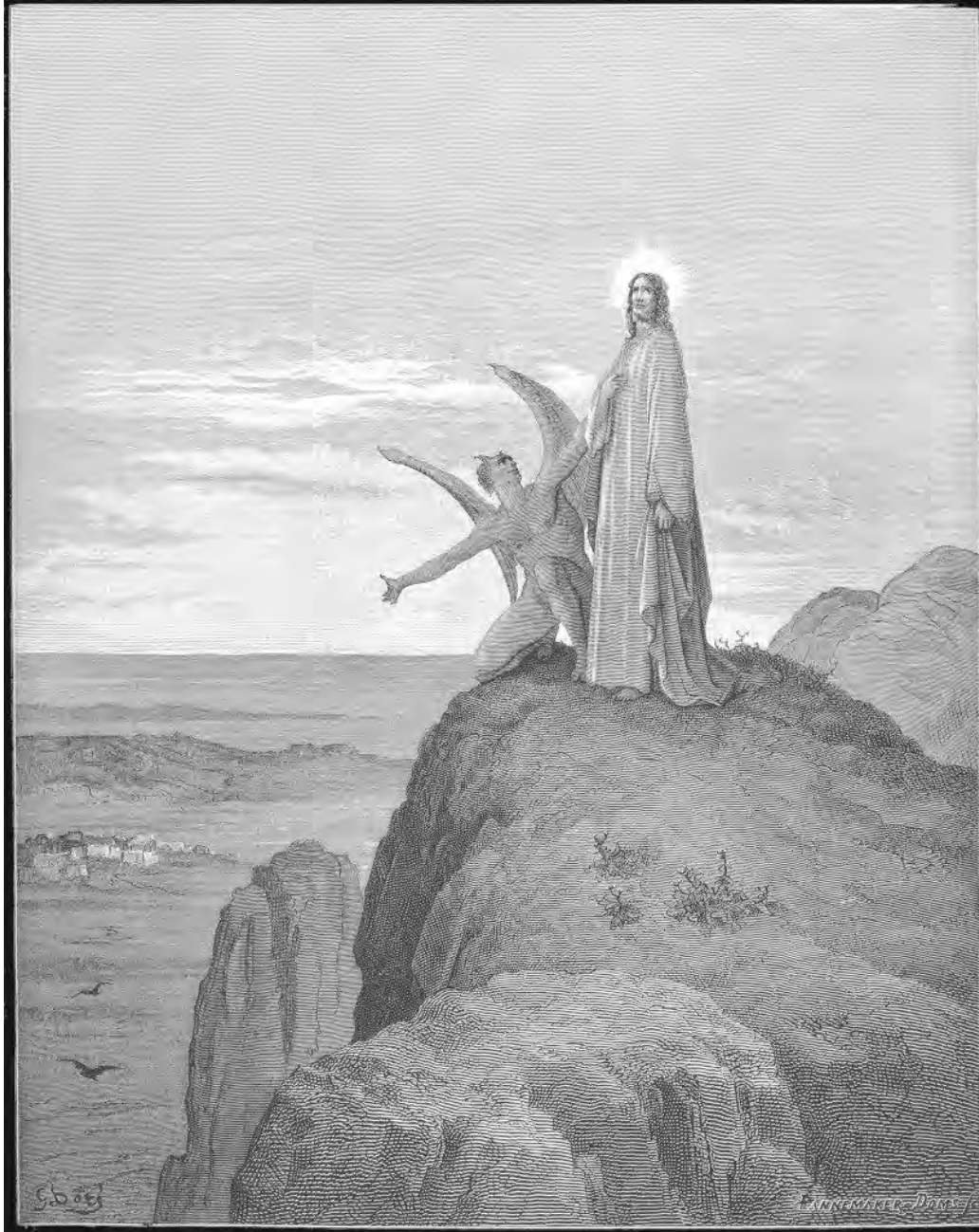


# LUKE—WEEK 5

## ACTION



F. Michael Slay  
*A DEEP Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Luke 4:1–37 — Action

*The Cover Picture is The Temptation by the Devil  
An engraving by Gustave Dore (1832–1883)*

Jesus and John surprise folks.

Jesus emerges from Satan’s temptation to amaze and offend just about everyone.

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T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

Thank you.

Luke 4:1–37 — Action  
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1 Luke 4:1–13 (ESV)

*And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”*

*And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”*

*And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.*

Jesus being hungry at the end of a 40 day fast means that the fast has become life-threatening. This isn't some minor test; Jesus is really being taken to the mat.

What's the point? Why is Jesus being put through this? We get two hints in Hebrews.

*For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. — Hebrews 2:18*

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. — Hebrews 4:15*

He learned and grew from this. It's striking that Jesus needed this kind of disciplining. He is without sin, not to mention smart and wise, yet, this training adds something.

Remember that the next time you're stuck in something really harsh.

Even Jesus needed trials.

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As we see here, discipline need not be punishment for wrongdoing. The greatest discipline is often reserved for the greatest saints. This is a crucial lesson to keep handy for when tough times come. When you're in the thick of things, it's hard to think of anything else other than surviving.

But always remember that trials have a purpose, and try to see your way through to the endpoint.

Then you can reap the full benefit God had in mind when He sent you into those trials.

2 Luke 4:14–15 (ESV)

*And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*

Note that Jesus' ministry is an instant hit. *A report about him went out through all the surrounding country.* The buzz is all about Jesus. Everyone likes His teaching too. *And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*

But it's the first half of verse 14 that's the shocker. *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.*

Why is He in the power of the Spirit? What about His own power? He's the second person of the Trinity. Why does He need the power of the third person of the Trinity?

I doubt we can know, this side of heaven, why Jesus needed the power of the Spirit. But we know that He did. He gave up a lot when he condescended from on high.

*He left his Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite his grace!  
Emptied himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
for O my God, it found out me!  
Amazing love! How can it be?  
That Thou my God shouldst die for me!* — Charles Wesley

What does “*the power of the Spirit*” mean anyway? Who else had *the power of the Spirit*? Can we have that power? These are hard questions.

Or are they? Maybe our knowledge of the Holy Spirit is a bit thin. The Holy Spirit is obviously important, yet we don't talk about Him the way they did in the first century. What changed?

While we don't have all the powers that Christians had in the apostolic age, we have many of them. Most importantly, we still have the Holy Spirit in us. We know this, but don't seem to exercise it.

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It's like we've let the label “Christian” tilt our emphasis toward the second person of the trinity. “Christian” means Christ-like (or little Christ) not Christ-worshipper. If we're to be labeled by who we worship, “Trinitarian” is best. The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity that we're closest to. He's our point of contact. Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is so intimate that the He prays for us.

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* — Romans 8:26-27 (ESV)

3 Luke 4:16–21 (ESV)

*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

*And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

The passage is from Isaiah 61, which begins with *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me.”* Jesus is announcing that He is the anointed one of Isaiah 61. Everyone in the synagogue knows exactly what that means (or so they think). The anointed one is the Messiah.

But notice that Jesus is saying that He’s the anointed one because *The Spirit of the Lord* anointed Him. This happened when John baptized Him *and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”* — Luke 3:22 (ESV)

He’s announcing that He’s the anointed one, but His anointing includes incarnation.

The people in the synagogue don’t know that.

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Also notice what He’s anointed to do.

*“He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

Jesus passed on this aspect of His anointing to His followers. **We** *are anointed to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

“Time out,” you might say, “that isn’t an anointing, but a command. We Christians are tasked with these things, but calling it an anointing is a bit of a stretch, right?”

Nope. Okay, then who does the anointing?

The Holy Spirit. So, are we anointed?

Yup.

4 Luke 4:22–30 (ESV)

*And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?” And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away.*

What’s wrong with this picture?

Man #1: That was awesome!

Man #2: Isn’t this Joseph’s son?

Man #1: Okay, now I don’t like what he’s saying.

Man #2: Hey, let’s throw him off a cliff.

Jesus challenges the crowd about their shabby treatment of prophets, and they react with murderous hatred. Jesus could have said, “You make my point.”

This is a marvelously crisp example of sin’s allergic reaction to truth. Even soccer fans don’t get this crazy. All Jesus does is point out some well-known historical examples of how most people in Israel don’t listen to the truth, and they go ballistic on Him. Hits a bit too close to home, eh?

This can’t be explained; it just is. Our own sin surely blocks us from seeing this clearly. It’s the mechanism behind all kinds of crazy things like denial, hatred, prejudice, etc. One thing is clear though; this is what sent Jesus to the cross—both strategically and physically.

It’s why He had to go, and it’s how the mob sent Him.

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Because of our own sin, we tend to think, “Oh, I’m not like that.” We tend to think we have all the answers, that we’re not the ones who are allergic to the truth. In a way, that’s true. The Holy Spirit in us makes us able to hear truth—just as it will one day enable us to stand in the presence of God without disintegrating. But our old sinful self still hangs on. That’s the war inside of all of us.

*Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. — Ephesians 4:22–24*

Seek humility. Put a bullseye on pride. Ask God to expose our sinful hearts and convict us so that we may grow in the likeness of His image.

5 Luke 4:31–37 (ESV)

*And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.*

Peter wasn't the first person to confess Christ; this guy was. Of course, it wasn't really him; it was the demon. But the demon knew something no one else knew—who Jesus really is.

This passage has a very simple message—one we seem to refuse to learn. Demons' skills are way ahead of ours; we are powerless against them. Only Jesus has power over them.

Charlie Daniels has a song where he challenges the devil to a fiddling contest—and wins. I sure hope he never tries that for real. He put his soul on the line and didn't even ask God for help. Foolish doesn't even begin to describe this.

When Jesus gave the great commission, He said something surprising.

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” — Matthew 28:18*

Not, “you,” “me.” Even the original disciples were not given authority.

He has it all.

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We get this wrong for a pretty good reason. We have powers no one could have even dreamed of a couple of centuries ago. Imagine traveling back in time and displaying modern technology.

The computer screen you're reading this on wouldn't just have amazed them; it would have scared them. Normal works of modern medicine would have been miracles in their eyes.

Imagine their reaction to a simple powered megaphone. What would they have thought of a helicopter? You could have easily convinced them that you're an angel.

But all of this is nothing in the presence of a real angel (good or fallen).

And their powers are nothing compared to the one to whom all authority has been given.

We need to respect this—and use it.

Take prayer seriously.

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Ever had a trial that you later realized you needed?
2. While Jesus was walking among us, what limits were there on His power?
3. At the time Jesus read this, he was already known and popular. How do you think the people who heard this should have reacted? How did they react?
4. Why/how does our sin make us allergic to the truth?
5. When the going gets tough, the tough get on their knees. Why do we forget to do this?