

# Going Deeper with Jesus

Bishop Keith Dalby

# OUR WRITER

Bishop Keith Dalby was consecrated as Bishop on 16th August 2019 at St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide, and installed as the fifth Bishop of The Murray on 17th August at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Murray Bridge.

His theological training was at St Barnabas Theological College (BTh) and he served his curacy at Mitcham (Adelaide Diocese) and then ministered in the Diocese of Ballarat as Rector of Timboon and then Rector of Warracknabeal before moving to Sydney. During his time as Rector of St John's Gordon in the Diocese of Sydney, he completed the requirements for the award of MA in Theology from Moore Theological College.

His interests include swimming, walking, and reading historic naval fiction.

Prior to ordination Bishop Keith spent 12 years as a submariner in the Royal Australian Navy.

The production team thought the cover design both incorporated Bishop Keith's going deeper in his previous employment as a submariner and a reminder of our own responsibility to continue seeking a deeper relationship Jesus.



## Overview of the Book 2

Suggestions for conducting these studies. Web Page  
[www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html)

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Additional material available on line for these studies at  
[www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html)



To help your group bond quickly, there is a suggested outline members could fill out at [www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html) and this would form a care basis for the group during the Lent Studies.

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Welcome to our Lenten Studies. This year we are in the Year of Luke; Year C. I hope you find these studies helpful as you continue following the Lord Jesus.

Lent, like Advent is a time of reflection. Sometimes we call them Penitential Seasons. While this is true, simply to concentrate on them as a time of penance might be to miss the point. Part of the difficulty we have with our seasons is that when we go through a season, we often think that we are done and dusted with that, and we can move on to the next one. Advent is such a case. So many of us really don't know what to do with Advent, so we simply absorb it into Christmas and think Advent is about the coming of Jesus at Christmas in a manger in Bethlehem. It's not. When we get to Epiphany we often look back to Christmas because we really don't want to look forward to Lent. When we get to Lent, we can't wait for it to be over, and Holy Week is even more of an issue. We can't wait to get to Easter Day. After all, it's much nicer to think of resurrection than to think of Good Friday and Crucifixion.

The point is we compartmentalise the seasons, which is not what they are about. They are a reminder to carry the emphases of these seasons with us as we journey through the church's year. This is especially true with Lent. If we think simply about Lent as a time to say sorry, and to lament our sinfulness, only to stop when Lent is finished on Palm Sunday, then we have missed the point.

Lent, and to a similar extent Advent, is about reminding us of the importance of reflecting on our relationship with God and His Son Jesus in the Power of the Holy Spirit. It is a heightened season that is meant to equip us to continue such reflections throughout the rest of the year.

Repentance is the English translation of the Greek Word *metanoia* which in turn is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *sub*. (Please note these are transliterations) The Hebrew word means to turn. It has the sense of changing course, plotting a new direction in one's life, returning to the source of departure. The Hebrew is much more dynamic than the Greek, as for the Greek, *metanoia* comes about by changing one's mind, either for good or bad.

For Luke, repentance required committing oneself to the words and deeds of Jesus (Luke 10.13). Repentance, therefore, must be seen in the context of the proclamation of the Kingdom. That is, it is not about us, it is about God, and our relationship to God. One of the aspects of the Good News of the Kingdom, is the forgiveness of sins, thus repentance for Luke is connected to the forgiveness of sins. However, this is not our forgiving of others, but of God forgiving us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As a result of that, because we have been forgiven, we should forgive as well. So, for Jesus in Luke and therefore for us, repentance is a change of attitude that leads to conversion, which then must lead on to corresponding deeds commensurate with that forgiveness.

Sin, and the resulting sinful life is the product of a life that is self-centred and not concerned about God, and what God wants for our lives. Turning away from a sinful life is required in the light of the forgiveness of sins and salvation that has come in Jesus. Can I encourage us to think of sin not just as specific actions? A very underrated verse in Luke reminds us of this truism. Luke 12.34. 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' If our treasure is in ourselves, then our heart will be selfish and so will our actions, and we will be sinful. When our treasure is seen in God, then that is where our heart will be, and we will be less likely to be selfish and therefore less sinful as we will see the needs of others, rather than ourselves.

