HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 3 & 4

**Main Point**

Jesus called those who follow Him to repent of sin and resist temptation that they might experience freedom in Him.

Read Luke 3:1-9.

* **What do we miss if we fail to turn toward God in repentance and only turn away from sin?**
* **How did the crowds miss the point that saving faith leads to serving faith? What excuse did they have for not living for and serving God?**

At a wedding ceremony, the bride and groom pledge to cling to each other for better or worse. On the wedding day, the couple can’t see fully what such a promise means. They aren’t able to see the hardship they will face, the challenges they will need to overcome, or even the joyful times they will have together. Still, the couple commits to one another, no matter where the journey leads. The same is true in following Jesus. We have no way of knowing where life with Him will lead. However, we can be certain that He will be with us, no matter what challenges we face. In today’s passage, we will see how Jesus himself faced temptation and the way He recalled the truth of Scripture to remain faithful to God in this testing. Jesus calls His followers to repent of sin and resist temptation that we might experience freedom in Him.

Read Luke 3:1-20

* **According to Luke 3:15-16, how was John different from Jesus?**
* **Put John’s warning in verse 17 into your own words. Why was this important to note in a conversation about repentance and the coming Messiah?**

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.

Read Luke 3:21-38

* **Eighteen years had passed since Jesus, at the age of 12, went to the temple and listened to the religious teachers. Why do you think He chose to go to a river to announce the start of His ministry, rather than back to the temple? Who did He identify himself with through this action?**
* **Why was Jesus baptized, even though He didn’t need to repent of His sins?**

Luke used two accounts in Luke 3:21-38 to describe Jesus’ credentials as the Messiah. First was Jesus’ baptism, at which the Heavenly Father audibly affirmed Jesus as God’s Son. Second was a genealogical record that traced Jesus’ lineage through the Israelite patriarchs back to Adam, the first “son” of God (that is, first human that God created).

Luke continued to emphasize Jesus’ connection with humble people and he set the stage for Jesus’ work on behalf of sinful humanity. 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. By being at the river that day, He associated with repentant sinners.

Read Luke 4:1-15

* **Why do you think God’s Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness?**
* **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.)**

When Jesus returned from being baptized by John, He was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit to His encounter withthe Devil in the wilderness. The role of the Holy Spirit here is significant for at least three reasons: (1) the Spirit's role in driving Jesus to the wilderness shows Jesus' face-off with the Devil was ordained by God; (2) the Spirit's activity is a repeated emphasis in Luke's Gospel; (3) the Spirit's involvement in Jesus' life highlights Jesus' genuine humanity. The filling (Eph. 5:18) and leading of the Spirit (Gal. 5:18) are key aspects of empowerment for the Christian life. The wilderness is where Israel failed its test of faith before God (Num 14). Jesus would pass the wilderness test that Israel could not. Also, Jesus was being tested as &quot;the last Adam&quot; (1Cor. 15:45), the One who would succeed where the first Adam failed.

Read Luke 4:16-30.

* **What are the key roles of the Messiah listed in this passage?**
* **What is the significance of Jesus’ use of this Old Testament prophecy to define His mission?**
* **Think back to your conversion experience. How have you experienced freedom in Christ as proclaimed in verses 18 and 19?**

God assigned the Messiah specific functions. First, He came to preach good news to the poor. Second, the Messiah came to proclaim freedom to the captives—those in the prison house of sin. Third, recovery of sight to the blind took place through the Messiah. The healing of physical blindness brings a new perspective on life. The healing of spiritual blindness brings new life altogether. Fourth, the Messiah arrived to set free the oppressed. Fifth, the Messiah came to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor (see Lev. 25:10-17). This tradition symbolized the new start in life people can experience as a result of the Messiah’s mission.

* **What are some of the attitudes that may have been behind the question in Luke 4:22, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” Why did the Nazarenes’ familiarity with Jesus present a challenge to their acceptance of His mission?**
* **Why is it sometimes hardest to witness to a family member or close friend?**
* **How should Jesus’ description of His mission in Luke 4 impact the mission of churches and believers today? How do you see its impact in our church?**

From Nazareth Jesus went on His way. Even as His hometown rejected Him, Jesus relentlessly pursued His mission. The Nazarenes lost an opportunity, but Jesus continued to offer it to others. He demonstrated an uncommon focus to get the job done.

Read Luke 4:31-41.

* **What feature of Jesus’ teaching most astonished His listeners? What are features that cause you to judge whether a message has authority?**
* **Discuss Jesus’ authority in this passage: How did He use it? How is it different from human authority? How is it related to the kingdom of God? How are we to live under His authority?**

Jesus undertook a revolutionary type of ministry. His personal approach aimed to meet people’s various needs. Those needs included release from demonic control and healing from sickness. Foremost was the need to hear the good news of God’s kingdom.

Luke does not elaborate on the exact nature of the authority that Jesus demonstrated through His teaching in Capernaum on the Sabbath. Most likely the authority derived from the fact that Jesus' message was directly from God, not merely from the religious authorities of earlier generations whom Jewish teachers typically cited.