

Where is Hope?
A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday November 6, 2022
Remembrance Day

Luke 4:1-15

As we read our Bibles, I suggest you keep in mind that we are entering a different world, a different time, a different sense of the world, a different culture, and a different scientific understanding of the world, and therefore different importance is going to be placed on some things rather than others. The author, Luke, isn't always concerned with the same things we are concerned with.

So, I invite you to try to watch and listen for what is important to Luke as he tries to give you a solid foundation in faith. Have a look back to end of Chapter 3. When you look at the genealogy hopefully you saw some names you recognized. Jesus comes from the line of many names you'll recognize including David, Boaz, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Shem, Noah, Lamech, Seth and Adam.

There are also some names that you won't recognize. And there is something wonderful about that. There are people, who we don't know anything about, who raised their families in faith, who are part of the line of Jesus, and are essential to God's plan and design.

Maybe you and I are people like that... we are not the stars of the story, but we are still essential to God's plan. Because of our faithfulness, sharing our faith, mentoring others in faith, God's design and plan is accomplished.

Adam (at the end of Chapter 3) was named the first "son of God." "Who was just called "son of God"? (Jesus - Luke 3:22) Jesus is the new Adam, who at his baptism was claimed as God's beloved son. The first Adam – the first human, lived in a beautiful garden with God, was appointed to rule with God over the land and the sea and animals. The first humans Adam and Eve were given all the fruit of the trees to enjoy and were given one rule- not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowing good and bad.

A serpent, a crafty deceiver, comes to the woman and tells that she should eat the fruit of the tree for she will become like God knowing good from bad. The woman took matters into her own hands. She decided to listen to the serpent – who she

was supposed to rule over. She decided that wisdom on her own terms was good and that she wanted to be like God – on her own terms, doing what was wise in her own eyes.

She and her husband saw that fruit was good for eating, and desirable for making one wise, and so they took and ate. Rebelling against what God had told them. And in that rebellion, in choosing to be wise in their own eyes, death entered, and sin and death multiplied.

The man and woman were hiding from each other, they hid from God. Their first-born son Cain killed his brother Abel. Within a few generations, there was destruction and pain, brokenness and death filling the earth. God began his rescue mission which kept failing because of human rebellion. Now we have the new Adam who has just come on the scene, and he is driven out into the wilderness by the Spirit of God.

As I read this again and thought about it, I found myself anxious and almost holding my breath. What would the new Adam do? Would he overcome the deceiver when everyone else had failed?

There Jesus is by himself in the wilderness, 40 days, like Moses and the people who were there 40 years. The wilderness is a place of testing for God's people, would they trust God, would they follow God's ways? Very often God's people did not trust and failed the tests.

The accuser, the devil came to Jesus in the wilderness tempting, trying to trick Jesus first into proving who he was: "If you are the son of God..." Turn stones into bread. Moses gave the people bread in the wilderness. If Jesus is the son of God surely he can do as Moses did. Jesus will not give in to the devil and his ways.

Next Jesus was offered the kingdoms of the world. Jesus is David's son, the new Moses, the new Adam, and was sent to rule the world. What kind of kingdom will this be, and who will be the authority? Will Jesus rule on his own terms and do what is wise in his own eyes?

He could take up his kingdom the easy way, avoid the confrontations with the religious leaders, he could put Rome under his thumb, he could forego the cross and the suffering. All Jesus had to do was give in to the deceiver and bow before

devil. It would have been so much easier. Jesus would have received the glory, the power, the control of the kingdom... imagine what he could have done...

On this Remembrance Day Sunday, how many leaders/rulers have chosen the path of the devil taking the glory, the power, control of kingdoms, doing what was wise in their own eyes?

The last temptation is about seizing the power and glory at the Temple in Jerusalem. A dive from the pinnacle and angels bearing you up would be a spectacular way to seize the power and control of the Temple.

The devil, ever the deceiver even quotes scripture, and twists them to his own purposes. But Jesus is not deceived.

Maybe the one question of our lives is "who's will, will be done?" Are we willing to do God's will, which means doing things God's way, in God's time? Or are we going to grasp and scheme and get our own way, being wise in our own eyes, and doing things our own way, in our own time?

As I was reading this passage again, I was struck that the devil's ideas didn't seem so bad. Jesus was going to rule, did he really need to follow the path of suffering and death on a cross?

If Jesus had taken the devil up on his offer, I imagine that Jesus would have been exalted as King over all – but it would have meant death for all of us. There would have been no rescue for us.

As I reflect on this passage, I see again how easily I am deceived.

Jesus is the new Adam, the new human, who isn't deceived, who isn't swayed, who won't do what is wise in his own eyes, but will wait upon God, who will follow God's ways even when it means suffering and death.

The devil throws everything he has at Jesus, I take that to mean that Jesus was tempted in other ways, but in the end, the devil left him. Jesus triumphed where no one else has.

In this day, I am reminded in this passage, that God's ways aren't the same as our ways. The kings and rulers and leaders of this world grasp for glory and power for themselves at any price.

People, like you and me, very much want to be wise, and be like God, even sometimes twisting God's word to serve our own ends.

Thank God we have a Saviour to follow, following in his steps, learning his ways, listening for his voice alone we learn the path to abundant life, and when we fall, he is our forgiveness and strength.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 4:1-15 The Message

¹ 1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.' "⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "⁹ Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' ¹¹ and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "¹² Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.¹⁴ Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.