For the church a new possibility for the forgiveness of sins arises with the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is to be proclaimed first in Jerusalem and then into the whole world, and it is to be done all the time, not just in Lent! Thus, strangely, repentance is evangelistic. Repentance is about helping ourselves and others turn positively towards God.

I hope you are able to discover this reality for yourselves this Lent.

The Lord be with you.

+Keith, *Diocese of The Murray*

## The Format of these Sessions (with suggested time limits).

I am not sure what your familiarity is with what we might traditionally call bible study. I think studying the bible is important, for it is God's unwavering word for us to encourage and equip us to be God's people in a world created for us to delight in. However, after many years of leading bible study I have come to the conclusion that it is only the hook to get people in, and it might not be a very good hook for some.

I have come to see these bible study groups more as growth groups. I want people to grow in their love and relationship with Jesus and God and the Holy Spirit. I also want people to grow in their love for one another in their faith communities, and specifically in their growth groups. These are the best opportunities we have for pastoral care for one another. Also, remember, each of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore God resides in each of us, so in relating to one another, we also relate to God. If we have a focus on caring for one another while we study the bible, we might get the balance right, and others might be encouraged to join us in our journey of faith.

With all that in mind, can I suggest the following structure for your sessions;

**1. "Check in"** (10 minutes) – Before anything, even before you pray, it is important to check in with everyone in the group. Each person shares with the group something about how they are going. It might be something of great joy. It might be something that has caused them difficulty. Perhaps it is a feeling. As each person checks in, the group listens without judgment and without commentary or advice. Perhaps the host will note anything that might usefully be added to the opening or closing prayers.

**2. Opening Prayers** (5 minutes) Each week there is short liturgy provided that includes the collect for the week as well as the Sunday gospel. You might like to gather up some of the things from the "check in" during the opening or closing prayers. You could play some music and light a candle. A candle is a good reminder to us all that God is present through their Spirit.

**3. The Reading - Wondering Time & Discussion** (40 minutes). Since there are no right or wrong responses to wonderings, participants are unlikely to feel put on the spot. With many questions, there is an implied correct answer that everyone is to aim for. When participants do not feel they can give the “correct” answer with integrity, they might remain silent or even shut down. To avoid embarrassment or feeling uncomfortable, when it your turn, just say “Pass”. This is the clue for the leader not to press the issue and allow the ongoing flow of the group

**4. The Practice** – Wondering Time & Discussion (20 minutes) Each week a particular practice will be introduced. This is an opportunity to wonder about how the practice could be incorporated into the coming week and how a particular practice might inform or deepen your faith.

**5. Reflection Time** (10 minutes) Similar to the “check in” at the beginning, participants are invited to reflect on where the group has “travelled” during the session.

**6. Closing Prayers** (5 minutes)

Above all, the time spent in these growth groups are about your coming closer to God and to one another. It is meant to be a time of joy, belonging and welcome. I hope you enjoy our journey together.

## Weekly Overview

Week 1. Temptation: Luke 4.1-13

Week 2. Transformation: Luke 9.28b-36

Week 3. Why is there Evil? Luke 13.1-9

Week 4. The Forgiving Father: Luke 15.1-32

Week 5. New Possibilities: John 8.1-11

Week 6. A New look at the Cross: Luke 23.1-49





## Check in

House Keeping 'Care' Suggestion

- [www.grassroots.com.au/lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/lent2025.html)



## Getting Started

How do you usually experience Lent?

- Has it been a holy time?
- Is it a time when you just gave up things and wondered why?
- Did you just take on an extra discipline or activity during Lent?
- Are you drawn closer to God?

## Opening Prayer

*A candle is lit and the group spends a moment in silence, reflecting on what has been shared during "getting started" and becoming still in the presence of God.*

*Let us Pray*

*Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## The Reading – Wondering Time & Discussion (40 minutes)

**Read** – Luke 4: 1-13

*The reading can be found at [www.grassroots.com.au/lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/lent2025.html)*

*Close your eyes*



Have one person read the passage unhurriedly. The participants may either close their eyes and listen, or read through with the speaker. Then have another person

read unhurriedly again. This time highlight any words or phrases that are either strange to you or different, especially if you are reading from different translations. This can be the basis for your discussion. Note little words, conjunctions such as and, if etc. These are often critical in our understanding of the passage

## Introduction

The temptation of Jesus is a very familiar passage for many of us. However, the readers of Marks' Gospel, the first Gospel, do not get any of the detail we have in Luke or Matthew and in Matthew the temptation order is not the same as in Luke. As a result of this familiarity and therefore possible bias in reading, I want quickly to address two important words. The Greek word we translate as the devil is diabolos. The various possible translations are slanderous, wickedness and evil person. The figure of Satan, or the Devil is often unhelpfully translated for us with preconceived ideas. In the Hebrew scriptures Satan is simply the accuser. Despite popular mythology about Satan or the Devil, The Devil never makes us do anything we don't want to do in our heart of hearts.

The second word to look briefly at is the word we translate as tempted in Greek is peirazmos. This has the sense of testing, self - examination, as well as tempting. The difference between testing and tempting is the examiner's motivation.

## Discussion Questions (Be selective with the questions. No need to answer all of them)

- Can you deduce what the Devil is trying to do here with Jesus?
- Is this figure tempting or examining Jesus?
- Why do you come to your conclusion?
- Is this testing or tempting something you have experienced?
- What answer would you give your child or grandchild who asks "What is evil?" or "Do you think the Devil is real?"

## Context

One very important reality about the four Gospels that is often not understood at all is that the Gospels are very carefully crafted documents. The writers did not just throw a whole lot of information in a document for us to read at a later date. The Gospels contain deep religious meaning while telling the story of Jesus and why we should place our faith and trust in him as the only Son of the one true God.

## Discussion Questions

- What event in the life of Jesus takes place immediately before our reading above? (Luke 3: 21-22)
- In the light of what happens to Jesus after he is baptised, did you experience something similar at your baptism or confirmation. Did this help you in your Christian walk? - Share if you feel comfortable.
- When we get closer to God what might the Devil's response to us be?

### **A Closer Look at the Three Questions to Jesus and his responses.**

The Baptism of Jesus was the commissioning of Jesus for his public ministry. The Holy Spirit, having led him into the desert for the forty days, descends upon Jesus and God speaks from Heaven, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased." If you had that affirmation on you, how would you feel about yourself? Now, go back to the text we are looking at and think about these questions.

## Discussion Questions

- What do you think is being asked of Jesus?
- Has the church got a good balance between the reality of God's love towards us, and the reality of our sin in our selfishness?

The first response of Jesus is: "It is written, One does not live on bread alone."

What on earth is this all about? (Clearly this is not about dietary intake!!)

Let us just think for a minute. Jesus has been baptised and had this amazing affirmation of who he is before God. He has now gone into the wilderness for 40 days and fasted. This is an important point for Luke. The Israelite nation, after the amazing affirmation of who they were before God in the Passover and the subsequent giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, went on a 40-year journey in the wilderness learning how to put their faith and trust in God, how to rely on God for everything. Luke is saying that Jesus is fulfilling this journey perfectly. Where the Israelites failed in their wandering,

in their testing, in their wilderness journey, Jesus succeeded. One of the first complaints the Israelites had was they did not have enough food. God provided for them. He provided manna which they scraped off the rocks and quail which he sent in abundance. They still complained! Clearly The Devil is playing on the issue of Jesus' hunger. Is he going to fail just as Israel did? After all, it is his immediate need. He has gone 40 days without food. I would be hungry too! It seems to me that sometimes we have such personal pressing needs, that everything else, even God, gets pushed to one side. The issue here for Jesus is the same as it was for the Israelites. Do we trust God enough for what we need each day? The answer Jesus gives shows that he does trust God for all his needs, personal and spiritual.

## Discussion Questions

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said you can't live on bread alone?
- I had a poster that read "The only bible some people will read today is you." What message will they receive when they see you in everyday life?

The second response of Jesus is: It is written You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.

The second test is very interesting. It is the temptation to take the short cut, the easy way out. Luke's two volumes, Luke and Acts is all about how God's world has been overtaken by the forces of evil personified in the Devil, who has all authority for the moment over God's good creation. The point of this test is, if Jesus worships the Devil, then he won't have to face the rejection of the religious leaders, or go through the agony of the cross. The irony is that Jesus would simply become the puppet of the Devil. So often we are tempted to take the short cut, the easy way out.

"I am a bit tired today, God will understand if I don't say my prayers today."

"Work pressures are too great at the moment, and I haven't spent enough time with my family."

"I won't go to church today so I can spend time with my family. God will understand."

“I won’t make a fuss about this Christian issue at work, or with my friends, or they will call me a religious fanatic.”

These subtle issues arise in our hearts and minds, and we take the easy way out. Before too long we discover that we have drifted away from God and we are all at sea.

The other, more direct issue, is simply all about who we worship. For many people worshipping Jesus is easy because Jesus is just another God one can put on the mantelpiece to cover all our bases, just in case. Having multiple Gods was common in the day of Jesus. Note Jesus’ response, “You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone you shall serve.” Idol worship was condemned because it distracted from the worship of God. It may not be as obvious as in Jesus’ day, but there are other gods in people’s lives. In the introduction to this booklet, I noted the reference in Luke 12 about your treasure being where your heart is. It is often our treasure that we worship, because that is where our hearts are.

Being a christian is not for the fainthearted. It is a difficult and often painful way of life. For many of us, the world and even our own church have anaesthetised us from this reality and we have become complacent and comfortable and no real threat to anyone, let alone The Devil.

## Discussion Questions

- Thinking about trying to take the easy way out, what distracts us from making God our absolute first priority in everything we say or do?
- What might the subtle distractions from prioritising God look like? Do any of the following touch a nerve with you?
  - *Lack of time*                      - *Work pressures*
  - *Lack of energy*                      - *Family pressures*
  - *Lack of motivation*                      - *Lack of finances*

The third response of Jesus is: “It also says, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”

Here, the Devil changes tack. Jesus has twice said, “It is written.” That is, the scripture says this and that. Jesus is using the scriptures to rebuff the

attempt by the Devil to place doubt in his mind, “If you are the Son of God...” So, in an attempt to use Jesus’ own tactic, the Devil says “It is written....” Jesus responds with a better text, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

What we have here is a typical situation we find in the church today. We fight over texts in the bible and the interpretation of those texts. The reality is, we can use the bible to justify just about anything. We think of some of the passages in Paul about women, which have been used to keep women’s voices and presence in our faith communities suppressed. Here, the Devil is right, God will give God’s angels commands to protect Jesus if necessary. Indeed, in Mark’s Gospel (Mark 1. 12-13), Mark adds to the temptation story, ‘angels minister to Jesus.’ This promise that God will protect us does not give us a licence to manipulate God. This is the ultimate issue with the third temptation. Don’t try to manipulate God.

## Discussion Questions

- Have we ever tested God?
- When you pray in the Lord’s Prayer - “Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil” - What are we praying? Share your thoughts and feelings.

## Final Note

In the Nicene Creed, we affirm that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. This is important because we affirm that Jesus responds to God in his human life as a fully incarnate human being. If Jesus turns stones into bread, or calls on angels, then he ceases to respond to God as a human and his divinity takes precedence. Then he will have nothing to say to us as a human being. All very nice for Jesus the Son of God, but what about us mere mortals?

## Reflection Time

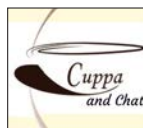


The leader asks the group for their feelings about how they progressed throughout the study. Was there anything they would like to share that might help them in their journey in faith?

## Closing Prayer

God of the new and eternal covenant, as the forty days of the great flood swept away the world's corruption and watered new beginnings of righteousness and life: grant to us, who are washed clean and born again in the saving flood of baptism, the wellspring of your grace, that your gift of new life may flourish once again; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

