

Jesus Overcame Temptation

A. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27) means living w/ Jesus' purpose (1 John 2:3-6).

1. We require constant reminders.
2. It seems that every day and every phase of life presents a new challenge in our desire to walk as Jesus walked.
3. Late in Paul's life, he was still working on it.

Philippians 3:8-10

8 More than that, ***I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord***, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 ***that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;***

B. Last week we saw that to live like Jesus means that we live with a sense of His true purpose.

1. Tell people about God and the Kingdom.

2. To show people how to obey God.
 3. To warn people to change.
 4. To seek out souls to save.
 5. To accept the cost of saving souls.
 - a. Jesus lived the way the Father wanted Him to live
 - b. And that defined His purpose in life.
 - c. That's the reason God said, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- C. But the first thing that happened to Jesus – after He was baptized and set out to do His Father's will – was that He was severely tempted by the devil.
1. How can God be tempted? Jesus was a man too; His humanity was tempted.
 2. But Satan wasn't drowned in the river Jordan when Jesus was baptized, and he won't be drowned in a baptistery either.

3. That's when he seems to come alive and put up more of a struggle to overcome us.
4. And Jesus is the perfect model on how to handle any temptation to sin against God.

Hebrews 4:15

15 For ***we*** do not ***have a high priest*** who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but ***One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.***

5. But Jesus knew how much of a struggle temptation could be, because He never yielded to it.
 - a. Imagine how hard that must have been, considering all that Jesus went through.
 - b. We, OTOH, can succumb to temptation over the slightest pressures in life.
 - c. But Jesus, even though Satan's attacks came fast and strong, overcame them each and every time.

Ephesians 6:11-12

11 ***Put on the full armor of God***, so that you will be able to ***stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*** 12 ***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood***, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this

darkness, ***against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.***

- a. Now, a physical thing or person may be the catalyst for our temptations, but it's origin is from a realm we cannot see.
 - b. That being the case, mere physical activity cannot overcome temptation; we cannot simply say, "Idle hands are the devils workshop" and expect to overcome all temptation just by staying busy.
 - c. No, temptations can ONLY be overcome when God's truth enters our hearts and causes us to change the way we think —that is a spiritual activity.
- D. Now, here's the challenge...we haven't always known when we are being tempted.
1. Because temptation, by its very nature, is stealthy, it's deceptive; it's "on you" and in control of you before you know it.
 2. The Hebrew writer talked about being "*hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*" (Heb 3:13) and Jesus said that the devil is a "*liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44).

3. So what we really need to know is HOW to defend ourselves from an enemy and his tactics when they are hard to detect?

E. Jesus brought Satan's temptations out of the darkness and into the light.

1. By following His example, we can effectively identify and overcome them.
2. The first things I need to say out about the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness:

Luke 4:1-2

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

3. It's important for us to see that although Jesus was physically alone, except for animals, God was with Him all the time.
4. And also, that He was tempted, not on one Sabbath, but during the 40 days He was out there in the desert.
 - a. We will find these two things to be true about our times of temptation.

[Now, let's delve into the text (Matt 4; Luke 4). When can you know you're being tempted.]

I. WHEN ARE YOU TEMPTED?

- A. When you want to place your needs before the will of God.

Luke 4:3

3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, ***tell this stone to become bread.***"

1. Was Jesus hungry? Real hungry! Is hunger a legitimate need? Always will be!
2. But since Jesus didn't do what He was tempted to do here, ***there must be some-thing more important than our human needs.*** What would that be?

Matthew 4:4

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, '***MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.***'"

3. How or when do you know that you're being tempted?
 - a. When you say, "*This need of mine is more important than God's word.*"

- b. We are very often tempted to make our needs more important than God's commands.
 - c. When that happens, Satan has us in his cross-hairs; he's neutralized us in God's kingdom and is dragging us into a destructive shell of self-interest.
 - The need for high achievement, for monetary gain, for affection, to give uncharitable opinions, etc.
4. Someone asks, "So why do we have such strong needs, if they can so often conflict with the will of God?"
- a. Why put a big, beautiful tree in the middle of a garden and tell people to stay away from it and not to look at it?
 - b. Because it gives us the opportunity to prove our dependence on God, and our love for Him and what He's done for us.
 - c. If we got to satisfy every need, free and clear, *what would we learn* about sin and its deadly consequences; *what would we learn* about God's holiness?
 - d. This world is a testing ground, not a playground; a place where we prove our love for our Maker and Savior, and our sincere desire to live with God in a place where every need is always supplied.

[Secondly, when are you tempted?]

- B. When you want to fulfill your dreams before fulfilling the will of God.
 1. Jesus' first temptation had to do with needs; this one has to do with wants.
 2. There is nothing more frustrating than unfulfilled desires and ambitions.
 3. OTOH nothing is more pleasing than to have a wonderful dream just fall into your lap.
 4. Well, Satan knows our wants, dreams, and ambitions; and he knows how to make some of them fall into our laps to lead us away from God.

