

The Gospel According to Luke

“Survivor: This World”
Outread... Outpray... Overcome
Chapter 4:1-13

Introduction

Jesus was and is God; but that is not how He overcame Satan. He used no supernatural abilities, called upon no mighty angels, performed no amazing miracles. The story is told in such a way that leaves no doubt Jesus faced His adversary not as God, but as a Man depending upon God.

It makes His victory over Satan all the more stunning. How can a man, without the physical sustenance of food or the emotional support of family or friends, defeat the devil?

Luke was careful to mention the **Holy Spirit** in his preface to the story:

Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, **being filled with the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was **led by the Spirit** into the wilderness,

Jesus was “**led by the Spirit**,” and He was “**filled with the Spirit**.” His relationship with the Holy Spirit is what enabled and empowered Him as a Man to resist and defeat His enemy.

You and I are men and women who can be led by and filled with the Spirit. It follows that you and I are men and women who can therefore resist and defeat our enemy.

Our text *emphasizes* these two relationships with the Holy Spirit and then it *expands* on them. We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 You Survive And Thrive In The World By Being Led By The Spirit, and #2 You Survive And Thrive In The World By Being Filled With The Spirit.

#1 You Survive And Thrive In The World
By Being Led By The Spirit
(v1-2)

You are in the wilderness. The world in which you live is not the way God created it or intended it. It is fallen and it is under the influence of Satan. He is called “**the prince of this world**” (John 12:31), “**the prince of the power of the air**” (Ephesians 2:2), and “**the god of this world**” (Second Corinthians 4:4). As Hal Lindsey used to say, “*The devil is alive and well and living on planet earth.*”

I will mention more than once that Jesus was acting not as God, but as a Man depending upon God. He was and is your example of how to not only survive, but thrive, in the wilderness.

This is not the first time we have encountered the Holy Spirit in Luke’s description of Jesus. In chapter one we learned that Jesus was to be **born** of Mary by the activity of the Holy Spirit. Then, in chapter three, Jesus came to be baptized and you were told that the Holy Spirit came **upon** Him. In just a few verses – in verse eighteen of chapter four – you will see the Holy Spirit **upon** Jesus again.

So far, then, we’ve seen Jesus **born** of the Spirit... **Filled** with the Spirit... **Led** by the Spirit... And have the Holy Spirit come **upon** Him.

All of these are true of any Christian:

1. In the third chapter of John Jesus speaks of believers being **born** of the Spirit.
2. In Ephesians 5:18 you are commanded to be **filled** with the Spirit.
3. Romans 8:14 says, “**as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**”
4. The Book of Acts recounts multiple times that the Holy Spirit came **upon** the believers as they asked for boldness to serve the Lord.

Our text said Jesus was filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit. The Spirit’s filling is described in verses three through thirteen. Let’s look at the Spirit’s leading as it is described in verses one and two.

Luke 4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Luke 4:2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

“Into the wilderness” can be translated, “in the wilderness.” Jesus was not just led out there and left; He was led out there and He was led all the while He was there. The point is that Jesus always followed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

So the first thing we can be confident about is that this leading of the Holy Spirit is always available to us.

Jesus was led in the wilderness to “be tempted for forty days by the devil.” Many translate the word for “tempted” as *tested*. That is really what this was: A test.

Why put Jesus to the test?

1. For one thing, Jesus needed to be tempted in all points like we are in order to be our sympathetic Savior.
2. For another thing, the temptation of Jesus exposed once-and-for-all the tactics of the devil in tempting mankind. We’ll talk more about this under our second point.

There was also a great deal of biblical symbolism going on:

1. In the beauty and bounty of the Garden of Eden, while fully satisfied and with support, Adam had succumbed to the devil. Adam and Eve faced the same temptations, but failed. Because they represented the human race, all of us share in their sin. Jesus, in the bleakness and barrenness of the wilderness, with no support other than the Holy Spirit, overcame the devil. He, too, represented us and we now share the spoils of His victory over the devil.
2. Secondly, there is symbolism involving the nation of Israel. Jesus was tempted “**forty days.**” It is significant that Israel failed her testing at the borders of the Promised Land and was relegated to wandering in that very same wilderness for *forty years*. Jesus was reclaiming the Promised Land for the Jews as their King.

The first thing we learned about being led by the Spirit is that He is always available to lead us. The second thing we learn is that He leads us to places of testing.

You need to understand that God is a show-off; He loves to show-off His people. The test is not designed to see you fail, but to show you off! In the first chapters of the Book of Job Satan came to report to heaven. God bragged about His servant, Job, with the pride of a Father. The devil said he could make Job turn away from following God. God showed-off Job. God allowed Satan certain freedoms to afflict and attack Job. It went on for some time; but when it was over, God had shown-off Job to the devil, to all the angels both fallen and faithful, and to every succeeding generation of men.

If you are being tested, it is to show you off. God can lead you *in* and *through* the testing.

How does He do it? How are you 'led'? What are the steps? That is a subject you will study for your entire life. Your life is the laboratory in which you daily learn about the leading of the Holy Spirit. I can only provide a few quick biblical principles.

The great teaching on the leading of the Holy Spirit is in Romans chapter eight. The apostle Paul uses the phrase, "[led by the Spirit](#)." Then he discusses three principles:

1. You are led by the Spirit as you partake of your privileges as a believer. He talks about your being adopted into the family of God, with all the privileges of a son or daughter.
2. Then he says you are led by God through His providence. All things are working together for your good. As you learn to accept God's oversight and rest in His loving care, the Holy Spirit is leading you.
3. Finally, Paul says you are led by God through His predestination. Now don't get confused about the doctrine of predestination. What it simply means is that, if you are a Christian, you are predestined to become more and more like Jesus every day you walk in the wilderness of this world.

