

Sermon 3-10--19 **Luke 4:1-13 Jesus Overcomes Temptation for Us**

Dear Prepared for Spiritual Battle:

We all have been there. We all have done it. One time or another we all have had to prepare for...

- a test
- a new job
- a special event

When Jesus went into the wilderness to face the devil he was preparing himself for his public ministry. The devil met Jesus in the wilderness to tempt our Lord. The devil has been tempting people since the beginning of time.

- He tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
- He tempted the Children of Israel in the wilderness
- He tempted King David
- He tempted the Apostle Peter
- He tempts you and me

Where others failed and fell to Satan's temptations, Jesus overcame the temptations and defeated the devil.

The devil was once an obedient angel serving the Lord. But he rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven. Revelation 12:7-9

Since the devil has been kicked out of heaven, he has been battling and tempting the Lord's people. The ultimate clash between the Lord and the devil would take place here in the wilderness recorded in Luke 4.

Jesus is directed by the Holy Spirit to enter into this battle. After Jesus' baptism Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert. The temptation lasted 40 days. The 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert are the origin of the 40 day period of Lent.

Think of the timing of this temptation by Satan upon Jesus. Jesus had just been baptized. He was about to begin his public ministry. It was a high spiritual

moment in Jesus' earthly life. Satan often attacks us when our defenses are down. He often attacks us when we seem to be riding high. He often tries to catch us to fall and fail when we seem to be on top of everything. This is why the Apostle Paul says to us: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall." I Corinthians 10:12

Jesus goes to the desert by the will of God. It is God's will that Jesus face the devil. We often put ourselves into places of temptation.

### **Temptation**

- Because we are not watching
- Because we are not praying
- Because we are not in constant contact with the Lord

Satan never gives up. He never quits. He is called in the Bible as a slanderer, accuser and a deceiver. He is constant in his attacks. He prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

In the case of Jesus, Satan is attempting to overthrow Jesus before he ever begins his ministry. It was a high spiritual moment for Jesus but also it was at a time that Jesus was physically drained. Jesus fasted for 40 days. He ate nothing for 40 days. He was hungry by the end of those 40 days.

The devil seizes upon this situation. He says to Jesus:

**"If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."** What is the devil doing here?

- He is tempting Jesus to use the power of his deity for his own selfish purpose
- He is tempting Jesus to provide bread for himself apart from his Father's will

Satan always tries to plant seeds of doubt in our hearts.

- To Eve he asked "Did God really say you must not eat of that tree..."
- To us he often asks "Does God really say you can't do this..."

- To Jesus he is saying “Does God really love you? No loving Father is going to deprive his child of food.”
- To Jesus Satan is saying: “Satisfy your desires...show me that you are the Son of God”

### **It is written**

Jesus response to Satan is “It is written...” v4 Jesus meets every assault by Satan with the Word of God. There is no debating Satan. He defeats him with the Word of God.

Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. The devil had focused attention on the bread alone; Jesus directs attention to the One who stands behind the bread. No debating he only defeats the devil.

We don't live by food alone that meets our physical needs. We need God's Word, spiritual food, for our souls. Jesus will not override the will of his father in heaven. Jesus would have failed in his mission if he would have used his divine power for his own selfish purposes...here to satisfy his earthly physical needs of food for the stomach.

The next temptation of Jesus is political in nature. The devil led Jesus to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. The devil says: “I will give you all their authority and splendor...if...if you will worship me.”

This is a temptation of wealth and power. The world can be awfully tempting. How often aren't we tempted to go after earthly wealth at the expense of spiritual wealth? How often aren't we tempted to go after earthly prestige at the expense of spiritual humility? There it is right in front of our eyes, all we have to do is grab it.

Satan is tempting Jesus to go for it. Be king now. Have the power now. Skip the agony. Bypass the suffering. Forget the cross. Compromise with me.

Satan tempts us to compromise.

- Come to terms with me...I will give you this or that

- Compromise with me...adopt the world's desires and attitudes

Jesus could easily have become a great world leader and controlled all the nations of the world. Again, if he would have done this he would have rejected the will of his Father as Satan had done once upon a time. Jesus overcomes Satan with a quote from Deuteronomy 6:13 "Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only."

Now the devil leads Jesus to the highest point of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He urges Jesus to jump down from the top of the temple and take a 500 foot dive. Satan even quotes Psalm 91:11-12 though he omitted the key phrase in those verses which is "in all your ways."

The Lord will protect us but we dare not test him and purposely put ourselves in extreme danger.

The devil is tempting Jesus to tempt the Father. The devil is thinking "I will test Jesus to make God perform." Jesus, take a dive off this temple and see how your Father will send his angels to save you.

### **Do we tempt God?**

- You better do this Lord for me, I will give you until next week
- If the phone rings in the next 2 hours, then I know it is God's will
- We ask for blessings of health then purposely do things that are unhealthy
- We ask for the Lord's protection then purposely put ourselves in harm's way.

Jesus knew to jump off the temple high point would be to challenge God. To do such a thing would push God into a corner. To do such a thing would put demands upon God.

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 "Don't test God."

Jesus won victory over the devil by using the sword of the spirit...the Word of God.

- Adam and Eve fell into temptation because they denied the Word
- Israel fell into temptation because they denied the Word
- We fall into temptation because we drift away from the Word

**“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...” Hebrews 4:15**

Like us, Jesus was tempted but he was not overcome. Hebrews 4:15 Jesus slammed the door on Satan. But the defeat of Satan in the desert is not the end of the story. Luke closes with the rather foreboding comment “When the devil had finished all this tempting he left Jesus until an opportune time.” Jesus would be faced with various tests during his ministry on earth. This was only the beginning. The most serious of these would come at the cross. But Jesus continued to do the Father’s will.

We take comfort in the fact that although we do at times fall into temptation Jesus won the victory for us and defeated Satan.

**Jesus is our champion.**

By faith in Jesus we are assured of the final victory over sin, death and the devil.

With the Word at our side we, too, may overcome Satan’s temptations. When Satan says to us...

- God doesn’t care for you we can quote I Peter 5:7 “God cares for you.”
- Don’t wait for God, do your own thing we can quote Psalm 27 “Wait for the Lord.”
- God is holding out on you we can quote Romans 8:28 “God will work out all things for us.”

Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.

**Proverbs 4:25 says: “Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.”**

Have you ever seen a horse in a parade? They usually put blinders on these horses so the horse does not get distracted by the sights along the parade route. The blinders keep the horse’s eyes focused on what is directly ahead of them.

“For the grace of God...teaches us to say ‘NO’ to ungodliness and worldly passions...” Titus 2:11-12