Matthew 4:8-10 (third temptation)

8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "***All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.***"

5. What made this a temptation to Jesus?

- a. After all, He made the world and everything in it; He controls it, and no one can admire it more than Him.

Acts 17:26

26 and **He made from one man every nation** of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having **determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**

- First of all, I'm not convinced that this was the first time Jesus had this thought.
- Being Deity, He would have considered all the possibilities of His time on earth.

- b. So why was this a temptation to Him? Was it the opportunity of an immediate grab for power & fame?

- c. Was it the broader influence He could immediately have for good?

- d. Was it the opportunity to immediately subjugate the world to do God's will.

- I don't know that Jesus even consider-ed the devil's conditions here "*if you will fall down and worship me, I'll give you these kingdoms.*"

- It's possible that Jesus was tempted to just take control of everything RIGHT THEN and put it all back into order.

- And He didn't need the devil's permission to do that.

- 6. But Jesus resisted by saying, "Get lost Satan, we're going to do things God's way!"

Matthew 4:10

10 Then Jesus said to him, "**Go, Satan!** For it is written, '**YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.**'"

- 7. So the next time your heart is set aflame by your dreams and desires, ask yourself "Will this interfere my ability to worship God and serve His body the church?"

- a. When the answer is "Yes", then you know you're being tempted.

- b. College students and job seekers have to ask themselves that question in their choices of careers and job opportunities.

- c. Wives and mothers must consider these things under the husband's headship.

[Third, when are you tempted?]

C. When you begin to doubt that God's plan is for the best; that only His plan truly exhibits His will and His love for you.

1. Satan works in the realm of doubt; he wants to leave us with questions about God's love and His plan of salvation.
2. That's the reason Satan began the temptations saying, "If you are the Son of God"; he wanted Jesus to begin doubting the mission His Father had given Him.

Matthew 4:3

3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "***If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.***"

Matthew 4:5-6

5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "***If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down;*** for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

3. The **first** temptation appealed to the *flesh*, and the **third** appealed to His *eyes*, but this **second** one appealed to His sense of personal *pride*.

- a. Satan didn't come right out and say it, but he's implying something by this temptation.
- b. He's implying, "Jesus if you will do this thing, then someone will see it and the Jews will sweep you up and heap praise on you. There's no sense in subjecting Yourself to the ridicule of being the product of a peasant family."

4. But God's plan was to identify His Son was completely different, even disappointing to many Jews, God planned to identify His Son by raising Him up on a cross and then raising Him from the dead.

5. When Jesus told His disciples about that plan Peter said, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." You deserve acceptance, honor and peace."

And Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (Matt 16:23).

6. Satan wants us to question whether or not God's plan is really for the best plan—if it is really enough to satisfy people.

Matthew 4:7

7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, '***YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.***'"

7. You know what that means? God is God and you're not going to change His will, don't even try; He knows what's best, and He knows how best to accomplish His will.
 - a. A lot of people think that we could get more souls into the kingdom if we would drop our hardline stance on truth.
 - b. But that's not going to change the will of God, nor will those things make God's will more effective in salvation.
8. So when you hear that little voice saying, "God's way is too old fashioned; if you really want to be effective today you'll conform to what the people want."

Then you know you're facing a temptation.

[As we saw how Jesus faced His temptations, there were at least three things that gave Him success.]

II. HOW JESUS OVERCAME TEMPTATION

- A. Jesus stayed alert and aware of Satan's activity.
 1. Jesus lived with a constant awareness that what Satan tried to do to Him, he was trying to do to everyone.

2. But Jesus could recognize the devil's voice, even when he spoke through a friend.
3. Jesus knew that Satan was always looking for an opportunity show up again.

John 10:10

10 ***The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.***

2 Corinthians 2:11

11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for ***we are not ignorant of his schemes.***

Ephesians 6:10-11

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 ***Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.***

- A. Jesus was resolved to do His Father's will even in times of weakness.
 1. Satan tempted Jesus at His weakest and most vulnerable point (Luke 4:2, 13).
 2. You might expect a crack in His armor of righteousness, but Jesus had resolve every time He was tempted.
- B. Jesus relied on prayer and on God's word.

1. Jesus defeated Satan w/ the same resources available to us (Matt 26:36; Matt 4:4, 7, 10).
2. He repelled every temptation by praying and declaring God's Word.
3. Temptation is spiritual warfare, and we can only win spiritual battles by filling ourselves with spiritual truth.

CLOSING

- A. Jesus never gave-in to temptation; He never sinned.
Amazingly Divine.
- B. He always gave-in to doing what He came here to do; He paid the penalty due for our sins.
- C. You may have God's forgiveness of your past sins today by believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized.