

Jesus on Temptation

Luke 4:1-13

Series: "Jesus On _____"

Pastor Jarrett Stephens

We are coming to the conclusion of our *Jesus on* series. Next week will be the final message before we start our summer preaching calendar. I'm excited about this summer...as always you will get to hear from many different people on our team that we will rotate through each of our campuses, and we will be preaching on our favorite promises in the Bible.

I read somewhere...no idea if it's true or not that there are over 8,000 promises in the Bible. And so, we are going to look at some of them in our summer series we're calling: *Promise Keeper*. This series will start the first weekend in June.

For the last eight weeks we've been looking at Jesus's perspective regarding subjects like money, marriage, anxiety, and forgiveness. And this weekend, I don't know of a better subject to address on a day where we recognize our graduating seniors than the subject...the topic we are addressing today.

The message: **Jesus on Temptation**

I was at a senior graduation party just the other evening and I was visiting with a couple of our seniors, and I was eating a piece of a cookie cake from *The Great American Cookie Company*.

Now, if there is a kryptonite that can buckle me at my knees...stop any diet I am on...remove any ounce of self-discipline I think I may have it's chips and salsa AND cookie cake from *The Great American Cookie Company*...so good!

Well, I was talking to these seniors about this cookie cake I was eating – how good it was, and the dilemma I was in because I'm trying to get my weight down a little bit – and these two senior boys that shall remain nameless kept urging me to just go get another piece...they weren't just urging me, they were encouraging me!

And I told them, they just gave me my opening illustration for the message this weekend because I knew I was preaching on temptation – and I want you to know that I told those boys, "to get behind me, Satan – and I said "no" to the temptation of another piece of cookie from *The Great American Cookie Company*!

Now, everyone in here knows the power of temptation. We know what it's like to avoid temptation. We also know what it is to succumb to temptation and the conviction and/or guilt that comes along with it.

Temptation is a given in life. It is a regular occurrence that we face every day and through the text we are looking at this morning, we are going to see that Jesus also knew the power of

temptation. He experienced it in his life just as we do AND we'll also learn how he defeated temptation.

So, whether you are 18 or 80, this is a message that all of us need to hear!

Now, there is A LOT I want to unpack before we get into the heart of our text. These are just a few observations that I think are VERY important to understand as we talk about temptation.

Matthew writes about the wilderness temptation of Jesus in his gospel, Mark briefly mentions it – and in ALL instances – this is important - the temptation of Jesus immediately follows the baptism of Jesus.

There is no question this is meant to draw our minds to the picture and parallel of Israel being led out of Egypt and delivered through the waters and into the desert/wilderness. Israel's testing lasted 40 years was due to disobedience. Jesus's testing was a result of obedience and lasted 40 days.

It starts with his baptism though. This is where he is identified as the promised Messiah and affirmed by the voice of God, the Father.

Luke 3:21-22 – “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened,²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

So, you get a divine revelation of WHO Jesus is, and after this baptism, this revelation, Jesus is immediately led into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.

In Matt. 4:1 – operative word Matthew uses is “then” – the temptation happened right after the baptism.

Now, what's interesting to me is Luke for some reason (and I'm going to speculate as to why) writes of Jesus's baptism, but BEFORE diving into and writing about the temptation gives an entire section on the genealogy of Jesus. See Luke 3:23-38.

Matthew gives a genealogy as well, he just does it to open up his gospel, and if you remember anything about Matthew's genealogy – he's tracing it back for the sake of the Jewish audience he's writing and goes back to show Jesus was a child of Abraham and David. He wants to emphasize the royal line of Jesus – he is the one sitting on David's throne...Jesus is the Messiah!

Luke's genealogy is a bit different in that it traces more the physical lineage of Jesus going past David...past Abraham...and all the back to Adam, the first man ever created! Look at it!

Luke 3:23, 38 – “Jesus, when he began his ministry was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli (and notice who Jesus is traced back to)...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”

Now, let me speculate on why I think Luke did this...I could be reading into this way more than I should, but I think there is something to this especially as it relates to temptation.

In tracing Jesus all the way back to Adam – and he does it right before the temptation passage where this is no break in the action so to speak – why?

Luke, I believe is setting up for us in our minds an important contrast we need to remember as he moves forward.

Illus. Teaching children – Do you remember that sometimes when you were teaching your children a lesson...maybe showing them how to behave...the best way to do it is to use a negative example – this is how NOT to do it and the consequences that come along with doing something the wrong way or behaving in the wrong way (prison).

Well, I think this is kind of what Luke is doing in reminding us of the genealogy of Jesus. He's getting in our mind and highlighting a contrast between “the first Adam” and Jesus who is referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 as the “second Adam”.

Now, stay with me on this! While the first Adam and second Adam have some similarities...they are VERY different. Hear the Apostle Paul's take - and remember Luke traveled extensively with Paul on his missionary journeys. He wrote Acts and no doubt he would have heard Paul's teaching and discussions on this subject.

1 Cor. 15:45-47 (this is written in early 50's – we're talking 20 years after Jesus's death and this is the theology Paul is spitting out!)– **“Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.”**

Paul give us this contrast again in the book of Romans.

