



VILLAGE

@ASBC

MOVING FROM CROWD TO COMMUNITY



Date: January 21, 2024
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Dominique A. Robinson
Sermon Title: *Standing on Business*
Scripture: Luke 4:1-13 (NRSVue)

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, *2* where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. *3* The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." *4* Jesus answered him, "*It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'*" *5* Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. *6* And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. *7* If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." *8* Jesus answered him, "*It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'*" *9* Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, *10* for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' *11* and On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" *12* Jesus answered him, "*It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'*" *13* When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

THIS WEEK'S GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Each week, the Curriculum Team welcomes guest contributors. This week, we thank Facilitators Nicole Edwards and Artura Jackson for their contributions.

SERMON SUMMARY

As we enter SEEK 2024, our church-wide twenty-one day period of fasting and prayer, Dr. Robinson's powerful word calls us to the work of "Standing on Business." Using Luke's version of the temptation of Jesus, we are reminded that we do not fast and pray for specific tangible outcomes. Instead, we fast and pray so that:

- Our connection to God grows stronger.
- We are positioned to discern the voice of God for our lives.
- God's purpose for our lives becomes clearer.
- Others might see God in us and be encouraged.

Even as we fast and pray, we must be aware that Satan is persistent and will attempt to tempt us at every turn. Drawing from the work of Henry Nouwen's *Reflections of Christian Leadership: In the Name of Jesus*, Dr. Robinson notes the four following ways the enemy will tempt us:

1. The Desire to Be Relevant. In Luke Chapter 4, after 40 days of fasting, Jesus' need for food was real. Satan's request that Jesus turn stones into bread was a relevant request. However, Jesus knew that doing the right thing at the wrong time and for the wrong reason is never wise. Jesus' actions teach us that wisdom is more important than relevancy. Wisdom, not relevancy, will help us when facing temptation.
2. The Desire to Be Powerful. The enemy offers Jesus power in exchange for worship. However, in truth, all power already belonged to Jesus. We are often tempted to reach for less than we already have. As children of the most high God, we already have power and authority. When offered anything less, we must recognize it as false power and act in the power God gave us.
3. The Desire to Be Popular and Remarkable. Over and over, the devil says to Jesus, "If you are the son of God." This language attempts to call into question Jesus' true identity. The evil one speaks to our insecurities and tempts us to do showy and dangerous things so that others see us as remarkable and popular. However, our identity is not based on popularity or remarkable feats. Our identity is based on our relationship with God and what God says about us. We are chosen, blessed, redeemed, and so much more. We are children of the most high God.
4. We are stopping Our Progress Before We Begin. In Luke 4, the enemy confronts Jesus **before** the beginning of his ministry. Sometimes, the enemy sees our potential better than we do and will seek to stop our progress even before we begin. We have to know who and who we are. Even when Satan attempts to stop our progress, we must remember God's promises. Knowing our place in God helps us stand on business and resist temptation.

KEY POINTS

1. The purpose of fasting and praying is to help us 'Stand on Business', the business of seeking God's purpose and being the 'God Encounter' to those we meet along the way.

2. Fasting positions us to receive guidance from God.
3. Fasting is not to obtain material gain from God.
4. Like Jesus, we face temptations that challenge us:
 - a. The temptation to be relevant
 - b. The temptation to be powerful; to lead and not be led
 - c. The temptation to be popular by doing something remarkable
 - d. The temptation to lose our identity and forget who we are in Christ
 - e. The temptation to give up on our progress before we even begin to see God's promise
5. The enemy comes to us in a multiplicity of ways, including directly and indirectly. The enemy also comes to us when we are alone and, as the text says, at an opportune time.
6. Even when the enemy comes, we must remember that God is with us everywhere. God was with Jesus in the wilderness, just as God was with him in the waters of baptism.
7. While fasting removes certain things from our lives, the object of fasting is to replace what we remove with new or enhanced ways to be before God (e.g., spiritual disciplines).

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Our preacher noted the presence of idioms/proverbs in Ebonics or African American Vernacular English in our communities. How many Black colloquialisms can you name in one minute?
2. Dr. Robinson says, "...there are people who radiate the love and light of God." Who is that person for you? How did their presence impact you, or does it?

INTO THE BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. In Matthew 3:17, God confirms the identity of Jesus at his baptism. Jesus settles the 'matter of identity' during the temptations of Satan. Where else in scripture is Jesus' identity challenged? What do we learn from Jesus' experiences of clarifying his identity?

2. Deuteronomy 28:12-13 (see below) was referenced in the sermon. It identifies aspects of a child of God's identity. To what other scripture do you turn for clarity about who you are as a child of God?

