

First Sunday in Lent
March 10 2019
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Luke 4:1-13 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, `Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" 5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, `You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set 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 shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' 11 "and, `In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, `You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" 13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

Jesus faced many temptations during the forty days in the wilderness but these three are recorded as a summary. Luke gives us a glimpse into the way in which Satan likes to trick us. But he also shows us the means by which we may defeat Satan.

1. Temptation number one: I Need This

The first of Satan's temptation is seemingly the most innocent. And it can be the most difficult for us to understand. I mean why not turn the stones into bread? What was wrong with that?

You could perhaps say that, "Jesus wasn't supposed to use his power for his own benefit," perhaps there is some truth to this but then again there were many times when it seems like he did:

- When they were about to throw him off the cliff he walked through their midst
- When he feed the 5,000 he ate of that himself
- When he needed to get across the lake and didn't have a boat he walked on the water
- He often knew what people were thinking

In this case we really can't say anything more than "it was God's will" and Jesus knew it. He knew that in this case it was God will that he go without food for forty days. And that is part of the temptation. Often we don't understand why we can't do this or that and we have to learn to trust God's will. Jesus responds to this temptation with faith.

Jesus' quote comes from **Deuteronomy 8:3** "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

Here Moses reminds the people of Israel that God will provide. In faith Jesus says, "I do not know why I must not eat, but I know that God will provide."

1 Peter 5:8-9 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

When Satan whispers that we have need, we respond God will provide.

This temptation comes in many different forms, "I need this," "God made me this way," "God gave me this desire." Perhaps one of the most insidious forms is "I'm doing this for God."

How many times in India, I thought it would be better to pay for a fancy hotel. Many of the cheap hotels use mattress filled with coconut husk. It's barely more comfortable than sleeping on a board. How easy to think I should use the church money for a nice hotel, after all I need to get my sleep so that I can teach better. You see I'm doing it for God.

This takes great faith. To trust the Father to provide when we feel we need it now. What harm can it do to change some rocks into bread and eat a little. Against such temptation we need faith. Let us pray for such faith to learn to wait on the Lord.

In this we have failed often evenly daily. Yet Christ took our place. Remember that the Spirit drove Christ into the wilderness on purpose to test him. Christ didn't need to pass the test. We did. Christ is sitting in in our place. He fills out the test we get the A

2. The second temptation: The easy way out

The second temptation of Satan is the easy way out. You came to redeem the world, here I'll just give it to you.

Against this temptation Jesus responds with obedience. He quotes the first commandment.

It is obedience to God's word that keeps us on the narrow path, that keeps us from falling into dangerous situations.

Psalm 119:1-3 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! 3 They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Perhaps the worst from of the easy way out in our own day is abortion. A young girl who is not married finds herself pregnant. She can confess her sin to her parents, her church, her pastor. She can give birth to the child and find a way to take care of it. Or she can have an abortion and the whole thing will just go away.

Closer to home as a minister or as a church elder, it might be easy to put off dealing with sin and hope that it will just go away. It might be tempting to sweep things under the rug that need to be dealt with.

As a spouse. It can be a lot easier to watch a movie and call it together time. Rather than actually sit down and spend some real quality time with your spouse.

As a parent it can be easy to assume your kids will figure it out for themselves, rather than to do what God calls you to do. To help them with their homework, to make sure you are having evening devotions, and saying prayers.

As a child it can be tempting to "just get it done" rather than taking the time to do it right.

We have not been obedient but Christ has been obedient in our place. We often talk about his death for our sins but we forget that was only half of the battle. He died for our sins but he also took our place under the law, fulfilling God's law when we could not.

3. The third temptation: glory and praise

Finally, we have perhaps the most intoxicating of the three temptations, the praise and glory of this world. "Let all the people see your glory," says Satan.

Against this temptation the Lord responds with the greatest weapon the word of the Lord, and that word not only gives him the strength to resist temptation but it drives Satan away. Which is really what is needed in all temptations. Rather than sit and wrestle with the temptation we need to get out the sword of the spirit and drive Satan away.

This temptation is far more subtle than we might think. Desiring the praise and glory of the world might cause us to change our doctrine. It might cause us to be weak on our confession. It might cause us to join our friends at school in smoking or drugs etc. These are all temptations we ought to be warned against but there are many more subtle ways that Satan tempts us in this way.

Refusing to admit we were wrong. We don't want people to think less of us, so we refuse to admit that we are wrong. Refusing to forgive, our feelings are hurt, our pride is hurt, so we don't want to let go of our anger. These are subtle ways Satan tempts us with the glory and praise of this world.

Another thing is private confession. God's word says, **James 5:16**, "confess your sins to one another" private confession is an important part of the Christian life, but we don't like doing it because it hurts our pride. It is not an easy thing to tell another person I messed up this is what I did wrong.

Against this temptation we have the word of God which alone is able to teach our hearts humility

Jeremiah 23:29 "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

Hebrews 4:12 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is the word of God that breaks open our prideful sinful heart.

We have a fourth weapon which Christ did not “the blood of the lamb.”

Revelation 12:10-11 10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Christ has already conquered sin, satan and death. Our way to heaven is open and clear. Satan can not stop us. For Christ took our place and past the test for us.

Amen