

**THE SPIRIT DROVE JESUS OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS,
AND IT WASN'T IN AN AIR-CONDITIONED LIMO!**

**THE SPIRIT DROVE JESUS. A POWERFUL WORD. SOME
TRANSLATIONS SAY THE SPIRIT LED HIM, SOME SAY THE
SPIRIT THRUST HIM. SOMETHING BIG IS HAPPENING
HERE TO JESUS, FOR THE SPIRIT TO ACT SO STRONGLY.**

**WE CAN READ INTO THOSE WORDS THAT JESUS HIMSELF
DIDN'T PARTICULARLY WANT TO GO INTO THE
WILDERNESS. IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE JESUS WAS KEEN
TO GO.**

**SO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN JESUS' LIFE AT THIS
MOMENT?**

**HE HAS JUST BEEN BAPTISED BY JOHN IN THE RIVER
JORDAN. THE HOLY SPIRIT HOVERED OVER HIM LIKE A
DOVE, AND HE HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD HIS FATHER
SAY: "YOU ARE MY SON, MY BELOVED. MY FAVOUR IS ON
YOU."**

HE CAN NOW SAY: "WOW. I AM GOD'S SON. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS? WHAT THINGS CAN I DO WITH THIS "BEING GOD'S SON?"

HERE IS THE ANSWER TO THOSE QUESTIONS OF JESUS. IT IS ONLY IN THE WILDERNESS ALONE WITH GOD, THAT JESUS CAN ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS FOR HIMSELF.

IN HIS GOSPEL, MARK DOESN'T TELL US WHAT THIS TIME OF TESTING WAS ABOUT.

LUKE TELLS US THAT HERE IN THE WILDERNESS JESUS WAS TEMPTED TO USE HIS NEW FOUND KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AFTER 40 DAYS OF FASTING, JESUS WAS HUNGRY. THE DEVIL TEMPTED HIM TO USE HIS POWER TO TURN STONES INTO BREAD ROLLS AND SATISFY HIS HUNGER.

JESUS RESPONDS THAT WE DON'T LIVE ON BREAD ALONE. WE MUST SEEK NOURISHMENT AND LIFE SUPPORT FROM GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE.

THE DEVIL TEMPTED HIM TO LEAVE GOD OUT OF HIS LIFE FROM NOW ON, AND DO HIS OWN THING WITH THE POWER HE HAS AS GOD'S SON. JESUS RESPONDS THAT HE, AND WE, MUST WORSHIP THE LORD OUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ALONE.

HE WAS TEMPTED TO PUT GOD TO THE TEST, TO MAKE GOD PROVE HIS LOVE FOR JESUS, BY BEING ABSOLUTELY STUPID AND THROW HIMSELF FROM THE HIGHEST PART OF THE TEMPLE. IF GOD LOVES HIM HE WILL NOT LET HIM BE HURT. AGAIN JESUS RESPONDS IN THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE: "YOU MUST NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST".

IN THESE THREE MOMENTS, JESUS FACES ALL THE TEMPTATIONS WE ALL FACE.

WE CAN BE DRAWN AWAY FROM A DEEP, COMMITTED RESPONSE TO US BEING BELOVED SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD.

WE ARE SO EASILY DISTRACTED TO FEED OUR HUNGER FOR WHATEVER WE THINK WE NEED TO BE HAPPY AND CONTENTED IN LIFE. WE NEED THIS, OR WE WANT THAT. HOW DEEPLY DO WE REALISE THAT OUR REAL HUNGER, OUR BASIC NEED IS TO KNOW GOD IN OUR LIVES. TO LIVE OUR LIVES BASED ON GOD'S WORD TO US?

HOW WE CAN BE TEMPTED TO DO OUR OWN THING, TO LEAVE GOD OUT, TO PUT HIM TO THE TEST BY OUR OWN FOOLISHNESS. HOW OFTEN WE CAN FORGET ABOUT GOD UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS WHEN WE THINK: NOW I REALLY NEED HIM. IT IS THEN THAT WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES: WHERE HAS GOD BEEN IN MY LIFE WHEN THINGS WERE GOOD FOR ME? AM I ONLY A BAD WEATHER FRIEND OF GOD?

IN HIS RESPONSE TO TEMPTATION, JESUS WAS ACTUALLY MAKING A COMMITMENT TO GOD, TO THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD, TO THE ADULT, SENSIBLE RESPONSE TO GOD. TO BE AWARE OF OUR NEED FOR GOD AT ALL TIMES, AND OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE IN BOTH EASY AND HARD SITUATIONS.

AFTER HIS WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES, JESUS WENT INTO GALILEE AND BEGAN HIS LIFE OF MINISTRY BY PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS FROM GOD. JESUS IS OUR GOOD NEWS FROM GOD. JESUS IS THE PROOF OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US. HIS MESSAGE IS LIFE-GIVING AND LIFE-SUSTAINING.

HE CONTINUES TO SHOW HIS LOVE AND CARE WHEN HE COMES TO ME IN HOLY COMMUNION: THAT HOLY UNION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND ME.

THE SPIRIT DRIVES US TO RESPOND TO GOD IN OUR LIVES. HOW DO I RESPOND?