*The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. **You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath,** if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.*

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. The power of ego withing our contemporary culture makes it easy to drive toward success, which can become a powerful idol. As a child of God, how do you balance living a life of purpose while operating in a world that places high value on material possessions and financial success?
2. While fasting removes certain things from our lives, the object of fasting is to replace what we remove with new or enhanced ways to be before God (e.g., spiritual disciplines). If you are participating in SEEK2024, what are you removing from your life, and what new or enhanced spiritual disciplines do you hope to engage in?
3. In the text for today's sermon, the devil began two of his tempting questions with, "*If you are the son of God...*" (vs. 3 and 9). This approach questioned Jesus' identity; Jesus knew who He was. In life, people may question your identity with similar statements like, "If you are a Christian, then you would..." or "A Christian is supposed to..."
 - a. When you are met with these types of statements or inquiries, what is your internal/unspoken response? What could be your verbal response?
 - b. Further, how do you identify yourself? Who are you in Christ?
4. When we obey God and fast and pray, yet we do not receive the clarity or "right now" answers we desire, what is your next step?
5. Dr. Robinson reminds us that there are people you can purge from your phone list by saving them as DNA (Do Not Answer). Do you have a list of people, places, and things you do not need to answer or entertain?

“CAN I PUSH IT?” QUESTIONS

1. Consider your various “communities.” Within “community” what prompts competition? Is it always negative? What allows it to continue and grow? When it is negative, how can it be forestalled?
2. Dr. Robinson suggests that in the Black community we have a way of taking an “anti-black, patriarchal, heteronormative perspective” of the world, sprinkle it with a little Jesus, and place it on one another’s shoulders. This view would decenter blackness, as well as the role and power of women, LGBTQ+ persons, and other marginalized communities. How does this kind of “view” show up in the black community and in the black church? How does it impact either church or community?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR VILLAGE STUDY

1. The Gospel of Luke says the enemy left Jesus until an “opportune time.” Has the enemy ever approached you at an opportune time? What made the specific circumstances opportune? What did you do in that moment? How has this experience shaped you?
2. As we enter SEEK2024, we know we will experience temptation. In today’s sermon, we learned that withstanding temptation is not easy. What are the practices you use to overcome temptation?
3. Referencing the scripture from Proverbs 18:21, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue,” the preacher asks us to speak life into our situations. What does this mean to you? How do you speak life into a situation?
4. It is reported that people maintain their New Year's Resolutions for a mere seventeen days. What practical steps do you intend to implement to maintain any New Year promises you made to God or to engage well in SEEK2024?

5. Dr. Robinson noted the difference between wisdom and knowledge. What do you think is the difference between wisdom and knowledge, and why?

ACTIVITY

1. Rev. Dr. Robinson concluded with several “I AM” declarations about herself because God changed her name. What “I AM” statements can you declare now, and what “I AM” declarations are you SEEKing during this time of prayer and fasting? Make a list of these to share with your Village.
2. One beloved church hymn is “Standing on the Promises of God.” The Bible contains over 100 promises God makes to Christians. During SEEK2024, which promises of God are you standing on? Make a list of your top ten favorites. Consider using these promises as affirmations.

SPIRIT WORK

Consider which of the following questions posed by our preacher resonate with you. Consider using this question as your touchstone during the following week. Ask this question of God, and then sit for at least five minutes in silence, waiting to feel God’s leading.

- a. Where do I belong?
- b. How can I serve?
- c. Where is my joy?
- d. Is this the job for me?
- e. What brings me peace?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. For more information on our morning preacher, Dr. Robinson, please go to her website, <https://www.dominiquearobinson.com>.
2. *Reflections on Christian Leadership: In the Name of Jesus*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen <https://www.amazon.com/Name-Jesus-Reflections-Christian-Leadership/dp/0824512596>
3. The origin of Ebonics? What is Ebonics (African American English)? | Linguistic Society of America
4. If you have not registered, consider joining the Alfred Street Baptist Church’s annual corporate fast, SEEK2024/iThirst. <https://www.alfredstreet.org/seek/>
5. To receive daily encouraging messages during SEEK, text ‘iThirstSEEK’ to 571-977-4525

6. To join the daily 7a and 7p EST prayer call, click on the photo below, or use this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81246227565#success>



A promotional poster for the 'SEEK 2024' prayer line. The top section is black with a circular logo on the left and the 'SEEK 2024' logo in the center. Below this, the text 'SEEK 2024 PRAYER LINE HAS A NEW PLATFORM' is written in white. The middle section has a purple background with yellow and white text. It includes a QR code and an image of a laptop displaying the Zoom logo. The bottom section is black with white text for social media handles and contact information.

SEEK 2024 PRAYER LINE HAS A NEW PLATFORM

JANUARY 22 - FEBRUARY 11, 2024

CHECK OUT THE NEW VIRTUAL ZOOM LINK FOR PRAYER & SEEK 2024!

GET READY TO LOG ON OR DIAL-IN FOR LIVE PRAYER AT 7:00AM ET. >

DAILY PRAYER CALL • 7AM & 7PM ET
MONDAY THRU SUNDAY

ZOOM ID: 812 4622 7565
PHONE NUMBER: 1-301-715-8592

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