



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Reach In”

Ps. Tim Johnson – May 4, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Who did you turn to as a teenager when you had struggles of some kind?
- Who is someone you turn to today when you are going through something challenging?
- Who helped you through your darkest hour so far in life?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. (Matthew 4:1-11 ESV)

Jesus' wilderness struggle is as powerful an example of the Spirit's role in our lives as are all the miracles Jesus performed by the Spirit. Most people live in the world of challenges, struggles, and temptations. Many get discouraged and give up the fight, assuming they cannot overcome. Yet we must remember that temptation itself is not sin. Yielding to temptation is sin. Others make the mistake of thinking that they don't need to be on guard against certain temptations, because they have done well for some time. But we must always remember that we need the help of the Holy Spirit in all things.

Jesus defeated temptation and Satan. In doing so he exposed the tactics of Satan, which were also used against Eve (Genesis 3:1-6), as well as against us. *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.* (1 John 2:16 ESV) It seems that Satan has no new tactics, but that all his temptations of humans ultimately boil down to these fundamental ploys.

Jesus is our great Deliverer. He has provided for our regeneration, forgiveness, reconciliation, and justification. Furthermore, he has provided for our internal transformation and strengthening through the Holy Spirit. We are not merely forgiven, but left defeated. The Holy Spirit is given to us to apply all the benefits of salvation that Jesus has procured for us. We need the Holy Spirit.

The events immediately preceding Jesus' wilderness struggle are important. He had just been baptized in water, with the Holy Spirit descending upon him as a dove and the voice of the Father audibly declaring his pleasure in the Son. This prepared him for what was next. It was the Father's will right after this to lead him into the wilderness. The testing Jesus faced there was not designed by the Father to break Jesus, but to prove him true and pure. It was to demonstrate that he would not sin. Temptation involves the enticement to do evil, which is what Satan does. God never tempts anyone. But he does test us in order to prove our faith, develop our character, and mature us.

The result of Jesus' successful testing and denial of temptation was the launching of his public ministry in great spiritual power. *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness... And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.* (Luke 4:1, 14 ESV)

We too need to be filled with, led by, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8 ESV)

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 ESV)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13 ESV)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit... (Ephesians 5:18 ESV)
The original Greek of this verse makes clear that we are to be continually filled by the Holy Spirit; that is, we have need of God's presence in our lives on a daily basis.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17 ESV)

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- Have you ever experienced a time of testing following a significant spiritual experience? What did you learn?
- What is something you have overcome with the help of the Holy Spirit? How do you practically preserve and build upon the result of what the Holy Spirit helped you overcome?
- How has the Holy Spirit worked through you to help others overcome things in their lives?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would fill us and our church with the Holy Spirit.
- That God would lead us and our church by the Holy Spirit.
- That God would empower us and our church with the Holy Spirit in order to effectively advance God's kingdom.