

That You May Know

it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:3-4 ESV)

Jesus Was Tempted

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Luke 4:1-13

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Introduction:

Good morning! Please turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 4. It is my pleasure to share God's word with you this morning and to contemplate what He has revealed to us in it.

Before we jump into this scripture, I want to take a moment to look at the end of Chapter 3 of Luke. If you look at verse 23 you see that Luke has listed the detailed genealogy of Christ. Now we are not going to read through the entire genealogy, but it is important to note how this passage bookends. That is, how it starts and how it ends.

³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. (Luke 3:38 ESV)

When a genealogy is listed in the bible it can be tempting to just skip over it. Let's be honest – this is what a lot of us will do when we reach these sections of our scripture reading. However, we CANNOT pass over the significance of this. This detailed genealogy helps us to understand that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, the second Adam. He is the true and better Adam, the true and better Israel. I want you to keep that in mind as we review the scripture of focus for today.

With that in mind, would you look with me in your Bibles to Luke 4:1-13. Hear now God's holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active word.

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led 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 were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give

all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve.’”

⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and 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 will command his angels concerning you,
to guard you,’

¹¹ and

“‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

¹² And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:1-13 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Let us open in prayer.

Now, the MAIN reason why this story is in our Bibles is so that we might come to see and know WHO Jesus is. We’re going to unpack that a little later. But, before we get there, we also find an example in this story of how Jesus faced - and overcame - temptation. That being said, let’s begin this morning with the simple question:

What Does This Story Teach Us About Temptation?

1) Temptation is the weapon of choice for the devil

Let us look at how Satan approaches with his attack. Look again at verse 3:

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” (Luke 4:3 ESV)

Then look at verses 6-7:

“To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” (Luke 4:6-7 ESV)

And then look at verses 9-11:

And he took him to Jerusalem and 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 will command his angels concerning you,
 to guard you,’¹¹
 and
 ““On their hands they will bear you up,
 lest you strike your foot against a stone.”” (Luke 4:9-11 ESV)

The devil’s tool of choice is temptation. And this is an old method. Now Satan may be smart, but he is not all powerful. There is a lack of originality here. We see it here in how he tries the same technique as he did with Eve in Genesis 3. Notice the similarity.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” (Genesis 3:1b ESV).

That serpent of old is so bold as to not only tempt the eternal Son of God, but to also use the same approach that he did on Adam and Eve. As stated in our wisdom literature.

there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9b ESV)

In this we can see that the enemy does not have an infinite toolbox. There is an end to what he can use. And because of this, we are provided with a perfect example of how to respond. Look at your life. He resorts to the same old tricks, and it’s important for you to know that.

That leads naturally to the second point:

2) Temptation is a test that all of us will face

Everyone will be tempted. Not in the same way, but to the same end. And that end is to make us stumble and fall and sin. It is worth noting that Satan knew that he was dealing with someone powerful. We can see in how he addresses Jesus in verse 3 in the first recorded temptation.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” (Luke 4:3 ESV)

This simultaneously should serve as a warning and should give us some comfort. First, the warning. If Satan would be so bold as to tempt Jesus, then he will also try to tempt us. Temptations will come, and we need to be careful because even Peter warned us about this.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 ESV)

So yes, the enemy will work constantly to make us stumble. And yes, we do need to be aware of the strategies that he will use.

But here is our comfort. We can rest assured that Jesus can relate to what we are going through. He has been there. He is one who has withstood temptation, and He will also stand with us in our temptation. And remember, He was prepared for the eventuality of temptation. The enemy tried to make him stumble, and yet Jesus did not sin. Because of this we can approach God's throne to receive the mercy and grace that we seek.

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV)

As we go through the three temptations recorded for us to study, we see three categories of temptation. The first is material in the form of food, the second is power in the form of earthly authority, and the third is safety in the form of testing God. Here, Satan is appealing to different categories of desire. Physical, power, and assurance.

But God does want the best things for us. It may be that we are not ready for them.....yet. And it may be that what we desire God knows we do not need. As we have seen in the Sermon on the Mount, we tend to pursue immediate, temporary rewards – treasures on earth – but we were made for so much MORE! To quote C.S. Lewis:

Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child

who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.¹

Think about that. It is not that our desires are too strong, but too weak. They are directed to the wrong targets of desire. By performing the duties that we know we need to perform – time in God’s Word, time in prayer, communion with others, fasting – it helps to reset our desires in the right direction and for the right objects.

Which brings us to our third point.

