

Luke 4:1-15

"The Well-Armed Christian"

May 12, 2024

1. Intro

- a. For four hundred years, the people of Israel were enslaved in Egypt
 - i. During those early years, as it was just Joseph and his brothers and their families, God's people enjoyed a time of peace and comfort, even though they were bound to the Pharaoh of those days
 1. But, when the sons of Jacob had all died, and a new Pharaoh came into power, everything changed
 - a. God's chosen people, who were now multiplying exponentially in Egypt, were now seen as both a threat and a resource by the new Pharaoh
 - i. A threat, because Pharaoh realized what their rapidly increasing numbers might mean for his rule and authority
 - ii. But also a resource, as these growing numbers represented a vast workforce by which Pharaoh could build his kingdom
 1. And so, this new Pharaoh placed upon God's people a harsh yoke
 2. And for another three centuries, the Israelites would labor and toil with much groaning and weeping
 2. But as we know, God raised up an unlikely leader at the end of these four hundred years
 - a. Moses, a Hebrew...
 - i. Adopted into the family of Pharaoh himself
 1. Raised in the riches and extravagance of one of the most glorious kingdoms on earth in those days
 - ii. But then exiled into the wilderness at the age of forty for murdering and Egyptian foreman
 - b. Moses, who would return to Egypt forty years later, now with the command to Pharaoh to release the people of God, for the Great I AM had heard their cries
 - i. And so, through Moses, God would inflict plague after plague upon Pharaoh and his people
 1. Until finally, after the tenth plague in which the firstborn of every Egyptian family was killed by the angel, Pharaoh released the Israelites from their captivity
 - c. Moses led them through the Red Sea...
 - i. The law was given to God's people at Mt. Sinai
 - ii. The Tabernacle was constructed
 1. And the people of God arrived at the borders of the land God had promised to Abraham many hundreds of years before
3. At God's command, 12 spies were sent into the Promised Land, one man from each of the twelve tribes
 - a. Shammua, Shaphat, Caleb, Igal, Joshua, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel

- i. For forty days, these twelve men secretly traveled throughout the land, observing the people, the cities, and all of the natural resources the land had to offer
- 4. And in Numbers 13:27-29, we read of their report to Moses...
 - a. *27We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.*
 - i. Caleb interjected with an incredible statement of faith...
 - 1. “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”
 - a. But the people didn’t listen, did they?
- 5. Verses 31-33 tell us...
 - a. *31Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” 32So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”*
- 6. And then we read this staggering reply in chapter 14...
 - a. *1Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. 2And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” 4And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”*
 - i. Let us return to the place where we were slaves for four hundred years...
 - ii. Let us return to the people whom our God had absolutely ransacked in judgement...
 - iii. Let us return to the Pharaoh whose hatred against us now burns uncontrollably at the loss of his own son
 - 1. These words of the people of God were absolute madness
 - 2. And they so provoked God to anger that He was willing to wipe out every single one of them, and start out again with just one man, Moses
- 7. All of this came because of the faithlessness of 10 spies
 - a. All of this because every man that entered into the Promised Land, except for Joshua and Caleb, gave into fear, instead of faith
 - b. For forty days, these 10 men were tested in the land of their enemies
 - i. And they failed the test in every way imaginable
 - 1. And as a result of their faithlessness, unbelief spread through the people of God

2. And for every day that the spies wandered throughout the Land, God made the people wander throughout the wilderness for a year
 - a. Forty years of punishment, for forty days of faithlessness
 - i. Until every adult, twenty years old and older, died in the deserts... kept out of the Promised Kingdom of God
- ii. We must keep this tragic story at the forefronts of our minds as we look at our passage for this week, for it unmistakably is meant to serve as a backdrop for these 15 verses
 1. We saw last week in the genealogy of Christ that Luke, taking Jesus' family tree all the way back to Adam, meant for us to see the Jesus was to be the second Adam
 - a. Where Adam failed in the garden, bringing sin and death into the world, Jesus would have victory, crushing the head of the serpent, even as he was bruised upon the cross
 - i. Jesus was the NEW and GREATER Adam, who would bring forgiveness and life!
 2. But now, in the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, we will see that Jesus will also begin his journey to become the new and greater Israel, as he stood on the borders of the New Kingdom that was soon to come
 - a. Let's look at our passage then, Luke 4:1-15...

2. Luke 4:1-13

- a. *¹And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and 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. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" ⁹And 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, ¹⁰for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' ¹¹and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" ¹²And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.*
- b. So Jesus was returning from the Jordan river where he was baptized, and he was heading back home to Galilee, and his hometown of Nazareth
 - i. But note Luke's language in verse 1...
 1. Jesus wasn't just heading back home, and all of a sudden he was waylaid by the devil
 - a. In verse 1 we read that Jesus was FULL of the Holy Spirit, and then he was led into the wilderness BY the Holy Spirit
 - i. In Matthew's Gospel, he even explicitly says that Jesus was led by the Spirit TO BE tempted by the devil
 1. There was nothing accidental AT ALL about this encounter
 - b. And again, as we think back to the Israelite spies in Numbers, it was GOD who commanded that they be sent into the Promised Land
 - i. God, who knows what is in the hearts of man, chose each of these tribal chiefs to go and spy out the Land

- c. Just as God the Father led the men into the land, God the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness
 - c. And for forty days, Jesus was tempted by the devil
 - i. The number “40” has LOTS of historical significance in the Scriptures, doesn’t it?
 - 1. When God flooded the earth in Noah’s day, the rains fell for 40 days and 40 nights
 - 2. When God gave the law to Moses, he was on the 40 days and 40 nights
 - 3. Goliath taunted Israel for 40 days before David arrived at the front lines of the battle
 - 4. And when Elijah fled from Jezebel to the mount of God, he fasted the entire 40 days and 40 nights it took him to get there
 - a. All of these events have one thing in common... it was a time of TESTING for God’s people
 - i. Noah and his family no doubt were tested for those 40 days in the Ark, as they probably heard the cries of the people who were drowning all around them, as the skies thundered and poured out God’s judgment upon the earth
 - ii. The Israelites were tested for those 40 days at the base of the mountain, as they fell back into their idolatrous ways in Moses’ absence
 - iii. The Israelites again were tested for 40 days, as one man, the giant Goliath, stood and mocked them and their God, and they all cowered in fear at his words and his size
 - iv. And Elijah was tested as well, as he fled for 40 days from an evil queen, believing that he was the last one out of all of God’s prophets that was still alive
 - b. 40 days in the Scriptures very often signifies a time of testing for God’s people
 - i. So it was for the 12 spies
 - ii. And so it was for Jesus
- d. So, pay attention again to Luke’s words in verse 2...
 - i. For forty days, Jesus was BEING tempted by the devil
 - 1. We will look at the three specific temptations that Luke records for us when those forty days had ended...
 - a. But clearly, Jesus endured MANY MORE temptations than just these three that came at the end
 - i. For 40 days, he was BEING tempted
 - 1. Jesus certainly faced temptation during the previous 30 years of his life
 - a. Even though he lived a quiet life in the small village of Nazareth, there surely still must have been many opportunities for him to be tempted to give into sin
 - i. He could have easily had resentment toward his parents for making him come back home after the Temple incident when he was 12
 - ii. He could have easily had bitterness or anger toward his brothers and sisters, who no doubt scoffed at him whenever the circumstances surrounding his birth were brought up
 - iii. He could have easily been prideful in his heart, as he watched his brothers and sisters get

forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

1. Jesus was certainly famished
 - a. Forty days without food could very easily put one at the edge of death
 - b. But Jesus KNEW the promises of his Father's Word
 - i. He KNEW that the hour had not yet come
 - ii. He KNEW that the cross in Jerusalem still awaited him
 - iii. So in the face of temptation, Jesus TRUSTED in the promises of the Word of his Father!
2. The contrast between his words and those of the 10 Israelite spies couldn't be more glaring
 - a. God had said to Abraham that BY HIS WORD, his descendants would inhabit the Promised Land
 - b. God had confirmed this promise BY HIS WORD to Isaac and to Jacob
 - c. And God had again confirmed this promise to Moses, BY HIS WORD
 - i. By the Word of Yahweh, the land of the Canaanites was to be given to the people of Israel, no matter how big the Nephilim were, or how vast their cities
 1. But instead of choosing to live in faith by the Word of God, the Israelites instead chose to run in fear
 2. Interestingly, when Joshua and Caleb make one last attempt to persuade the people to trust in God, they say to the people in Numbers 14:9
 - a. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are BREAD for us.
 - i. God has PROMISED that they are OURS to conquer
 - ii. And in His promises, we will be sustained
3. Where the 10 spies, and all the rest of Israel failed in fear, Jesus rested in the Word of his Father
4. So then Satan takes Jesus up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time
 - a. And he said to Jesus, "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. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."
 - i. That is a STUNNING statement, isn't it?
 1. First, notice the power of Satan
 - a. He was able to show Jesus ALL the kingdoms in the world, in just one moment of time
 - b. This should serve to remind us that Satan is not someone to trifle with
 - i. For a long time, I was a part of a pretty big men's ministry here in the Tulsa area
 1. This group was a pretty high-testosterone group of guys... lots of big beards and big muscles and big attitudes

- a. One of their favorite things to say was, “Let’s go out and kick Satan in the teeth today!”
 - i. Friends, Satan is an angelic being that we should not mess with, at all
 - 2. Martin Luther had it right when he said,
 - a. For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe / His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate / On earth is not his equal
 - c. So we see the power of Satan in this incident
- 2. But second, notice the AUTHORITY of Satan
 - a. He told Jesus that ALL of the kingdoms of this world, with ALL of their authority and ALL of their glory, had been given TO HIM to give to whom he wills
 - i. And Jesus DID NOT argue with him about that
 - 1. This is why we ought to be VERY cautious in thinking that political power and national prosperity are a sign of God’s favor upon His people
 - 2. Yes, ULTIMATELY, God is sovereign over every ruler and every nation on this earth
 - a. But in this passage we see that, for His own mysterious purposes, God has given to Satan a measure of authority over ALL the kingdoms of the world
 - b. And so Satan says to Jesus, “Just worship me, and I will give ALL OF IT to you”
 - 3. And again, Jesus goes back to the Word of His Father for his response...
 - a. It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve”
- ii. This time, his response comes from Deuteronomy 6:10-15, a passage that again speaks to their coming into the Promised Land...
 - 1. *¹⁰“And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, ¹²then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹³It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. ¹⁴You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— ¹⁵for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.*
 - a. Jesus knows better than anyone or anything out of all of God’s creation:
 - i. His Father is a JEALOUS God
 - 1. He will not share the worship of his people with ANY god outside of Himself
 - a. This was a truth that the 10 spies failed to acknowledge
 - b. When they came back from the Promised Land with their bad report, and they enticed the people of Israel to try to go back to Egypt

- ii. But the spies failed the test
 - 1. And in doing so, they instead put the Lord their God to the test
 - b. Would the angels have swooped down to rescue Jesus as he plummeted from the top of the Temple?
 - i. They ABSOLUTELY would have
 - 1. But Jesus refused to put his Father to the test
 - a. Where the 10 spies failed in every aspect in their 40-day test in the Promised Land, Jesus was FULLY victorious in his 40-day test in the wilderness
 - ii. And so verse 13 says that the temptations were ended, and Satan left him until an opportune time
 - 1. Every temptation known to man had been thrown at Jesus
 - 2. And he faced them ALL without sin
 - a. And therefore, he has become our great High Priest, who is sympathetic to every single one of our temptations that we will face in this lifetime
 - b. And then Luke tells us in verses 14-15,
 - i. ¹⁴And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.
6. So, Christians, how will YOU live during your “40 days and 40 nights” in the wilderness of this world?
 - a. I hope and pray that you have seen this morning that you CANNOT be victorious in your own strength
 - i. Do not miss the reality that, in these comparisons between the 10 Israelite spies and the Lord Jesus Christ, if you do not abide in Christ,
 - 1. You will be just like the spies... every single day
 - a. For they did not trust in the Word of God
 - b. Nor did they trust in the power of God
 - i. And their hearts became hardened as a result
 - ii. This is why the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 3:7-11...
 - 1. ⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ ¹¹As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”
 - a. So how do we enter God’s rest?
 - iii. First and foremost, Christ MUST be our High Priest
 - 1. As Hebrews 7:26 says, because he endured all things without sin, he is a high priest who is “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens”
 - 2. And in his exaltedness, Christ is the permanent High Priest, who is “able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25)
 - a. Apart from Christ, we have no Mediator who will stand between us and the wrath of God that we deserve
 - b. Just as God wiped out the 10 unfaithful spies, so also will He wipe us from the face of the earth, if we are not found in Christ
 - i. So run to Jesus as your Savior and your great High Priest
 - iv. And then, second, follow the example of your Lord

1. Gird yourselves with the only offensive weapon God has given to His people...
 - a. The sword of His Holy Word
 - i. This is how Christ waged war against Satan in the wilderness
 1. Every temptation to sin – even the one’s Satan crafted through the twisting of the Scriptures – every temptation to sin, Jesus met with a decisive blow from the Word of God
 - ii. This is the only way we will conquer against the devil
 - iii. This is the only way we will enter into the Promised Land of God’s eternal rest
 1. As Hebrews 4:11-12 says,
 - a. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
2. Look to Christ as your salvation, friends
3. Look to His Word as your weapon in the fight
4. And, in those moments when you fail, and you fall back into the sins of your Egypt, then look to Christ as your great High Priest
 - a. He is able to sympathize with all your weaknesses
 - i. For he faced every single one of them in the wilderness
 - ii. And he was victorious over them ALL!
 1. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need