day fast.
			* A fast, by the way, that the text says is now clearly finished – it was “ended”.
		- So why not both answer the question in his own mind and prove to the devil that he is who he believes himself to be?
			* The side-benefit being that he would get some much needed food!
	+ Like the things that tempt us, this temptation is multi-faceted.
		- It is clearly a physical temptation – use the power of God for my own physical satisfaction.
		- There is clearly a “prove it to you” temptation – to use the power of God for my own vindication.
			* “What do you mean, “IF you are the Son of God”?
		- And then there is the clear “prove it to myself” temptation – to use the power of God to replace my faith in God.
			* Remember, Jesus has done no miracles at this point – why not do one here?
				+ No one else would see if it didn’t work out.
				+ Plus, if it did happen, then he would gain confidence that what God SAID about him was true.

He would not have to rely on the WORD of God…

But rather now had EVIDENCE that he could trust that went beyond that Word.

* + - There is so much more going on here than just being hungry.
	+ But by the Spirit who is leading him, Jesus cuts through to the core of the temptation and replies:

*4 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”*

* + - Luke gives his response in short-hand, while Matthew and Mark include the rest of the quotation: (Mt. 4:4)

*4…but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

* + - The Spirit brings to mind this passage to reply to the tempter’s trap.
			* The temptation is not about food, its about faith!
				+ Jesus’ hunger was just the “weakness” the devil was trying to exploit in calling into question God’s care and reliability.
				+ In that sense, this temptation is not all that different from the temptation of Eve, who was tempted to believe that God was trying to withhold something from her…

That she couldn’t trust Him.

* + - * This scripture reminds Jesus that while food is needed, trusting God at his word is the only thing he can build his life on.

Vs. 5

*5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 6 and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”*

* This temptation demonstrates both that this was likely all internal in Jesus’ heart and mind, as there is neither a physical location and time element that could accommodate the temptation…
	+ AND it demonstrates the humanity of Jesus, for whom if he were functioning in the fullness of His divinity, this would not be a “temptation” at all.
		- After all, the Son helped to create the world, so the idea that Satan had a sovereign right to the Earth is laughable from God’s perspective.
		- But Jesus is processing all of this as a learning, growing human being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
* So what is suggested here IS a temptation (or the Bible would not categorize it as such).
	+ As the mission becomes clear in Jesus’ mind, the notion of a self-sacrificial death cannot have been a preferred outcome.
		- He understands that he is to bring about the advent of the Kingdom of God – and that he will be King.
		- But why do it in such a convoluted manner?
			* Why submit to the powers of this Earth?
			* Why suffer at the hands of tin-pot dictators when with a single call he could raise up an army of angels and be done with it?
	+ Satan is simply suggesting that perhaps there is another way – a way that involves much less time and much less suffer on Jesus’ part.
		- If you can take a short-cut to the destination and at the same time reduce the pain of the process, why not?
			* This is why lotteries exist and crimes are committed.
				+ People are trying to speed things up and reduce the pain of the process.
			* All it takes is a little creativity and a relocation of where we put our trust.
				+ Because by definition, it means that we believe that we know better.
		- And when we choose to trust in ourselves rather than trust in God and his plan and process, then we have shifted just who we choose to worship.
	+ Again, as Jesus is continually led by the Spirit in the wilderness, the Spirit draws him to another passage of Scripture that he would have learned as a boy.

*8 And Jesus answered him, “It is written,*

*“‘You shall worship the Lord your God,*

 *and him only shall you serve.’”*

* + - In his new-found identity as the Son of God, he would not go rogue and do things HIS way.
		- Rather, he will take the longer, harder road.

*9 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ 11 and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”*

* Yes, but….(this is Satan’s last line of attack)…the Scriptures say this too.
	+ Here he tries to give Jesus a good biblical excuse to go his own way and avoid the pain.
		- Only this time uses the temptation of popularity rather than power.
			* In many ways, the theme of all three temptations have to do with ways to avoid pain by misusing the power granted to him in the Holy Spirit.
		- Here the argument even includes a biblical justification!
			* Like with the first temptation, Satan again attacks Jesus confidence in his new identity as the Christ.
				+ So he calls on him to “prove it!”
			* But in this temptation, he adds that it will be good for everyone, because they will see God at work rescuing Jesus as the Scriptures promise.
			* This temptation not only seeks to get Jesus to misuse the Spirit’s power, but also to misuse God’s word.
				+ All for personal comfort, ease and popularity.
	+ Do you catch the theme here in all these temptations?
		- Avoid pain at all costs…
		- Speed things up as much as possible…
		- Find ways to improve your position to the greatest extent…
		- All because this is what God would want for you, right?
* Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit answers with Scripture yet again:

*12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*

* + And the devil slinks off until, Luke says *a more opportune time.*
		- This moment of physical weakness had not proven to be enough.
		- But there will be other times coming in which Jesus will again be physically and/or emotionally weakened and the temptations will return.
			* Like after being betrayed and abandoned by all his friends and hung out to dry alone.
			* But then, like here, Jesus will crush the serpent’s head in the power of the Holy Spirit at work within him.

And that’s really what I want to leave you with here this morning.

* Jesus did it our way so that by the power of the Spirit within us, we can do it His way.
	+ He functioned fully in his humanity, having to grow and develop in his understanding of His identity as the Christ, his mission on earth, and his working relationship with the Holy Spirit who would guide him and empower him for life and ministry.
		- He had the same all the same questions, the same breakthroughs, the same weaknesses, and the same resources that we have.
		- The difference is that He did not fall to the temptations to take short-cuts, to get ahead, to take control, to satisfy his appetites, or to just trust and believe in himself.
	+ Instead, he walked in the Spirit…
		- Listening for his leading…
		- Obeying his promptings…
		- Functioning in his power…
		- And overcoming temptation by His word.

All by that same Spirit who lives in you to be your comfort, your guide, your teacher, your empowerment, and your guarantee of the promises of God for today and for what’s to come.

**Benediction**

*So now, take heart, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet was without sin. So let us draw near to the throne of grace with confidence, knowing that we will receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen*