

Episode 18: Power to Overcome

The Satan we read about in the Bible isn't allegorical. He isn't a clever fictional character whose purpose is to point out that you and I have difficult problems. The Bible – both the Old and New Testaments – could not be clearer about this: there is a very real person named Satan and he is our enemy. Jesus Himself certainly demonstrated His own belief in the existence of a personal devil. In three of the four gospel accounts, we read about a specific encounter between Jesus and Satan. For the next three episodes, let's consider Luke's narrative as he describes Jesus' encounter with Satan.

“Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.” But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.’” (Luke 4:1-4)

In this passage, we read that Jesus is “full of the Holy Spirit.” He has just been fasting for forty days and He is spiritually aware. If you have ever been on a lengthy fast, you know that you become more spiritually focused. Jesus is also hungry and it's in His moment of extreme want that Satan confronts Him: “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.” Satan knows how to attack us in our times of stress and distress. Unlike you and me though, Jesus is aware that He could actually turn stones into bread. I would have probably done it, wouldn't you? If I hadn't eaten anything for forty days and had the power to turn stones into bread, I would probably jump at the chance! Jesus doesn't do this. He isn't ruled by His appetites. He also understands that Satan doesn't have His nutritional health or His best spiritual interests in mind. Instead, Jesus uses an Old Testament scripture from Deuteronomy Chapter 8 verse 3: “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

This is a powerful strategy that you and I must use. When Satan preys on our appetites or tempts us to do things we know God wouldn't like, we must use the Scriptures as our defense.

I want to encourage you to be prepared. Read your Bible. Study it. Know it. And when temptations come – as they always do – you'll be prepared to use it.

God's word has great power...and that's wonderfully Good News!

© 2023 Dave Lambert