



February 21, 2010 The First Sunday of Lent

“Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty day to be tempted by the devil.” Luke 4:1

Dear Friends;

Children often ask the question of other children, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” This is more than idle speculation. They are trying to discover who they are and what their mission in life will be. They will imagine being different things, and see if it fits.

As they grow older there will be those who will try to push them in one direction or another. But sooner or later they like all of us must come to a clear understanding of who we are, lest we drift aimlessly or become constantly manipulated by others.

Jesus, led by the Spirit had come to a clear understanding of himself and his message—he is the beloved ‘son of God.’ His understanding of what that means will come into conflict with what others want to tell him it means.

Jesus is not going to give in to evil forces or popular expectations to be militaristic, warrior hero and wonderworker. The first temptation asks whether Jesus will use his power flamboyantly changing stones to bread or will his teaching warm stony hearts to share with those who do not have bread.

The second temptation poses will Jesus give in to the political rulers and the status quo or will he exercise his authority in a different way—as a servant moving others to serve God by serving others.

The third temptation tries to shake Jesus’ dependence on God. Will Jesus coerce faith and avoid death by using supernatural powers or will he draw others to God by promoting justice even if his efforts will ultimately lead to his death.

Jesus will successfully counter these temptations but unless we think that after his desert experience it was over Luke tells us that the devil “departed him for a time. Lk 4:13”

What does this mean for us? Just like Jesus there are forces all around us telling us who we are and what we should be. They make us doubt our Spirit-blessed identity as child of God and sibling of Christ. We are told we must have money, beauty, luxury and power—to be self-sufficient dependent only on our deified self.

This season of Lent is a time for us to shut out the other voices who invites us as beloved children and to act on the love we experience sharing it with the least and lowliest. And to know that we will face resistance but our trust in Jesus will help us overcome the world’s hostility.

Peace,

Ft. Ron