

STUDY GUIDE

NEW VISION
THE MIDDLE
REPENTING
AND
RESISTING
LUKE 4:1-13
08/13/2017



NEW VISION

MAIN POINT

We must resist the temptation to sin and repent from sin when we commit it.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some of the things you do to insure you make a good first impression?

Read Matthew 3:4. What would be your perception of this locust munching, oddly dressed outdoorsman preacher?

It's hard to overestimate the importance of a good first impression. At the same time, we must be wary of judging someone too quickly. John the Baptist is a classic example of someone with an odd lifestyle but an impeccable character, doing exactly what God wanted Him to do. In this study, we'll look at what John's message was, and also learn from Jesus as well.

READ AND REBUILD THE STORY READ LUKE 4:1-13.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER TELL THE STORY (MATTHEW 3:13-17) DO AS BEST YOU CAN, DO NOT STOP AND TEACH, TRY NOT TO MAKE POINTS (COMMENTARY), JUST TELL THE STORY.

REBUILD THE STORY AS A GROUP: CHRONOLOGICALLY REBUILD THE STORY FROM MEMORY. ASK QUESTIONS IF NECESSARY. LIKE – "WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?", "WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?", "DID WE LEAVE OUT ANYTHING?" FINALLY, HAVE PARTICIPANTS LOOK AT THEIR BIBLES AND SEE IF ANYTHING WAS ADDED OR LEFT OUT OF THE STORY AS THEY GO THROUGH IT ONE MORE TIME.

Why do you think God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness?

Describe a personal wilderness experience from your life, if you feel comfortable sharing. What are the dangers of a wilderness experience? What are the potential blessings?

What did this time of testing prove about Jesus? Why do you think Luke included the account so early in his Gospel? (Read Hebrews 4:15 and Romans 5:12-19 for insight.)

What three areas did his tempting focus on? (physical needs, vv. 3-4; pride, vv. 5-8; power, vv. 9-12) In which area do you most often find yourself tempted?

Why is knowing and obeying God's Word an effective weapon against temptation?

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How would your relationship with God be different if He demanded perfection and repentance wasn't an option?

What can you do this week to show God how much you appreciate His grace and mercy?

What are some specific ways you've seen God's power at work in your life when you've faced temptations?

PRAY

Spend time in silent prayer, giving your group members the opportunity to voice prayers of repentance for sin. After a few minutes, close with a prayer of thanks to God for the power He gives us to fight back against the enemy.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 3:1-22

3:1 John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance and faith. In so doing John helped prepare people for Jesus' public ministry. God's word apparently came to John much as it did to the Old Testament prophets. God used John as a mouthpiece or spokesman at this crucial time in history. God commissioned John as a prophet and equipped him for the task.

3:2 With the phrase "son of Zechariah," Luke identified John as the one born to prepare the way for the Lord (1:13-17). Obviously the desert played a significant role in John's life. Luke also mentioned John's life in the desert in Luke 1:80. The reference to the desert not only indicated John's location; it also helped identify John as the prophetic voice promised in Isaiah 40:3. Desert places held significance for others mentioned in the Bible, including Moses and Jesus.

3:3-6 John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He performed this ministry in preparation for Jesus. John associated baptism with repentance. The Greek word translated "for" in the phrase "baptism of

repentance for the forgiveness of sins” also could be translated “with reference to” or “as the result of.” God’s forgiveness was the result of the people’s repentance and was symbolized in baptism. Submitting to John’s baptism demonstrated evidence of repentance and willingness to participate in the coming kingdom of Christ. John preached a baptism that followed repentance and was a sign of that repentance. Repentance literally means “a change of mind” toward something. John called for a change of mind toward sin. He called people to confess and turn away from their sins and to turn to God. Baptism, then, was intended to symbolize publicly that repentance already had occurred in a person’s life.

3:7-9 Verses 7-9 record the clear warning John sounded. Luke noted that John preached to the crowds. Matthew mentioned that John preached to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 3:7). John’s message from God was for everyone. All people need repentance. The harsh words of these verses indicate John’s awareness of the insincerity of some who presented themselves for baptism. How did John know that members of his audience had not repented? He saw that they had produced no fruit in keeping with repentance. John saw no evidence of changed lives. Many Jews considered themselves in right standing with God simply because they descended from Abraham. John reminded them of their individual accountability to God. They could rely neither on an outward ceremony of baptism nor on a physical descent from Abraham to save them from God’s wrath against sin. Instead they must individually turn to God in repentance and demonstrate that repentance by changed lifestyles.

3:15-18 John illustrated his inferiority to the Messiah in verse 16. The Coming One would be more powerful than John. True humility surfaced as John expressed his unworthiness to untie the sandal thongs of the coming Christ. Only the most menial of slaves was required to untie the sandals of his master. John did not view himself as worthy to perform the duty of the lowliest slave for the Messiah. John the Baptist demonstrated genuine humility. As the forerunner of the Messiah, John demonstrated an appropriate attitude. He focused on Jesus instead of drawing attention to himself.

3:21-22 Jesus was not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, as were all the other people whom John baptized. Rather, Jesus was baptized to identify Himself and His ministry with the ministry and message of His forerunner. Prayer, especially Jesus’ praying, is a strong emphasis of Luke’s Gospel. This is a relatively rare scriptural passage in which all three persons of the Godhead are mentioned: (1) the Father who said, You are My beloved Son, (2) Jesus the Divine Son, who was being baptized, and (3) the Holy Spirit who was in physical appearance like a dove. The words “You are My beloved Son” echo Psalm 2:7, while “I take delight in You” looks back to a key prophecy of the messianic Servant in Isaiah 42:1.

LUKE 4:1-13

4:1-2 Jesus’ temptations recorded in Luke 4:1-13 follow His baptism and precede the beginning of His public ministry. Between the record of Jesus’ baptism and His temptations in the wilderness, Luke inserted a genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38). Matthew recorded the temptations immediately following Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 4:1-11). Significantly, Jesus’ temptations followed God’s strong affirmation of His Son at His baptism. Jesus’ responses to the temptations clarified how He would approach His public ministry. Satan’s temptations were directed at Jesus as the Son of God, a reminder of God’s affirmation: “This is My beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17). Since Jesus uniquely was fully human as well as fully divine, He was subject to the devil’s temptations.

4:3-4 Satan tested Jesus at the point of His physical weakness—hunger (“tell this stone to become bread,” v. 2). The phrase “if you are the Son of God” expresses no doubt that Jesus is God, and is best understood as, “Since you are the Son of God.” The Devil tried to bait Jesus into satisfying His extreme hunger by exercising His divine powers. Jesus’ duty, however, was to suffer and patiently endure hardship as a perfectly obedient human who waited for God’s deliverance and empowerment (v. 1). Jesus answered by citing the written Word of God (Dt 8:3). The context of this citation deals with Israel’s needs being met in the wilderness for 40 years, physically through the manna and spiritually by the presence and Word of God.

4:5-12 The order of the second and third tests is reversed in Luke 4 from Matthew 4. The obvious reason would be that the wider structure of the Gospel of Luke depicted Jesus moving toward Jerusalem, with the final test in Luke taking place on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem.

4:5-8 As Messiah, Jesus will rule over all the kingdoms of the world at the end of the age (see Rev 11:15). The Devil tried to entice Jesus with a shortcut to that kind of world-wide authority. Even though Satan is called “the ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31), his claim that the world was given over to him and that he can give it to anyone he wants is untrue. The Devil is a usurper of God’s realm. It is no surprise that he did not tell the truth here, for he is “a liar and the father of liars” (Jn 8:44). Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 to make clear that only God is worthy of worship, a point that echoes the first of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3).

4:9-12 After two failed tests (vv. 3-8), the Devil attempted to catch Jesus off balance by quoting Scripture. In challenging Jesus to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple (from which the fall may have been over 100

feet), the Devil referred to Psalm 91:11-12, claiming that angels would rush to the rescue if Jesus jumped. Jesus did not deny the truth of the Scripture the Devil quoted, just the application he gave it. In clear contrast, He cited Deuteronomy 6:16, which recalls the tragedy of Israel's complaining and testing God at Meribah and Massah (Ex 17:1-7).