

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**March 3, 2022**

**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Deuteronomy 26: 4-10**

**Luke 4: 1-13**

**Romans 10: 8-13**

**1. Deuteronomy 26: 4-10**

- These verses describe a thanksgiving ritual at harvest time. When the people are settled in the Promised Land and are enjoying the harvest bounty, they are not to forget where they came from and what God has done for them. They are to bring a basket of the first fruits of the harvest to the priest and profess this statement.
- They are to express their belief in God by recalling the story of their relationship with God. Their forefathers were wandering refugees who settled in Egypt. When they became a large nation they were enslaved and cruelly treated. They cried out to God and he heard them. With power and might he brought them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. They now bring first fruits to thank God for all that he has done for them.
- Vv 4-10 are a profession of faith. The historical events that mark their relationship with God are recalled. God is a God of history. He intervenes in human history to make himself known. A significant point is that when they were enslaved and in dire straits they cried out to God and God answered their cry for help. The first step to redemption is a cry for help. Recognition of need and a reaching out to the one who can help is essential. God answers with power and rescues them. He brings them from slavery to freedom.
- They never want to forget what God has done for them. They have an annual ritual to remember.

**2. Luke 4: 1-13**

- V. 1: Jesus is empowered with the Holy Spirit after his baptism to begin his mission. First, he must undergo a personal test of his resolve to do what God asks of him and not make compromises due to his special status as God's Son. The three temptations all have to do with how Jesus will live out his mission as Messiah.
- V. 2: Jesus goes out into the desert or wilderness to be tested by the devil. In the wilderness there are no road maps or laid out cities. In the wilderness you need God in order to survive. You must put all your trust in God in order to survive in the wilderness. Jesus is in the wilderness for forty days, a symbolic number that indicates a special time of drawing close to God. He fasts for the whole time and is hungry.
- Jesus' testing in the wilderness reminds us of Israel (also called God's Son) in the desert or wilderness where they wandered for forty years. Instead of passing the test, they tested God. They continually asked if God was with them or not. Where Israel failed, Jesus will succeed.

- It is understandable that he would be hungry after a forty day fast. It is also reasonable that because he is the Son of God, his special status could permit him to make an exception and use his powers as God's Son to turn the stones into bread. Jesus will hear nothing of it. He cuts the devil off by quoting Scripture that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Dt. 8:3). Jesus is affirming that he will use his powers not for his own benefit but for the needs of others.
- In the second temptation, the devil says that he can give Jesus power over all the nations of the world. He says that he can give it to whomever he wishes. The devil is a liar! He has no power to give that kind of authority. The only one who does is God alone. The devil is offering Jesus an easy way out. He offers him the promise of lordship without the suffering of the cross. He may become lord of all, but the same evil structures of the world would still exist. He would be beholden to the devil. Jesus firmly rebukes the devil again with Scripture (Dt. 6: 13). He will do the will of his Father. He will not be the kind of Messiah that people expected—a military hero and champion of the people. He will be a suffering Messiah who rises from the dead as God has planned.
- In the third temptation, the devil dares Jesus to throw himself down from the heights of the temple. He tempts him to put God to the test. Will God save him or not? This is exactly what Israel did in the desert; they put God to the test. This is seductive because such a display of power would present a dramatic introduction to Jesus' ministry. Again, Jesus rejects the temptation with Scripture (Dt. 6:16).
- The temptations of Jesus were real. He was truly tested and overcame them. He was not play acting or pretending. Throughout Jesus' life he was constantly tempted to take the easy way out and avoid the horrifying death of crucifixion. Jesus also committed himself to fully sharing in our humanity which includes suffering. He would not use his divinity to make an easy way.
- The devil leaves but there is the hint that he will return. Jesus is left alone only "for a time."

### **3. Romans 10: 8-13**

- The heart of Paul's message is that we are saved by faith and not by works. By works, he means that we are not saved by obeying all the rules and fulfilling all the commandments. We are saved by believing in Jesus as Son of God and his death and resurrection for us. We believe that our good works and our obeying of the commandments are our response to God saving us not the means of our salvation.
- Preceding our Sunday selection, Paul says that Moses talked about the righteousness that comes from the law and he is talking about the righteousness that comes from faith.
- V. 8: The word of faith is in our mouth and in our hearts. It is very near.

- V. 9: Paul tells us what we must do: confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, believe with our heart that God raised him from the dead. This will bring us salvation.
- V. 10-13: It was risky in Paul's time to make a public confession of faith in Jesus and to believe in his resurrection. For a former Jew, this conversion would cause a break with family and an expulsion from family life. In the civil society, Christians were persecuted and their lives were in danger. Paul assures the church at Rome that if they believe and profess their belief, God will not let them be put to shame. He will save them with no distinction between Jew and Greek. Jesus is Lord of all. Call upon him and he will save you.