

## **Pastor D's Letter January 23, 2022**

I hope you will join me as we journey through Luke this year and next on Wednesday nights. This coming Wednesday (January 26th) I will be teaching from Luke chapter 3. It is the account of the beginning of the ministry of John (the Baptizer) and the Baptism of Jesus. Immediately after that account in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke we read these words:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

### **I want you to consider with me three things:**

- 1) Jesus was LED
- 2) By the Spirit into the wilderness
- 3) To be tempted by the devil.

What a challenging example for us to follow. Jesus has just been declared the SON OF GOD – BY GOD (Matthew 4:17, Luke 4:22) and yet, God - in the flesh - follows. The sign of a true leader is not someone with great ideas who says follow me. The sign of a great leader is that the leader knows how to follow. This thought is important for us to remember as we elect new officers at our "Annual Meeting" on Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup> immediately following worship. Our officers are elected, to FOLLOW the Holy Spirit and lead us in following where the Spirit leads.

Jesus' challenging example does not stop with reminding us of the need to follow the Spirit. Jesus' challenging example reminds us that sometimes the Spirit leads us into difficult places. The wilderness is not a fun place. It's lonely, tiresome and the lack of food leaves us tired and hungry. When we are tired and hungry, we can make poor decisions. That is when we really need to be led by the Spirit of God. That is when we need to trust God and rely on God's word to guide us. And that is exactly what Jesus did.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness was so he could be tempted by the devil. This might seem really odd to us. Elsewhere in Scripture we are told that God tempts no-one (James 1:13). But the passage is not suggesting that God is tempting Jesus. The purpose of the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the desert is not for Tempting but rather for Testing. The Greek word translated tempted is ***peirazein*** which means to test ones virtue to see how they respond when sin tries to entice.

### **Jesus was tempted in every way as we-yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15.**

God was proving – not to Jesus but to those who believed in Him – that Jesus was virtuous and could overcome the temptation to sin. It is only because Jesus overcame temptation that we can overcome temptation today (with His help).

Last Sunday I began a new series (part of our "Year With Jesus") on "Temptations Jesus Faced. That series will continue to the end of February. And, until February 6<sup>th</sup> we will be in Matthew 4:1-11 looking at the three "Temptations" Jesus faced in the wilderness. Invite your friends to join us. For as we see how Jesus overcame temptations we faced, we will find encouragement and strength for our journey.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,  
So that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
(Romans 15:13)

Dr. D

### **NEWS UPDATES**

-

- Join us for **Fellowship after church** in the Fellowship Hall.
- SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BE HELD IN FELLOWSHIP HALL AT 10:30. Join us as we study "COLD CASE CHRISTIANITY" and learn to understand and defend our faith.
- **WVN Bible Study this Wednesday (January 26<sup>th</sup>) Luke 3.**
- **MASKS ARE OPTIONAL** IN WORSHIP! Be considerate of those who choose to wear masks and maintain social distance.
- If you cannot come in person, we continue to broadcast our **SERVICE LIVE** every Sunday at 9 a.m. on <https://www.facebook.com/SierraVistaPresbyterianChurch/>. Our account is public. **YOU DO NOT NEED A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT TO WATCH.** If you come to worship in person or watch at home, **invite a friend to join you.**
- If you watch on Facebook, **Worship sheets** are available on our website at <https://www.sierravistayuma.com/> under the NEWS Tab.
- If you wish to receive the monthly **newsletter** or know someone who wants to receive **Pastor D's Letter**, contact the church office with your email information.
- **THANK YOU for your CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT** of the church by giving in person, mailing a check, or giving ONLINE.