If you want to be led by the Spirit, accept God's providences as His predestined means to make you more like Jesus. Accept them by taking advantage of every spiritual privilege that belongs to you as a child of God: Prayer, the Word of God, fellowship, etc.

We left Jesus "hungry." The devil had been continuously attacking the Lord; but now it was most intensely felt. When your hunger returns after forty days of fasting you must eat or you will die.

#2 You Survive And Thrive In The World By Being Filled With The Spirit (v3-13)

Luke mentioned Jesus was "filled with the Spirit" in verse one. I suggest to you that these remaining verses explain what it means to be "filled." You are filled with the Spirit to the extent you are filled with God's Word. I say that for at least two reasons:

1. First – Jesus quotes from God's Word. It is obvious that the emphasis is on His being filled with God's Word.
2. Second – In the New Testament, the apostle Paul told believers to be "filled with the Spirit" in Ephesians 5:18. There is a parallel passage in the Book of Colossians (3:16-17) where Paul equated being filled with the Spirit with being filled with God's Word.

Jesus did not suddenly become filled with the Spirit in the wilderness. He was *already* filled with the Spirit before He was led out in the wilderness. He was already filled with God's Word.

If you want to be Spirit-filled, then feed yourself a steady diet of the Word of God. When you do, you will find yourself coming under the Spirit's control because the author of the Word of God is the Spirit of God. When the Word of God is received into the believer's life, the Spirit takes that truth and gives you guidance and direction.

The three temptations follow a pattern that repeats itself throughout Scripture:

1. The apostle John warned believers to guard against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (First John 2:16).

2. In the Garden of Eden, when Satan tempted Eve, you read that she “**saw that the tree was good for food**” (the lust of the flesh), “**that it was pleasant to the eyes**” (the lust of the eyes), “**and... to make one wise**” (the pride of life).
3. Jesus was tempted the same way. The temptation to make bread was to fulfill the lust of the flesh; the temptation to bow down and worship came after He was shown the kingdoms of this world to fulfill the lust of the eyes; and the temptation to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple was to the pride of life.

You have the devil’s M.O. You have his playbook. You know exactly how he operates; you know what he is going to throw at you. He’s going to come after you in his world with some lust of the flesh or of the eyes, and with some appeal to pride. Knowing what he is going to do is a great help to defending against him and resisting him.

Luke 4:3 And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

Luke 4:4 But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*’”

The word translated “if” is in a tense that means *since*. Both the devil and Jesus knew He was the unique Son of God. Jesus could have made bread out of the stones; *He could have made bread out of nothing!* His refusal to use His power on His own established at least two things:

1. First, the spiritual is more real and powerful than the material. In this case, the Word of God is more necessary than even food.
2. Second, Jesus would only do what He was led to do. He would not act on His own.

We must believe that the spiritual is more important than the material, and then follow the leading of God in our lives – never acting on our own apart from God’s will as revealed through His Word.

In all three temptations Jesus quoted only from a small section of Deuteronomy, chapters six and eight. Why is that? Here is one reason: In Deuteronomy, the Jews were preparing to enter the Promised Land after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. They

were instructed how to live in the land under God's authority. Now Jesus was going to offer them the Kingdom of God on earth. He would show them by His humble obedience and refusal to use His divine powers how to live under God's authority.

Luke 4:5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Luke 4:7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "*Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"

Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim. The devil was handed a limited authority and rulership over the earth when Adam and Eve sinned.

Somewhere outside of linear time, Jesus saw all the kingdoms of this world in succession. His mission was to reclaim for mankind what Adam had forfeited. Satan offered it to him... All Jesus had to do was "*worship*" the devil for a split second.

The Father had determined Jesus would gain the kingdoms of the world by dying on the Cross. Satan was presenting a shortcut.

Jesus would have nothing to do with it! Worshipping God on the Cross was infinitely to be preferred to even a split second of submitting to Satan.

God's kingdom is of a very different character than the kingdoms of this world. The methods and manner of the world cannot be adopted as shortcuts to obtain something spiritual.

The temporary, split-second pleasures of this world cannot be compared to your future glory in heaven.

Luke 4:9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.

Luke 4:10 For it is written: '*He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,*'

Luke 4:11 and, '*In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.*'"

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

The idea is that the people below would witness this miracle and then be inspired to immediately receive Jesus as their Messiah.

Satan quoted Scripture! More accurately: He misquoted Scripture. His words were from Psalm 2:7 & 8, but he left out the phrase, "in all thy ways," meaning you must be in the will of God to claim this promise. A misquoted promise is a presumption. Jesus answered by comparing Scripture with Scripture to discern the will of God.

You've heard people say you can prove anything from Scripture. *Not true!* Sure, if you ignore other portions; or leave out certain sections; then, yes, you can come up with all kinds of weird, wild ideas.

One lesson for us here is to remember that the sensational and the spectacular are not necessarily God's will. Sure, He can heal you, or deliver you; He can do the miracle. But He sometimes wants to do something more profound – He wants to change you from glory to glory and show others the power of trusting in Him. God is revealed more powerfully when you simply walk with Him day-by-day.

Luke 4:13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

"Every temptation" means every type of temptation. Satan exhausted his playbook and left to regroup. He had been set back; but he would return again and again until finally, fully defeated on the Cross.

The Spirit-filled man is the Word-filled man.

Conclusion

It was as a Man that Jesus resisted and defeated temptation. He was **born** of the Spirit... **Filled** with the Spirit... **Led** by the Spirit... And experienced the Holy Spirit coming **upon** Him.

All these experiences are available to any man or woman – **to you** - in a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

