

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 4: 13-22

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week, we are going to read Luke Chapter 4 and today we will read verse 13 to 22.

Verses 1–12 speak of Jesus Christ being led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. What happened afterward? The conclusion is found in verse 13.

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

We must recognize that the devil is extremely crafty. When he comes to tempt people, he never stops. When he saw that he could gain nothing from Jesus, he withdrew from Him for a time, seeking other opportune moments.

Today, the devil's temptation toward each of God's children follows the same principle. He is always looking for opportunities to tempt God's children. Being tempted is not the same as sinning. Many times, when we are not paying attention, an evil thought enters our hearts from the devil—this is the devil's scheme. But how we respond determines whether we will fall into sin.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was tempted in all things, yet He did not sin. As recorded here, after He was tempted, He rejected the devil's temptations and forcefully countered them with the word of God. Many times, however, we are not that strong in our spirit, and we are not that familiar with God's word, so it seems we are unable to reject the devil's temptations as firmly as Jesus did.

In such situations, there is actually another way: we should quickly flee. Do not allow yourself to remain in a state of temptation. Human beings are weak; if

temptation lasts long enough, it is hard not to fall into sin. May God grant us wisdom—on the one hand, to learn to be continually filled with God’s word, to maintain constant fellowship with God, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If we cannot do that, then at the very least, we must learn to flee immediately when temptation comes. Just as in the Old Testament, when Joseph was tempted by Potiphar’s wife and she seized his garment, he chose rather to leave his garment behind and flee. Paul also told Timothy to flee youthful lusts.

Verse 14-15: “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.”

Jesus’ ministry on earth began at the age of thirty. The first year, in fact, was a hidden ministry. During this year, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke basically record nothing about it. It was not until thirty years later, when apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, that he went back and recorded that first year of Jesus’ hidden ministry. In John chapter 1, we see that after Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, He encountered the apostle John and Andrew. Andrew then introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. Jesus also called Philip and Nathanael. After that, there was the first miracle—turning water into wine—at Cana of Galilee. These events most likely all took place between verses 13 and 14.

Therefore, what is recorded in verse 14 should indicate that Jesus had already completed the first year of His hidden ministry after His baptism. Why was it hidden? Because at that time, the ministry of John the Baptist had not yet ended. During this period, Jesus, being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, returned to Galilee, and His fame spread throughout the surrounding region. He then began to teach in the synagogues, and He was praised by all.

Verse 16: “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. “

The Scripture reading on the Sabbath usually followed a set schedule, and anyone who was observing the Sabbath was allowed to stand up and read the Scriptures aloud. It so happened that on that day they were reading from the book of Isaiah.

Verse 17-18: ” And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.’”

At that time, the Old Testament Scriptures were all written on animal skins and rolled up into scrolls. Within the scrolls, there were no chapter divisions, verse numbers, or punctuation like we have today. Once a scroll was opened, it was filled with dense lines of text, so it was not easy to locate a specific passage. Yet under God’s sovereign authority, on that particular day they were reading from the book of Isaiah. Jesus, being full in His spirit and knowing what He ought to read, opened the Scriptures and found the place where it was written—clearly showing that He was very familiar with the Scriptures.

The portion He read was from Isaiah 61:1–2. It says: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me.” Jesus is the Christ, and Christ means “the Anointed One,” the One anointed by God with the Holy Spirit. By reading this passage, Jesus was in effect publicly declaring: I am that Anointed One, anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Then it continues: “to preach the gospel to the poor.” The “poor” here should be understood as those who are poor in spirit—those who are humble in spirit. When a person is willing to listen to the gospel and willing to humble himself, the Lord is

willing to preach the gospel to him. “To preach the gospel to the poor,” “He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”

Jesus used this passage from Isaiah to explain the main aspects of His ministry on earth. First, liberty to the captives. Ever since Adam sinned, all humanity fell into sin and came under condemnation by the law, and thus all were held captive by sin. Those who were condemned under the law were captives, and He came to release us who were captive, so that we might come out of sin.

Second, recovery of sight to the blind. We were created by God, made in His image and according to His likeness, yet we did not know God—we were blind. When He comes to preach the gospel, those who are blind are able to see. Third, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Today we are often driven by profit, stirred up by temptation, oppressed on every side, and lacking freedom everywhere. Jesus came so that people might gain true freedom. Just as people today may have the freedom to sin, but do not have the freedom not to sin—true freedom is freedom in the Holy Spirit.

Verse 19: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

In the land of Israel, all leases and all debts were completely canceled every fifty years, in the year of Jubilee. During those fifty years, if someone became poor and even sold his land, when the fiftieth year came, everything would be returned to its original owner. This Jubilee is what Jesus was referring to here when He spoke of “the acceptable year of the LORD.” This is truly good news: God desires to restore us to His original intention in creating humanity, so that people may truly enjoy everything God has prepared for us.

If you read Isaiah 61:1–2, you will find that it is essentially the same. It says: “...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of

our God...” What is very striking is that Jesus stopped in the middle of the sentence. He stopped at “to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” The next part—“and the day of vengeance of our God”—He did not read.

This is because when Jesus Christ came the first time, His purpose was to bring the gospel to the earth—to bring this wonderful message, the message of the Jubilee, the message of freedom, to the world. The “day of vengeance of our God” belongs to His second coming, which will be the primary focus of His work then. One day, when the time is fulfilled, He will return, and the purpose of His return will be judgment. Jesus, in great wisdom, found in the book of Isaiah the exact portion He needed to read, and He stopped precisely at the words “to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” This shows that His first coming was a ministry full of grace, to bring the gospel of grace to all people.

Verse 20: “Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.”

When Jesus was reading the Scripture, His words must have been full of authority, so that people felt something was different when they heard Him; therefore, they fixed their eyes on Jesus, staring at Him intently.

Verse 21: “And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

This marked the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. He told the Jews in the synagogue very clearly and with certainty: I am the Messiah who was written about in the book of Isaiah.

Verse 22: “So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

Thank the Lord that each one of us has a Bible in our hands. This Bible is God's word of grace spoken to us. By setting aside some time each day to be in the Scriptures, we listen daily to God speaking tender words to our hearts. May we also become people who are poor in spirit, willing to receive the gospel of grace that God proclaims to us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Today You are still speaking, and You are still speaking to each one of us through Your Scriptures, revealing Your will for what You want us to do and the path You want us to walk. Lord, help me in my life today, that in everything I may have the leading of Your Holy Spirit, and in everything the guidance of Your word. Give me a humble heart and a teachable spirit, willing to obey Your word. When I encounter temptation, help me to resist or to flee from every temptation, so that I may not fall into sin. Thank You for blessing my life today. I pray this in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!