

Discipleship Moment

Text: Luke 4:1-13

Luke 4 is a great text. It (among other things) alludes to and connects Jesus with the Old Testament stories. Turning stones into bread brings up memories of Israel's wilderness wanderings where they were given Manna from heaven, and when Moses cracked the stone open to miraculously give the Israelites water. The temptation to leap off of the Temple and be miraculously saved by angels recalls the moment when Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are saved from the fiery furnace and attended to by the angel. When the Satan took Jesus up to the tall mountain and showed him the world's nations, we are reminded of the Tower of Babel (which is the same Hebrew word for Babylon) and the pride that ultimately caused humans to be cast away into separate nations.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope that one day someone will be able to live obediently to God. God came, himself, to earth to fulfill this promise. God the Son came, not as an angelic liberator, but as one of us. A human. With all the complex relationships, family drama, and physical limitations.

God the Son sacrificed apathy for empathy. And suffered as we did, so he could save us. Hebrews said this was so that Jesus would not be a High Priest that didn't know human suffering. But joins us in it. I like that. Jesus knows what is like to suffer, to feel betrayed by a loved one (Judas), feel physical pain, work a job, feel the joys of weddings, and the sadness of funerals. Jesus is human, just like you and me. But Jesus never stopped being who he was, he never stopped being Jesus.

Derek Webb, a songwriter, wrote a song called "Take it to the World" where he writes, "And like the Three-in-one, you must become/What you wanna save 'cause that's still the way/He takes to the world."

This how God works. He sacrifices apathy for empathy. This is what Paul took up in his ministry when he said, "I have become all things for all people, so that I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). But Paul never stopped being Paul. For the sake of the Gospel, Paul chose to look, talk, and live like those who he wanted to save. While at the same time being true to himself.

In many ways we are not very good at this. If someone lives different than we do, we usually treat them like they're doing something wrong. If they talk different or dress different we do the same thing. But I think God calls us to become like those in our community who are suffering, I think this is the challenge for our church today.

But we can't stop being ourselves. If you are a white, upper-middle class professional, you can't not be that. But you can start hanging out in the places those who are suffering, who are marginalized in society do. You can be open and receptive to people with different skin tones and clothing choices. Becoming all things to all people means loving, talking to, spending time with, living life with, and supporting those people who look and sound much different than you do.

How can we save somebody if we don't know them? How can we help someone if we don't know what they need? How can we preach about a God who became like us to someone we refuse to be like, or even spend time with?

Sacrifice apathy, and be filled with empathy.

Going Deeper

Use this resource to start conversations about this week's sermon for your personal devotions, with your family, or with your Life Group. You can use one question per day or all at once

- 1 Which temptation that Jesus experienced most resonates with you? Which temptation is most like what you have struggled with?
- 2 What does it mean that God the Son became a human? Why is that important?
- 3 Do you think this helped Jesus save us? Why or why not? How does this help us receive God's love?
- 4 What kind of people in our community are suffering the most? the poor? the Latino community? the working class? the elderly?
- 5 What would it look like if Jesus came to the Sauk Valley today? What would he look like, talk like, wear, drive, where would he work?
- 6 How can people who don't look or sound or dress like that "become all things for all people?"