

# the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*“Of course, any Bible itself is ‘just a book,’ ink on a page. And we do not change because we have a relationship with a book. We change through a relationship with a person— God Himself. This is why the Bible has a life-giving quality. When we go to the Bible to encounter God, what we find surprises us. We encounter something far more compelling than an arid theology or philosophy. We feel the grasp of a warm hand in ours.”*

- Tremper Longman, III

## TIME TO LISTEN: LEARNING TO READ OUR BIBLES, PART II BY TOM GIBBS

A few years ago everybody’s favorite grocery store had a catchy slogan. “Go home a hero,” HEB promised us. Great selection and a great price, that’s HEB. Nobody loses, especially when Daddy goes to get a few extra items to nurture his “superpowers.”

Who can argue with such a slogan? Too bad real life doesn’t fit our favorite slogans. Isn’t it the case that we often feel like losers, rather than heroes? We feel beat up, discouraged and out of ideas for defeating whatever our “newest” adversary might be—a broken clothes washer or a child struggling in school. In the midst of our struggle, questions about God’s place in our chaos emerge. Where are you God? Are you doing anything about this thing called “my life”? How can I go home a hero?

If you will remember our last issue of the *Kerygma*, we emphasized an approach to the Bible that views the whole of the Scriptures as one story authored by God himself, under the main themes or organizing principles of: Creation, Fall and Redemption. We discovered that such themes all converge in Jesus Christ. Through his incarnation, life, death and resurrection, Christ restores a creation and a people, which were lost. We concluded that our starting point in reading the Bible is first to discover how a particular passage fits into this larger, redemptive story about Jesus.

In addition, we are all familiar with the “so what” or “felt-need” questions that quickly dominate our immediate interest in a passage: How can this passage help me save my marriage? What are the Biblical steps to fiscal responsibility? What are the principles of Biblical leadership? Nevertheless, when questions such as these drive our interpretation of the Scriptures our understanding is superficial, and even worse, it becomes moralistic. We end up turning the characters in Bible stories into mere examples for our lives. When that happens, we have ripped them from their place in the redemptive story of Christ and made them serve our story alone. For example, if we *simply* follow King David as a man “after God’s own heart”, then are we in danger of *simply* following him into his sin with Bathsheba? To *simply* follow David will surely end up in tragedy. Yet according to Jesus (Luke 24:44), the stories of David were not primarily examples for us to follow, but windows for us to see both our need for Jesus and Jesus’ work for us. To put it another way, the most important application of the Bible is *not what we promise to do for God, but rather it is what God has promised and already done for us in Jesus Christ.*

If the cross of Christ teaches us anything about Jesus’ mission on this earth, it is that his first purpose was not to inform us about *how to live*, it was to reveal to us that *if we are to live we*

*must live through him.* Grace precedes instruction. As a result of the devastating effects of the Fall, we need more than better spiritual “insight” or a beefed up spiritual “immune” system. Rather, we need an entirely new life. Thankfully, that life comes to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus, received by us through faith.

If that is true, then how does the message of grace, which is faithfully proclaimed on every page of the Scriptures, intersect with the story of my life? Does the message of the Scripture help me “go home a hero” when I feel beat up and broken so much of the time? To consider these questions as well as the “how” of Bible study we will briefly examine the narrative of Jesus temptation in the wilderness prior to beginning his ministry. We will use the account from Luke chapter 4:1-13, but the accounts from Matthew or Mark would suit our purposes equally well.

**“the overall story of the Scriptures deepens our study of any particular passage.”**

Let’s first remark that the way most of us might read this passage is through the exemplary lens alone. In other words, most of us consider this passage as a shining example of how Jesus both submitted to and overcame temptation. We think that if we follow the principles that he practices we will find ourselves “unmoved” before the Evil One. We believe that if we have the Scripture in our minds and a confidence of God’s provision in our hearts, then we can go home heroes even when the Devil himself attacks. However, such an approach means that

we have only seen Jesus as an example; therefore it is most likely a woefully inadequate treatment of the passage. The Devil would probably like nothing more than for us to believe that overcoming temptation is as simple as “being like Jesus.”

With that false approach in mind, let’s approach this passage with the principles we have already discovered.

### Important Observations:

Every good study of Scripture starts with noting important features of the passage, including characters, locations, geographical features, etc. It is also important to notice repeated words, emphasized themes or other Bible passages quoted. What can we observe from Luke 4:1-13?

\* Where do these events take place? Jesus retreats to the wilderness near the Jordan River, which would have been a desolate and rocky area.