**Hospitality is important.** Consider the following:

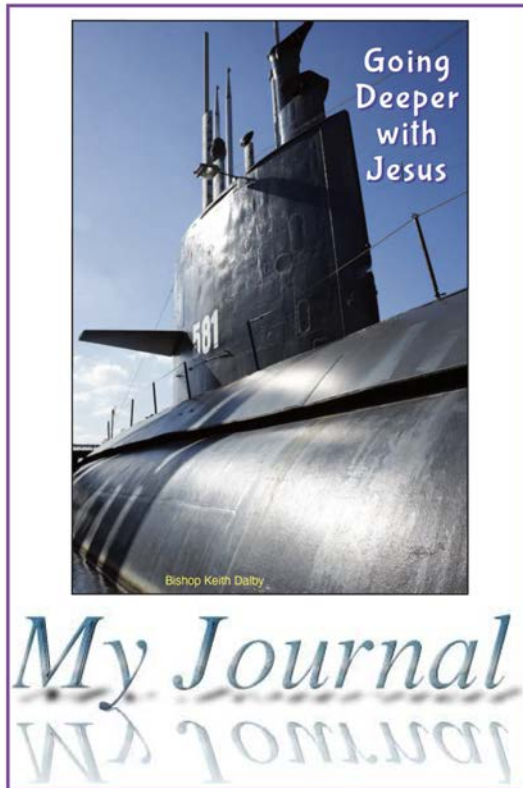


- Soup and bread before the study?
- Coffee and cake before or after the study?
- Cheese and biscuits, along with dried fruits and nuts at the end?
- If the group members are from different nations, maybe a different national delight each week?
- Remember birthdays are important celebrations

Decide who will be responsible for the hospitality for the next week, or even the next couple of weeks. Please take into account dietary needs of group members. The leader or a group member to provide simple refreshments for the end of this first study.

Next Week! **Actions** – Attempt one, or all of these suggestions.

- This week try to hand over to God one difficult situation and pray something like this. “Loving God, I hand this situation over to your care. Help me to trust in you that you will bring it to fruition in a way that gives glory to you. Amen.”
- Each week this Lent, identify something in your life that distracts you from God. Try to think of strategies to help you remove it as a distraction. Maybe you might pray something like this. “Loving God, I recognize that this (whatever it is) is causing me to be distracted in my relationship with you. Please help me to remove this as a distraction and help me this Lent, and this year, continue to remove these distractions that cause me to lose focus on you. Amen.”
- If you are not involved in anything in your faith community, identify something in the faith community you belong to where you might be able to help.

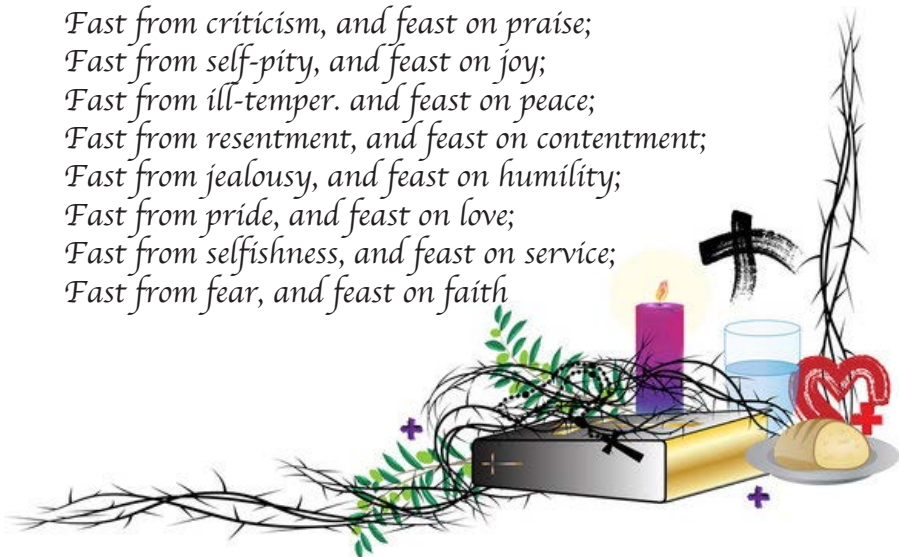


Our memory works much better when we write things down. A journal also gives us an opportunity to look back at some of the jottings we made along the way during this study.

You can use any book or pad for this, but if you wanted a design that links in with this study that you can print out to use, go to [www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html](http://www.grassroots.com.au/Lent2025.html)

## **A Lenten Tip: "Rule For Lent"**

*Fast from criticism, and feast on praise;  
Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy;  
Fast from ill-temper. and feast on peace;  
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;  
Fast from jealousy, and feast on humility;  
Fast from pride, and feast on love;  
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service;  
Fast from fear, and feast on faith*





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