

**We do not live by bread alone.**

How many of you remember Carlos Spencer? He's on TV3 at the moment doing Carlos's Reno's. But King Carlos started out as the Auckland, Auckland Blues and All Black 1<sup>st</sup> 5/8 during the 1990's and early 2000's.

How many of you remember these?

Does anyone know the connection between Carlos Spencer and toffee pops?

Well, some time ago Mr Spencer appeared in an ad for toffee pops. He was very scantily clad and was the speculation of a modern suburban housewife/woman's daydreaming...Carlos Spencer, a leisurely afternoon and a packet of toffee pops...

The ad ends quite humorously with our modern housewife/woman being called back to reality, and she is struck in everyday life with her husband ... who funnily enough, does not look like Carlos Spencer.

The whole advertisement is framed in the genre of temptation. Carlos Spencer is a temptation. Griffin's toffee pops are a temptation. Day dreaming and fantasizing are a temptation....

And this idea of temptation is an interesting one when we come to look at our gospel reading for today. Because this is often how temptation is viewed. That it is a choice between good and bad. Between Carlos Spencer and our husband. Between toffee pops and our goals for how we look. Between real life and fantasy.

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But as we look at our text, we will see it's not the case here.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus has just been baptised and the Holy Spirit has come upon him and our text says, "full of the Holy Spirit ... led by the Spirit in the wilderness ... he was tempted by the devil."

And here comes the interesting part ...

The first temptation is "to turn stone in to bread," let's think about this for a moment. If we could turn stone in to bread ... we could solve the world's food supply problems. If we could turn stone in to bread there would never be another hungry child anywhere. Refugees and all the poor would be fed. Jesus is offered the solution to all the problems of hunger the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wonderous thing.

He says no.

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The second temptation is to control all the kingdoms of the world. Let's think about this for a moment. If we controlled the kingdoms of the world, there would be no war. No invasion of Ukraine. No violence. There would be justice and peace. Jesus is offered the solution to the political troubles of the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wonderful thing.

He says no.

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The third temptation is the ability to perform miracles on cue. Let's think about this for a moment. No more Covid or death from cancer. No more plane crashes or cyclones or floods. There would be no more catastrophes. Jesus is offered control of all the unexplained and powerful forces in the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wonderful thing.

He says no.

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Jesus is tempted, and the purpose of that temptation is to put Jesus off course, off mission. But the temptation doesn't come in the form of bad v good, but of good v best.

The devil comes to tempt Jesus away from his mission, away from the appointed task God had given him. The devil tries to do that, with worthy and good things ... but not the things God had intended for Jesus to do.

**Which was to tell us ... We do not live by bread alone.**

In spite of what we might hope for, even now as refugees flood across borders and famine flourishes around the globe, Jesus' mission was not simply to abolish world hunger, as good as that would be. In spite of what we might hope for, even now as invasions take place and bombs fall, Jesus' mission was not simply to abolish war, as good as that would be. In spite of what we might hope for, even now as millions around the world suffer and die from Covid, Cancer, and heart disease, Jesus' mission was not simply to abolish disease or control the natural forces of the world, as good as that would be.

Jesus mission, according to Luke, is to show us that there is more to life than bread and power and health. There is more to life than simply the things we see. That as wonderful as the solutions of each of these problems are ... they are not the fulness of life, that God has for those that love God. So, Jesus says to us ...

**We do not live by bread alone.**

**We live by the life that God offers us in him.**

His hope ... is that in him ... all hunger will be satisfied. In him, all power will be used justly. In him, wholeness will be complete.

The devil's offers were good, but they weren't the best, and Jesus was not turned from his calling.

His calling to suffer and die. To be resurrected and ascend ... to send the Spirit.

This Luke says, ... was Jesus's mission ...

... and over Lent, we are called to contemplate, how it's ours too.

**That we do not live by bread alone ... but by the life that God offers us in him.**

Thanks be to God.

Amen.