

How many of you remember Carlos Spencer? King Carlos was the Auckland, Auckland Blues and All Black 1st 5/8 during the 1990's and early 2000's.

How many of you remember these?

Does anyone know the connection between Carlos Spencer and toffee pops?

Well, some time ago Mr Spencer appeared in an ad for toffee pops. He was very scantily clad and was the speculation of a modern suburban housewife/woman's daydreaming...Carlos Spencer, a leisurely afternoon and a packet of toffee pops...

The ad ends quite humorously with our modern housewife/woman being called back to reality, and she is struck in everyday life with her husband....who funnily enough, does not look like Carlos Spencer.

The whole advertisement is framed in the genre of temptation. Carlos Spencer is a temptation. Griffins toffee pops are a temptation. Day dreaming and fantasizing are a temptation... Adultery is a temptation.

And this idea of temptation is an interesting one when we come to look at our gospel reading for today. Because this is often the way we view temptation. That it is a choice between good and bad. Between Carlos Spencer and our husband. Between toffee pops and our goals for how we look. Between adultery and faithfulness.

But as we look at our text we will see this is not the case here.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus has just been baptised and the Holy Spirit has come upon him and our text says, "full of the Holy Spirit...led by the Spirit in the wilderness...he was tempted by the devil."

And here comes the interesting part.....

The first temptation is "to turn stone in to bread," let's think about this for a moment. If we could turn stone in to bread...we could solve the world's hunger problems. If we could turn stone in to bread there would never be another hungry child anywhere. Jesus is offered the solution to all the starvation problems of the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wondrous thing.

He says no.

The second temptation is to have control of all the kingdoms of the world. Let's think about this for a moment. If we controlled all the kingdoms of the world, there would be no war. There would be no violence. There would be no exploitation. There would be economic equality. There would be justice. There would be peace. Jesus is offered the solution to all the political troubles of the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wonderful thing.

He says no.

The third temptation is the ability to perform miracles on cue. Let's think about this for a moment. No more death from cancer. No more plane crashes. No more hurricanes or cyclones or forest fires. There would be no more catastrophes. Jesus is offered control of all the unexplained and powerful forces in the world. He is offered a good thing. A great thing. A wonderful thing.

He says no.

Jesus is tempted after his baptism and infilling of the Holy Spirit, and the purpose of that temptation was to put Jesus off his course, off his mission. But the temptation doesn't come in the form of bad v good, but in the form of good v best.

The devil came to tempt Jesus away from his mission, away from the appointed task God had given him. The devil came to do that with other worthy and good things...but not the things God had intended for Jesus to do.

Jesus mission was not to abolish world hunger. Jesus mission was not to abolish war and economic oppression. Jesus mission was not to abolish disease or control the natural forces of the world.

Jesus mission according to Luke, is to usher in a new age. An age where people live in relationship with God. Where they experience salvation and their sins are forgiven. Where they are full of the Holy Spirit. Where they live a communal life as disciples or followers of Jesus, in love in and for the world. And all this comes about because Jesus was not turned from his calling.

His calling to Follow. To suffer. To die. To be resurrected. To ascend...and...to send the Spirit.

He was not tempted to do good, but he pressed on to do what was best.

And to give all people the opportunity of genuine life. Life in and with God.

Luke says, THIS...was Jesus mission.....and Luke says.....it is ours too.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.