3) Temptation in and of itself is not sin

Look with me again at verses 1 and 2:

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led 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 were ended, he was hungry. (Luke 4:1-2 ESV)

You cannot really get any clearer than that. Jesus was tempted. And how do we know that temptation is not sin in and of itself? Again, we can refer to God’s perfect Word.

²² **He committed no sin**, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (1 Peter 2:22 ESV)

Jesus was tempted. And yet Jesus did not sin. Think about that. The next time temptation rears its ugly head, you can take solace in the fact that you have not sinned.

Because we know that Jesus never sinned, we know that in and of itself – being tempted – is not sin. Martin Luther had an appropriate saying in reference to this.

Temptations, of course, cannot be avoided, but because we cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, there is no need that we should let them nest in our hair.²

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory, and other Addresses* (Harper One, 2015)

² Luthur Martin, *Explanation of the Lord’s Prayer* (GLH Publishing, 2022).

That is, you cannot prevent temptation from entering your life, but you are responsible for how you respond to it. It is not the thought. It is whether you entertain the thought or immediately evict it from your mind. That temptation to take a little extra off the till? The thoughts that cross your mind when you see someone attractive? The impulse when someone cuts you off in traffic? That in an of itself may not be sin. However, what you do with those thoughts can lead to sin.

We are responsible for our first action, and our second thought. However, we are accountable for what we do with those thoughts. I often times will tell my children to act like Joseph did when temptation came around in the form of his boss' wife.

¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. (Genesis 39:12 ESV)

Joseph did not stick around. He did not decide to have a prolonged debate with her. He fled. Naked and fast, he fled. And we can do the same. And this leads directly to the next lesson that we learn in this passage:

4) Temptation is NEVER irresistible

We see this in verse 13 of our passage.

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:13ESV)

At this point the enemy has emptied his quiver. He was out of ammunition, at least for the time being. If we hold fast, the attack will subside. I am not saying that they will not return but the attacks will subside for the time being. The Apostle Paul reminded the church in Corinth of this same principle. He encouraged them with this promise:

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV)

The devil WILL tempt you, but it's important for you to understand that the devil is *limited*. You may have heard that the devil is like a dog on a leash. He can only tempt us as much as God will permit. Even when working against Job, he was given specific instructions.

And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. (Job 1:12 ESV)

And yet in all this Job did not sin. So again in chapter 2.

And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.” (Job 2:6 ESV)

There are two ways that we can view this. We can get depressed in the knowledge that the enemy will not give up. There seems to be no reprieve. Another day, another assault. Day in and day out. Same old, same old.

Or we can take assurance in the fact that God is sovereign over all. He will only permit us to be subjected to what he permits. We can ask Him for our daily bread and remember He promised that He would provide it.

³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:34 ESV).

One of my often used sayings is “If it was easy, everyone would do it.” But isn’t that true? Temptations will come, but so will the rewards of remaining steadfast. Holding out. Do not be waived. What a wonderful blessing! Here we can see that our Lord and Saviour was tempted and held out in the assault, and that if we do the same, we will be blessed.

For those of you who know me, my background is in the science of exercise physiology. I have learned through this field that it is by focusing on the proper goals and surrounding yourself with like minded people that you can reach your physical and lifestyle goals. Marathon runners train with marathon runners. Power lifters train with power lifters. People interested in weight loss join up with others interested in the same goal. Want to quit smoking? It probably won’t happen if your spouse does not also quit.

In the same sense, when we place our focus on God and surround ourselves with brothers and sisters in Christ, we draw closer to God. We encourage each other to participate in better practices.

We meet together. We pray together. We discuss what we have just read, which podcasts we have just listened to, and practice our scripture memorization with each other.

And God will deliver us from evil, but we do need to hold fast. The enemy will come at us again and again, but he who is with us is stronger than he who is against us. And some of us will undergo most terrible trials and temptations. Job lost his seven sons and three daughters. Joseph was wrenched from his family and home and tempted by his boss's wife. Jesus spent time in isolation to be closer to his father and was tempted by the Devil himself. And yet, if we hold steadfast, the enemy will flee. Which bring us to our fifth and last point.

5) Temptation is fought with the Word of God.

When Satan tempts Jesus to turn stone to bread, Jesus responds with this.

⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" (Luke 4:4 ESV)

Jesus responds immediately with scripture. And this should serve as an example for us. If we look we can see that each time Jesus responds in the same manner. For the second temptation where Satan tempts Jesus with earthly power, look at the response.

And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

"'You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve.'" (Luke 4:8 ESV)

Again, the response is with scripture. For the third temptation Satan asks Jesus to test God and to have Him cast Himself from the height of the temple. So how does Jesus respond? Again, with scripture.

¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Luke 4:12 ESV)

With each attempt, Jesus responded with scripture. This should tell us something about the importance of holding God's word close to our heart. Satan *deceives* us. He *lies to us* about who God is and what God said. Therefore, it is only logical that the best way to prepare ourselves for

that attack is to spend our time pressing into the truth. We need to spend time in the word AND - more importantly - we need to stay in right relationship with the AUTHOR of the Word. The better we know our Father, the better equipped we are to sniff out the lies.

Admittedly, this is something that I need to work more on myself. Each year I tell myself that I need to work on this more, that I need to work more on memorizing scripture. And each year I tell myself that this year will be better. And that this time I really mean it! But, as with planting trees it is also true of memorizing scripture. That is, the best time to start memorizing scripture is 20 years ago. The second best time is today, right now.

And there are tools to assist us with this. We have monthly scripture verses printed on cards to help motivate us all to learn more scripture. You should be able to find these either on the cabinet at the side or the Welcome table at the back. These scripture verses are the same ones that the little ones in Redeemer Kids are right now learning also. If you are picking up any of your little ones from Redeemer Kids today, just ask them on the way home about their memory verse. Do not feel shame if none of you can recite it. That is your baseline, and it can get better! There is no excuse not to start today!

This story reminds us that temptation is the weapon of choice for the devil and it is a test that all of us will face. This story also reminds us that temptation in and of itself is not sin. It reminds us that temptation is never irresistible, and that we have the tools that we need to stand up and overcome it.

But, as I said earlier, the PRIMARY purpose of this passage is not to teach us about temptation. The PRIMARY purpose of this passage is to magnify Jesus. So, as we conclude this morning, I want to ask one last question:

What Does This Story Teach Us About Jesus?

Now, in this story, Jesus stands toe to toe with the devil and provides us with a masterclass on how to stand in the face of temptation. There is so much that we can and will learn here from Jesus' example. But, before we draw out those practical lessons, let's make sure that we understand why this story is here. What does Luke intend for us to see here?

If Jesus had succumbed to any of these temptations, we would all still be hell-bound. The cross would have been emptied of all power. The resurrection wouldn't have happened. Here we see the true and better Adam, and right from the start he is succeeding where Adam failed. He succeeds where Israel failed. His time in the wilderness was not marked by grumbling and disobedience, but by prayer and faithfulness.

So, that is the MAIN point. Jesus is the true and better Adam. Let me remind you that this story comes *immediately* after the genealogy of Jesus. A genealogy that ends in verse 38:

³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, **the son of Adam, the son of God.** (Luke 3:38 ESV)

Right after Luke traces the line all the way back to Adam, we find the true and better Adam alone in the wilderness standing toe to toe with the serpent. This scene is supposed to seem familiar to us. It should direct our minds back to Genesis 3 when the devil first tempted Adam and Eve. The devil uses the same move. He speaks the same lies. This worked before, and he thinks it will work again. Afterall, if something is not broke, why fix it?

But it didn't work. His attempt to break Jesus in fact did break down. And we all are and we all should be eternally grateful for that.

Here we see the Son that was promised in Genesis 3. This is the obedient Son who is going to restore us to who we were made to be and bring us home. Look at what God tells Adam and Eve, and indeed Satan, immediately after they have first sinned.

¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,
 "Because you have done this,
 cursed are you above all livestock
 and above all beasts of the field;
 on your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and her offspring;
 he shall bruise your head,
 and you shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:14-15 ESV)

Think about that for a minute.

Take time to discuss that today while you are at lunch together as a family. This was the protoevangelium – the prophecy of God’s plan for our salvation through Jesus Christ. Immediately after the fall of man God had promised a redeemer, a way for us to be with God, despite the entrance of sin into the world.

We need to connect the dots here. Here we see the true and better Adam, and right from the start he is succeeding where Adam failed. He succeeds where Israel failed. His time in the wilderness was not marked by grumbling and disobedience, but by prayer and faithfulness. He succeeds where *we* fail. He is the hope for sinners who have succumbed to temptation - sinners like you and me.

This changes everything.

Temptation will come, but temptation in and of itself is not sin. God will bring you through high times and low times, but we need to constantly use the tools that He has placed at our disposal. Prayer, scripture, fasting, community. We need to keep our eyes on the prize. As we journey through this life we need to remember that God has revealed Himself to us. He has revealed to us how to obey Him. He has provided us with the tools that we, as His children, need to use in order to remain on the straight and narrow path. And we know that we cannot do this on our own. Christ is all we need. He is the true and better Adam. He is the true and better Israel. He is the child who will crush the serpent’s head.

And this is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let’s pray together.