

(Luke 4:1~13, part 3)

God permits various trials and tribulations to enter our life, and uses them to strengthen us and shaping us into the people he would have us to be. You've heard the expression, "*Whatever don't kill you, will make you stronger.*" Which is a very true statement... It is through trials and adversities that we grow the most in our faith. Trails seem to serve the purpose of ridding us of our self-dependence, our self-sufficiency...by what I refer to as "*Squeezing the life out of us*", exhausting us of ourselves, propelling us to throw our full weight on God. I continually find this to be true, time and time again. The strongest believers I've ever met are those who have undergone tremendous adversity and suffering...

James was an "*optimist*" when it came to trials... In his epistle, he writes...

²*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. (Endurance) ⁴But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

James saw trials as the times when God did His greatest work in us... Working in us, strengthening us, making us stronger in the faith. What Satan often uses to try and destroy our faith, God uses to increase our faith...

These trials that we encounter will do one of two things, we will either become "*better*" people, or "*bitter*" people. Here we read of one such trial...and tragically, instead of becoming "*better*" people, they became "*bitter*"... During their 40 year journey through the wilderness, the Lord brought the nation Israel to a place called *Rephidim* (**REF ih dim**)

¹*And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim (**REF – ih – dim**)...
... "*and there was no water for the people to drink.*"*

According to what is written, we learn that God had deliberately led them to this particular place, it was no accident. He knew there was no water there, which strangely enough is the very reason He chose this spot. He brought them here to test the nation, to prove what was in them...and to use this as an opportunity to grow them in the faith.

(Vs 2) But as we see, that was not what happened...²*Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?*

"Chide" means to quarrel, to wrangle or argue heatedly with someone... it speaks of becoming violent. In other words, they got hot with Moses, and demanded that he provide them with water to drink! Moses responded by asking them, **why they were so upset with him?** Which may seem apparent at first, suggesting that they were angry at him for bringing them to a place that didn't have any water! But even so, Moses still is justified by his questioning them, because it was not his fault, he was only doing what the Lord commanded him to do. (Here is a whole other message, for another time) The people constantly murmured and complained against Moses the entire 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and the truth of the matter is, none of it was his fault. The trials and tribulations they endured they had either brought upon themselves or God had brought them to prove his people, to build them up. But nevertheless, they blamed Moses...

He asked a second question...*wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?* Moses accuses them of "*tempting*" the Lord... The word "*tempt*" means *to test*, *to prove*, *to try*... Listen, the Lord had led them to this particular place, a place with no water, and He knew that. He brought them here to "*test them.*" In hopes that they

would respond rightly, by looking to Him to supply their needs. But as we see here, it was a test that they failed miserably.

Not only did they fail the test, they turned the situation around and tried to test the Lord!

(Vs 7b) We learn they were Questioning God...

As if to say, “Where’s your God at Moses?”

“Is He with us...or not? (If God is with us...where’s the water?)

(Vs 3) As they grew *more thirsty*...they grew *more agitated*...

They began complaining against the “*Man of god*,” the one the Lord had chosen to led them...

- It’s all your fault...
- You are the one who brought us out here to just die of thirst...
- At least we had water back in Egypt...

(Vs 4) Moses cries out to the Lord for a solution...

⁴And Moses cried unto the LORD, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

Things were quickly escalating, it had gotten to the point, they were close to killing him...

(Vs 5) The Lord provides water...⁵And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smote the river, take in thine hand, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The passage suggest that *this miracle* was hidden from the eyes of the people... God instructed Moses to “go ahead of the people” and to “take the elders with him”. Suggesting that only the elders witnessed the miraculous miracle of God bringing forth water from a rock. It seems to teach that rather than pacify murmurs and complainers, rather than granting their wishes...the Lord seems to have reserved this miracle and used it as a time to strengthen the leadership. No doubt, by what they witnessed, they grew in faith towards God.

The “*Smiting of the rock*” here is a picture of Christ... Something Paul refers to in 1Corinthians 10, when he reviews Israel’s journey’s in the wilderness. He refers to as the “*Spiritual drink*,” referring to the fact that it’s supply was from God. The smitten rock represents the smitten Christ, crucified so that he might supply our every need.

To serve as a constant reminder to Israel of their sinful actions, God named the place...

(Vs 7) Because of the way they responded to the test, the Lord names the place with 2 different names...

⁷And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Massah...(MASS uh)...Which means to test, to try...

Meribah...(MEHR ih buh)...Which means contention, quarrelling...

The names would serve as a constant reminder of Israel’s sin...and God’s faithfulness to Israel...

That's an interesting story, but the main reason I shared that with you, was that it helps serve to explain Jesus' temptation by Satan in the wilderness...

(Luke 4:9~12) Lastly, he tempts Jesus to tempt God...⁹*And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:*
¹⁰*For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: ¹¹And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

In his final attempt to get Jesus to sin, Satan tries to get Jesus to prove God's faithfulness by jumping off the temple, declaring that by doing so, **if God is true to His word**, He'll prove it by catching him. (*It's really just an attempt to try and get Jesus to put God to the test...*)

Interestingly enough, this time, *Satan quotes scripture*... He is quoting from Psalm 91:11~12...

¹¹*For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. ¹²They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Something we need to understand... Satan is one of the leading authorities of knowledge in scripture. He knows scripture, and can quote it. But he does not value it, or reverence it, he only uses it for his own purposes and to deceive people. If you remember, he used the "words of God" to deceive Eve.

¹*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said**, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

He takes the word of God and adds a slight twist...changing it's meaning... This is one of the most effective ways that false teachers work. They deceive many with the very word of God.

With a subtle and clever twist, the tempter attempts to use the Holy word of God, to get Jesus to sin... Having made it clear that he will not go against the word of God, by quoting scripture to Satan's two previous attempts, Satan cites a couple of verses from God's holy word, and then calls for Jesus to be obedient to it. As he does with all scripture, he twist it to conform to his desires, he uses it for his benefit. God didn't say that concerning jumping off a pinnacle, but that's how Satan twisted it sound.

Aware of his craftiness...Jesus quotes another scripture to repudiate Satan's claims...

¹²*And Jesus answering said unto him, **It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.***

Jesus is quoting from Deuteronomy 6... ¹³*Thou shalt **fear the LORD** thy God, (**Reverence**) and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. ¹⁴Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; ¹⁵(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. ¹⁶Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. (MASS uh)*

Rather than question God, and call out for Him to prove himself, Jesus refuses... He would not put God to the test! For God has nothing to prove... HE is God! To call on God to PROVE himself, is automatic indication of doubt! Here Jesus declares He will not "TEMPT God" by asking Him to "prove himself" by doing something to provoke Him to action!

I'm convinced that the three instances recorded here serve a two-fold purpose... First, to show the faithfulness of Jesus Christ... We've all fallen prey to the temptations of Satan, but Jesus was victorious over him and his ways! Thus, Christ has become our salvation...

I also believe *it is written* for our admonishment... As a model for us to learn from in how to deal with the temptations we face in this world from Satan. Three times here Satan tempted Jesus, trying to entice Him into sin...and all three times, Jesus overcame the temptation by citing scripture... There is no doubt in my mind that this is written as an example to help us in our battles with Satan. Jesus could have simply told Satan to get away, and he would have had to flee. There's no doubt in my mind that Jesus has the power to destroy him if he so chose to do so. But given that we don't have such power, here Jesus shows us the power we have to overcome him and his temptations... The words of the Psalmist comes to my mind, "*Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee...*"

It is written... It is written... It is written... The written word of God is not only to guide our lives, keep us from danger, strengthen us for the journey...but it's also the weapon we must use, the "*Sword*" in which we fight Satan with...*The word is powerful, and sharper than any tow-edged sword...*

(Vs 13) ¹³*And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

For now, Jesus had won...but it wasn't over...