Worship God only!

Luke 4:1-13

Key verse 4:8 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

After Jesus’ baptism, Luke recorded the genealogy of Jesus. Let’s look at Luke 3:38. “…the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” The Bible says that Adam was the son of God. It is very amazing that God made a man as his child. We can find God’s good intention to create a man. Another name for Jesus is also the Son of God. Adam and Jesus have many things in common. Jesus is sinless. Also Adam was sinless before the fall. They both confronted Satan’s temptation.

God did not give a thick book like today’s Bible to Adam but gave him only one commandment. “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” However, he listened to his wife and ate the forbidden fruit. The consequence of this disobedience was tremendous. They lost intimate relationship with God. They had to live in the cursed world. They became mortal beings. They became victims of Satan’s lie and power.

Now, Jesus came to the world as the new Adam. Jesus defeated Satan’s temptations completely. We want to learn from Jesus how we can defeat Satan’s temptation. Also I pray that we may learn who God is and who we are.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. His heart was filled with God’s words spoken to him, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. Jesus was in desert for forty days without food. I saw some politician fasted for many days to fight against a corrupt government. I really respect their deed. But they fasted at home. At least they drank salty water. At least they slept in a warm house. Jesus fasted in the desert. I am sure that he was exhausted physically and mentally. Then the devil said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” As a man, I would feel that my pride is offended if Satan says to me, “If you are a math PhD, can you solve this calculus problem?” Probably I will do my best to solve the problem to save my pride. Jesus was very hungry. He needed bread desperately. Moreover, he had a power to turn a stone into bread. Satan tempted Jesus to use his power to save himself!

Before looking at Jesus’ response, let’s think of bread problem. Here bread represents not only bread but worldly security such as a good GPA, a good job, a good house, a good car, a handsome husband, a beautiful wife and so on. People use their all power and ability to make their security more secure. People think that they can prove their values by obtaining better and more security.

The devil whispers that we can earn our security by ourselves and we should do our best to earn it. Those who are deceived by Satan’s lie try to obtain their security by themselves so they become stressed out and are always nervous and anxious. Many of my students come to me and tell me that they suffer with a psychotic problem.

People are suffering due to the recent worldwide recession. In Korea, a ferry with many young high school students sunk down and several hundreds of people died stuck in the ferry. We have to know that we can’t control our lives.

Let’s return to how Jesus responded. Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” In Matthew 4, what Jesus said in full is “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” These words were given to the 2nd generation of the Israelites who were saved by God from the hands of Egyptians. They survived in the desert for 40 years and were about to enter Canaan. In the desert, there was nothing to eat. But they did not starve. For 40 years, as God promised, God rained the manna every day except on the Sabbath. They could trust God who rained the manna faithfully for 40 years without fail. They could believe that God’s words are true. They learned that obeying and trusting God’s words is a way to life.

A rabbit does not need to trust God’s words. Actually they can’t even if they want. Only a human who is a being of spirit has a privilege to trust God and his words. It is so because we are beings of not only flesh but also spirit. When God planed to create a man, he wanted a man to be of His own image. God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. ( Gen 2:7 )

We forget that we are beings of flesh and spirit and consider only the welfare of our flesh. But we have to think about what is a true security. Many people dream early retirement. They want to live in Florida, play golf and collect shells in beach. They depend on their money in bank. Do you envy such people? I should envy them if this life on earth is the only life! But we believe that God is our creator, sovereign Ruler of the universe and moreover, our Father. God’s kingdom truly will come someday Our true security should be in God and his kingdom.

One day, Abram had a great sense of loss. He obeyed God’s command to leave his country and came to Canaan. He was still childless and his nephew Lot left him. God appeared to him and said, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” When I studied this story the first time, I was a little bit disappointed. I wanted money, fame, popularity or a high position but God wanted to give himself to Abram as a reward. To many people, one of the greatest rewards is a best friend, a spouse or someone who loves and supports them. God made a man as a being of spirit so that my spirit and God’s spirit may have a wonderful fellowship. How can God give himself to a rabbit as a reward? It is great privilege given only to man.

Look at verses 5 -7. “The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will be all be yours.”” This time, Satan tempted Jesus with the worldly authority and splendor. He promised to give them to Jesus if Jesus worships Satan. Satan revealed his dark lust to be worshiped in the place of God. Satan is saying that He will give Jesus all the authority so that Jesus is the 2nd greatest being of worship next to Satan. People want to be worshiped. My son Ezra does not like one boy because the boy wants to be a leader all the time. Actually Ezra also wants to be a leader so he does not like his friend. UT students want to be worshiped by getting a job at a famous company or bank. I want to be worshiped by publishing a paper in a top journal. We have to know that we are like Satan when we seek people’s worship.

How did Jesus defeat Satan’s lie? Look at verse 8. “Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” Jesus knocked down Satan by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13. “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.” There is only one Being we should worship. He is our God. When we worship God in spirit, God place us in a position of a leader. King David feared God and God placed him to be a king of Israel. The Israelite loved David in God because of his heart after God. God will place us someday in a position to serve. You could be a teacher in school, a team leader in a company or a parent at home. We should decide whether to worship God or to seek people’s worship.

God placed Jesus on earth. Because he feared God, he obeyed God. Finally he died on the cross for our sake. It was not easy at all. To obey God, he had to fight a fight of prayer sweating bloody sweats. Then God gave him the name above every name. One day God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. He could obey God not because God scared him but Abraham learned to trust God absolutely through several decades of fellowship with God. God blessed his obedience and promised to bless the world through his seed. When we worship only God, God will exalt us highly in his kingdom.

After knocked down twice in a row, Satan changed his approach to tempt Jesus. He used God’s word to tempt Jesus. Look at verses 9-11. “The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: “’He will command his angel concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” It is about God’s promise of protection.

Satan provoked Jesus to prove his sonship by throwing himself down from the temple and being saved by God’s angel.

How did Jesus answer? He answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord you God to the test.’” Jesus interpreted Satan’s suggestion as testing God. It is demanding God to prove his character or faithfulness. There are many people who test God. They try to force God to keep his promise immediately, according to their demand. Some demand healing. Others demand money. Some students demand an A on their exam. Some people pray that God may give them an empty parking space in a crowded shopping mall by faith. Their God is so kind and wonderful.

Robert Thomas was a missionary in China. He lost his wife, and then lost his mission at the same time. However, God gave him a shepherd heart for Korea. He tried to enter Korea through armed American trade ship General Sherman. Korean army attacked the ship and Robert Thomas was killed. He was of age 27 at that time. Robert gave a copy of Bible to one solider who was killing him. The solider used the Bible as wallpaper. He accepted Jesus by reading the Bible on the wall and his house became one of the earliest worship places for Christians. His life shows what life of faith looks like. Shall we just demand God according to our lustful desires? Or shall we fear God and serve him only?

We learn that God’s words are a powerful weapon to knock down Satan’s temptation. We should study the Bible with sincere and scholastic attitude to feed our spirit, to discern what is right from wrong, and to obey God. An interesting thing is that all words Jesus quoted are from Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is Moses’ farewell message to the new generation entering the Promised Land. One of the most famous verses “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” is also written in Deuteronomy. Do not forget your God who saved you from the terrible hands of Egyptians! Love your God with your whole being! This is Moses’ last one word to the new generation who might forget God in the abundant Promised Land. Remaining in God’s grace and holding his words and promise is the strongest weapon against Satan’s temptations.

Let’s remember the moment we first accepted Jesus as our Lord. Don’t forget that we are also God’s pleasing children! May God’s love dwell in our hearts abundantly! Don’t forget that we are beings of not only flesh but also spirit. Let’s come to the throne of Grace through prayer and God’s words!