\* When do these events occur in Jesus life? The temptation of Jesus comes prior to Jesus’ public ministry. In preparation for his public ministry, Jesus enters into a time of fasting. It lasts forty days, which should immediately recall to our minds the forty years of testing of the people of Israel in the wilderness. Is there a parallel here?

*Continued on page 3*

## MISSIONS MINUTE

### Redeemer's Mission to Peru, June 14-24, 2006 by Jennifer Romig

A very wise person in our church said that we should preach the Gospel to ourselves each day, to remember that we are nothing without the grace of God, and to remind ourselves that our very best is but rags before a holy God. It is ironic that these realizations of weakness bring such strength and freedom from legalistic self-labor. But they were never more relevant to me than at thirteen thousand feet amidst the dry winter dust of Peru and the dysentery that struck down my husband after only one day of work in Usphabamba.

What did God teach us from disease while we were in Peru? Or from frustrations when the showers in Cusco were ice cold, or when we had no endurance to labor because of the altitude in the Andes? We found the answer in the words that come from 2 Corinthians 12:9. "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'" During one of our team devotionals, we discussed how the phrase, "made perfect" (used several times throughout the New Testament), is not an action of the past but an ongoing process. We experienced this process moment-by-moment as we hand-carried large chunks of rock to lay down for the foundation, as we ripped out nails, dug out dirt floors, used pick axes to break up rock, and poured cement for the church's floor. God worked out His perfect love in us by breaking us down physically and spiritually, stripping us to nothing so that we could see everything in Him.

We also began to see His people in Peru as our *hermanos y hermanas*, as people who need Christ as we do, and we learned that we must pray for God's work to be fulfilled there. There is much religious confusion amongst Peruanos because Catholicism is inextricably mixed with paganism. But God has sent hope to Cusco and other places in Peru. Missionaries like the Allens are spreading the good news of the Gospel through their work, and more precious souls are coming to Christ as they learn that God's grace is indeed sufficient.

### Missions & Ministries that Redeemer Supports:

#### World Missions:

- \* Bill and Jeanine Allen (MTW) in Cusco, Peru
- \* Peter Dishman (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
- \* John and Heather Ferguson (RUF) in Trujillo, Peru
- \* Paul and Dawn Fisher (MTW) in Guadalajara, Mexico
- \* Cornerstone School and Seminary in Belize
- \* Gene and LuAnn Bowman (BEAMM) on the Texas/Mexico Border
- \* Doug and Masha Shepherd (MTW) in Ukraine
- \* Family (cannot be named) (Wycliffe) in SE Asia
- \* Andrew and Becky Bronson (MTW) in Thailand

#### Local Missions:

##### Church Planters:

- \* Allen and Tracy Taha Church Planters: Trinity Presbyterian Church in Boerne, TX

##### Reformed University Fellowship:

- \* Justin and Elizabeth Clement at Trinity University
- \* Benjie and Natalie Slaton at University of Texas
- \* Derick and Lisal McDonald at University of Texas, International
- \* Ryan and Bonnie Greene at Texas A&M University
- \* Pat and Ashley Roach at Rice University

##### Christian Medical Dental Association:

- \* Roger Matkin

##### Agape Pregnancy Help Center:

- \* Kira Wesley, Downtown Director

#### Local Ministries:

- \* Guadalupe Community Center, Elvia Gonzalez, Director
- \* Tobin Community Center, Ralph Rivera, Director

### UGANDA MISSION TRIP BY BEKAH STOLHANDSKE

Relaying the stories and summaries of Uganda are difficult. Anyone who has traveled to the 3rd World knows what I mean when I say that we simply do not have the words for many aspects of life in developing countries. It is hard to explain the balance of immediate and eternal needs against a backdrop of darkness...not only in the spiritual sense, but the kind of darkness when there is no electricity to flip on the light and see the rat digging in the suitcases.

In Uganda, I spent most of my time with Gerald Seruwaggi, the pastor of New City Church in Kampala, Uganda's capital city. Days were spent surveying poverty and brain-storming with about how to effect some relief. Meanwhile, I was rarely without a woman from the church with an average age of 45-48, it is rare to find a young mother lived to turbulent years of life expectancy of "Where is my representative of need for the be disciplined by end of every day I lay under my mosquito net, rubbed myself down with hand sanitizer, and literally whimpered to God, "Where from here?" He forgave my lack of faith the next morning, laying out yet another day, driving ahead ideas and orchestrating meetings that I never even knew I needed to have. Every scene of poverty became of vision for restoration. Not my vision, but God letting me in on a little glimpse of what he was doing in Uganda.



