

Week 3 Devotion: Khaled Dally

Luke 4:1-3

People often ask: why did Christ go into the wilderness? The wilderness is a place with no blessings and no fruitfulness. It is a place of trials and challenges. In the Bible, we see how humans are challenged in the wilderness. Adam and Eve inhabit the Garden of Eden, but after their fall, they are cast out. We also see the Israelites wandering in the wilderness of Sinai under Moses' leadership.

Why the wilderness? In the wilderness, people become equal, for there is no need for possessions or money. The rich and the poor are the same, teaching us humility. The wilderness is part of God's plan for us, as it reveals our dependence on him.

Christ chose to go through the same experience as humanity, facing trials and hardships. But where man failed, Christ was victorious, choosing God's word over physical bread.

"He was famished" shows us, Jesus felt hunger pains just as we do when we go without food. His body becomes weak, almost reaching the point of death. That is when the devil came and said, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." The devil is trying to make Jesus doubt his divine identity and fall into temptation. But Jesus responds, "It is written," showing that true life comes from God's word, not just physical food.

Holding on to God's Word gives us fulfillment. As Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6) Those who thirst for the world will remain thirsty, but those who thirst for Christ and his word will never thirst again.

As Palestinian Christians, we hunger and thirst for justice and peace. Without Christ's intervention, the world cannot reach this peace and justice because our greed and hunger for power and will never be satisfied.

Christ compels us, just as Peter was compelled when he witnessed Jesus' power through the miraculous catch of fish after an entire day without success. He left everything and followed. Matthew, a tax collector who once cared about wealth, also left everything when Jesus said, "Follow me." The disciples did not give their lives for a false satisfaction; they followed, even unto death, because they were truly filled with Christ. Perhaps this is missing in our world-- people willing to lay down their greed and lust for power, as Matthew did, to hunger for the kingdom of God. Only in this kingdom can we find true peace brought into the brokenness of our world.

Week 3 Discussion and Prayer:

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Questions:

1. How can we transform our hunger for money, power and success into hunger for God's word? For justice? For peace?
2. What temptations do we face that lead us away from God?
3. Where have we seen God's grace in our own lives?

Prayer

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal God, who faced temptation and overcame the weakness of the flesh, teach us to hold fast to your word. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, which strengthens and guides us through the wilderness of this life. Quench our thirst with your love. Satisfy us with the richness of your heavenly word. We are weak, yet you have said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Help us to see you not in the wealth of money or possessions but in the treasures of justice, compassion and peace. In you alone, we find true fulfillment. Amen.

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