

Devotion Monday 7 March 2022

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.'

4 Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone."'

Lent is a time of fasting and prayer and during this time many people give up something, usually it's something that is not good for us. We give up chocolate or coffee or sugar. We give up watching soapies or bingeing series. We generally give up something we know is going to be tough to give up. In our struggles with temptation, in our struggles with giving in, it gives us time to think about why that thing is so important to us. Yes, it tastes good or we enjoy watching it but if it was just something nice, why would it be so difficult to live without?

If we're honest with ourselves, it's probably because it fills some sort of gap, some sort of hole in our lives. It brings us comfort or allows us to escape from our stress, or we believe it will give us some sort of boost that we desperately need. If we allow it, Lent can create an uncomfortable space for us to dig into the underlying issues in our lives that make it so difficult to let go of easy unhealthy crutches and replace them with healthy ones.

"Man shall not live on bread alone." Our first choice should be to turn to God with our problems asking for help and guidance, that's why prayer is such an important part of our lives and especially during Lent. God is our rock and our strength. God also gives us additional ways to deal with stress and tension, they are built into our DNA. Rather than grabbing that chocolate that will make you feel good for a little while, take a walk, think through what is causing your stress and plan what you can do about it. The walk will release endorphins in the brain and help your body deal with stress. Or find someone who you trust that you can talk to about what is going on in your life and what changes you can make. Sharing your burden and praying together helps to lighten the load. God said right in the beginning "It is not good for the man to be alone."

May you take time this Lent to reflect on the unhealthy things in your life which have become so important to you that you can't live without them and may God reveal to you why you are so dependent on them and how you can deal with it and may God's strength and courage be sufficient for you to tackle them in a healthy way.

Prayer

Almighty God, thank you for the uncomfortableness of Lent, a time of giving up things that have taken the place of you and have caused us to not deal with the real issues in our lives.

Holy Spirit help us to see what these stumbling blocks are and help us to tackle our stress and issues in healthy ways rather than avoiding them.

Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us the way, thank you that you were tempted and yet you did not give in and that through you, we too have the strength to resist temptation.

Grant us the courage to turn to you for help and to take the steps necessary for a healthy life free from avoidance.

In your name we pray,

Amen.

Rev KS Brown