### TRUJILLO, PERU MISSION TRIP BY DIANE DENG

Now that I am back in the states, the first question friends ask is "How was Peru?!" This question is usually asked with raised eyebrows and wide-eyes. Their expression definitely reflects my wide-eyed, wide-smiled response of "WONDERFUL!" My experience in Peru allowed me to do what Christians are called to do everyday: engage and serve with love. For a month, I was able to serve in the dental clinic, immerse myself in the Peruvian culture, teach an English conversation class, and build relationships with the Peruvians and fellow interns.

In Peru, the people are not taught oral hygiene as children. Going to the dentist is a luxury. The majority do not care for their teeth until they feel pain or spot (a cavity). I performed cleanings, restorations, clean teeth and the other treatments at the clinic my calling to be a



I was sad to leave Peru. My hope is to return to Peru after I graduate dental school. I and my new friends in Trujillo so much that I desire to consistently return to the Wichanzao clinic for a couple weeks each year. Going to Peru allowed me to experience God's work outside of my small bubble of upper middle class comfort and security. He is at work building His Kingdom.

Trujillo. My love the ministry after I graduate. I am able to assist/observe treatments. My time reassured me of dentists.

Trujillo. My love the ministry after I graduate.

## MEET THE EGGAR FAMILY

We are excited to welcome the Eggars into our church family! Brandon Eggar is our new Assistant Pastor of Community Life and Outreach. He and his wife, NeeCIA, along with their two children, Addisyn (5) and Will (8 months), moved here from Dallas last month. Brandon just finished seminary at Westminster Theological Seminary and he was also the Director of Discipleship at Park Cities Presbyterian Church.

When they spent time at Redeemer during their interview, the elders spoke to them in length about Redeemer's vision of Christ's kingdom being extended into San Antonio. After that, both Brandon and NeeCIA knew that they wanted to "live and work with this body of believers in order to be a blessing to the city".

Brandon's position is one that seeks to help us cultivate Christ-centered community where we are daily growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And also to aid us in learning how to bring Christ to those in our spheres of influence. He will be overseeing a number of things at Redeemer, including community groups, Christian Education, helping new members get connected, teaching Bible studies, and helping Tom shepherd the church body.

The Eggars want us to know that they are thrilled to be here. They are already enjoying the uniqueness, history and "small town feel" of San Antonio. They want everyone to feel welcome to come by their home anytime! And they look forward to getting to know all of us.



*Brandon and NeeCIA Eggar  
Addisyn and Will*

## TIME TO LISTEN: LEARNING TO READ OUR BIBLES, PART II (CONTINUED)

\* Who is in the story? Jesus is not alone. He has been led by the Holy Spirit to the wilderness. This indicates a purpose for these events, which is within the plan of God. Even so, none of his disciples are with him for they have not yet been called. Jesus is left without companions to deal with the temptations of the Devil. Will Jesus find himself alone again in a time of testing (Lk. 22:39ff)?

### Interpretative Conclusions:

Now that we have made some good observations, let's see if we can make more sense of the actual narrative itself. What are these three temptations all about?

\* *Temptation to turn stones into bread (3-4):* It may be tempting for us to conclude that this test is of no consequence to Jesus Christ. After all, how can God be hungry? Yet our understanding that Jesus was a real man means that his hunger was a "lived" reality. Jesus humanity makes this a real temptation because Jesus' body had been weakened on account of fasting and the conditions in the desert. He would have been hungry in this needy condition. Yet Jesus does not succumb to the siren of neediness, like we so often do. Instead, he relies on the truth of God's word and refuses to use his power selfishly (Dt. 8:3). This dependence on God's provision reveals to us something of how Jesus will use his power.

\* *Temptation to gain the kingdoms of the world (5-8):* Similarly, this temptation may seem strange to us. How can Satan promise Jesus the kingdoms of this world? Didn't Jesus make the kingdoms of this world? Yet this temptation reveals that Satan was offering Jesus a compromise in the attainment of his kingship over this world. Would his Kingdom be attained through the wisdom of his Father found in his sacrificial and painful death or would it come through the ease and compromise of a power grab? Jesus recognizes that all power and authority that is true is based in what God himself has given by the Father. God alone is the proper object of worship (Dt. 6:13). Jesus sees through the selfishness and hubris of the Devil. God's mission must be accomplished in God's way. Through the faithful obedience of Christ who would not compromise the glory of the Father, we learn why our God is the proper object of worship.

\* *Temptation to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (9-12):* Here Satan tempts Jesus to publicly prove that he is cared for and protected by his Father. In other words, by throwing himself down he would force his Father's hand. This temptation is ultimately a temptation to doubt the goodness of Jesus'

Father. Jesus rightly reminds the Devil that the testing of the Lord is contrary to the Scripture because it is doubting the goodness of God himself. Rather than doubt God's love, Jesus is convinced of its reality in the Scriptures (Dt. 6:16).

There is another question for us to consider that is central to interpreting this passage correctly. Why is Jesus being tempted at all? To be sure, Jesus has given us keen insight into how we might handle temptation ourselves. But is the whole point of this narrative merely for Jesus to give us an example? Based upon our earlier comments, we know that cannot be our conclusion. Let's see if the context of the passage gives us any clues.

Prior to this passage, we discover that Luke is recording for us the genealogy of Jesus Christ. He takes us all the way back to Adam himself. How is that significant? Well, Adam was tempted by the Devil. But he failed. At Creation, Adam had every spiritual blessing but he turned away from such blessing and succumbed to the Devil's temptations. As a result, he was cast out of the garden into the wilderness. All of life was cursed because of Adam's transgression.

Now, Jesus Christ, the descendent of Adam, has come. He is being tempted, this time in the wilderness (a cursed part of creation). But this time the "second Adam" succeeds. Does his work have any benefit for his followers? Even as Adam's mistake passed on to each of us, does Jesus' success pass on to us? This is probably a connection that Luke is inviting us to make. The apostle Paul, however, explicitly makes that connection in his letter to the Romans. "If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). Therefore, the temptation of Christ is crucial to our understanding of Jesus as our Redeemer. Only a Redeemer who had passed all of the tests and temptations of this world could truly save us from the power of sin and death. Isn't this what the writer of the Hebrews tells us, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed one who is filled with the Spirit for the purpose of redeeming his people. Central to his redeeming work is his submission to the fallen character of this world. That he bore up under it and succeeded reveals his identity as our Redeemer.

### Concluding Applications:

Let's go back to our original question, "How can we go home a hero?" So many of us are told that the victorious Christian life is one without trial, without testing and without difficulty. Are we to believe this? Perhaps the story of Jesus' temptation is an encouragement simply because it reveals that God has purpose in testing. Even as Jesus himself was tested, so we ourselves will be. Through such challenges we can be assured that God is at work to accomplish his goal of maturity in our lives (James 2:2-4). Therefore we do not have to conclude that our trials are without meaning. God is always at work in our lives, even when it is darkest.

What is more, Jesus gives us ammunition with which to fight our own temptations. As we see his insights into the snares the Devil lays for him, we can also learn to resist easy pragmatism (temptation #1), vain self-worship (temptation #2) and skeptical doubt in God's love (temptation #3).

However, the most important application we can draw from the temptation narrative is for us to see that Jesus has fought for us. Because he has armed us with the resources of his grace, we can now fight against the snare of temptation. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer PCA in New York, is insightful on this point,

"There are, in the end, only two ways to read the Bible: is it basically about me or basically about Jesus? In other words, is it basically about what I must do, or basically about what he has done? Until I see that Jesus fought the real giants (sin, law, death) for me, I will never be able to fight giants in life. Unless I see that Jesus made the big sacrifices for me, I will never be able to make the normal sacrifices of life. Unless I can see him forgiving me on the cross, I won't be able to forgive others. Unless I see him as forgiving me for falling asleep on him (Matt. 27:45) I won't be able to stay awake for him."

Seeing Christ as our "second Adam" who successfully passed the test in our place actually transforms us, enabling us to obey. As we look to Christ, we are enabled to fight the giants of temptations in our lives. Whether they be those of the religious, like unforgiveness and spiritual pride, or those of this world, like worldliness and distorted sexuality. Our ability to follow after Christ is ultimately rooted in the fact that he has pursued us. Because Jesus is a new creation, he enables us to become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17).

Hopefully, the above exercise is both encouraging and instructive. Its aim has been to show that the overall story of the Scriptures deepens our study of any particular passage. We could have applied the same theological priorities to any passage in our Bibles. Imagine how your own study of the Scriptures will be enriched as you increasingly see its Christ-centeredness (Redemption) and thereby are strengthened to live (New Creation) out of his resources. Therefore, let's put our hand in his hand as we go to battle (Fall). Only then will we go home heroes!

# PRESBYTERIAN REDEEMER

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Join us

at our worship

location,

The McAllister

Fine Art Center

on Sundays

at 9:30 a.m.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 5** Newcomer's Dessert
- Sept. 8, 9** Foundations of Christian Marriage Seminar
- Sept. 21** Men's Fellowship Night
- Sept. 23** Autumn Grace
- Oct. 8** Mini- Missions Conference
- Oct. 13, 14** Men's Retreat
- Oct. 14** Agape Pregnancy Health Center Walk-a-thon
- Oct. 19** Men's Fellowship Night
- Oct. 29** Fall Fest

## MAP



 Sunday Morning Worship Services are held at the McAllister Fine Arts Center