Rom. 5:12-19 - **“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Jesus – the second Adam!) ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass (the first Adam), death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man (the second Adam) Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass (in the Garden the first Adam fell to temptation and as a result) led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness (Jesus defeating temptation in the**

wilderness and throughout his life refusing to escape the cross leads) **to justification and life for all men.**¹⁹ **For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."**

So, check it out by way of review:

- The first Adam had life breathed into him and became a living being. VERY different than the second Adam who was a life-giving spirit from the beginning.
- The first Adam was from earth...the second Adam was from heaven...

As it relates to temptation: The first Adam was placed in a Garden with perfect conditions and sinned. He disobeyed. He transgressed! And that one transgression...that one trespass led to condemnation and brought death to all.

The second Adam was in a wilderness...NOT perfect conditions (as we will see in just a moment) and he unlike the first Adam obeyed! He did what God wanted him to do, and as a result his obedience to saying "no" to temptation ultimately brought life to all who will trust and follow him.

The first Adam messed it all up! The second Adam cleans it all up and it starts right here in the wilderness where he is tempted. So, as we talk about temptation what goes on in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 is MUCH bigger than what we simply see on the surface.

We see in Jesus, the second Adam, Israel's true champion. He is the promised Messiah. He succeeded in obeying his Father where the first Adam AND Old Testament Israel failed. His identity has been revealed via his baptism and it's confirmed through this time of testing in the wilderness.

So, with ALL this as background...important background, let's see how Jesus faces, deals with and defeats temptation.

First, I want you to notice: **The Timing of Temptation**

Luke 4:1-2a – "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil..."

Jesus's temptation as noted happened right after his baptism! It happens right after the heavens have opened, the Spirit of God has descends, and the voice of the Father affirms his love and the ministry of Jesus – RIGHT AFTER this comes the testing!

Listen, temptation is going to come at us throughout our life at different times and it will come from all different angles. It's interesting to me that this specific time of testing in the life of Jesus came following a high mark in his life.

Typically, we think we're most prone to temptation when we're depressed or discouraged...when we're down! That's when the Enemy gets ready to pounce – at least that's what we think!

Jesus was tempted after a victory though...he was on a “spiritual high” so to speak! It's been said that “new levels bring new devils”! And we need to take this to heart and understand that some temptation will come NOT during the low times, but right after the high times!

illus. David – I think about when David fell with Bathsheba. He fell prey to temptation coming off a victory in battle. Things were good! He was the King...life was going his way...and that specific temptation came at a time when he was riding high!

Now again, temptation can come at ANY time, but taking a page from when it came knocking on Jesus's door, it was right after a “mountain-top” moment!

Illus. The Mountains Are Calling – Camp...spiritual high...get serious about your relationship with the Lord and watch the temptation increase! (baptism, The Grove, walking with God)

I say all this, to just say be on the lookout after a victory...that's when Satan loves to come at us...when we have our guard down!

Now, very quickly let's just talk about: **The Definition of Temptation.**

Is there a difference between temptation and testing? OR are these two sides of the same coin so to speak? I did an entire message on this in our James series because the half-brother of Jesus writes A LOT about this subject.

The word that is used here for “tempted” is also translated as the word “test”. How you read it really just depends on the intent of one giving the test or sending the temptation. And we know from scripture God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13).

So, we can say with confidence temptation comes from the evil one and we also know from scripture that testing comes from God (James 1:3, 1 Pet. 1:7).

The way the word is used is also determined by the response of the one experiencing the test or temptation!

In other words, I think it will help if we broaden our perspective a bit as it relates to testing/temptation. We automatically think of the word “temptation” and give a negative connotation to it! And it makes sense knowing that temptation comes from the Enemy.

He is the one trying to hinder our faith and cause us to fall. He wants us to allure us and entice us to evil and entangle us in sin.

I want to encourage us to take a step back though and realize that the VERY temptation that is coming from Satan on the flip side of the coin could serve as a test that is coming from God.

When God tests us or allows trials into our lives, he is NOT trying to hinder our faith and cause us to fall, but instead, he is trying to build our faith and cause us to stand...to make us stronger.

Commentator, **Willian Barclay** – “**Now here is a great uplifting truth. What we call temptation is not means to make us sin; it’s meant to make us good. It is not meant to weaken us, it is meant to make us emerge stronger and finer and purer from the ordeal. Temptation is not the penalty of being a man, temptation is the glory of being a man. It is the test which comes to a man whom God wishes to use.**”

We see this right here in these opening verses of Luke 4. Look at it again:

Luke 4:1-2a – “**And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit** (for testing...not because God needed to see if Jesus could prove he was the Messiah...Jesus is led BY THE SPIRIT to be tempted because he is identifying with us yet again – he KNOWS what it is to be tempted AND what we see here is Jesus showing Satan and the world exactly who he is. He...the “second Adam” is defeating temptation where the first Adam failed!) **in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil...**”

So, we see the test and the temptation. NOTICE...it needs to be said here that it’s not a sin to be tempted. Temptation is a normal part of life and is NOT a sin!

And this is why Jesus teaches us to pray, in the Lord’s Prayer – **Matt. 6:13** – “**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**”

He’s teaching us to pray that when something enters into our life that could cause us to fall to temptation, that we would not be led down that road. If temptation was a sin, Jesus would be a sinner and we know this isn’t the case! Temptation is not a sin, giving into the temptation is.

You’ve heard me quote **Martin Luther** on this: “**You cannot keep birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.**”

Temptation is enticement or allurement away from God and it always comes from Satan.

I’ll show you this by looking at: **The Origin of Temptation**

We know what it is, where does temptation come from? Well, in Matthew’s account of this, he refers to the Devil as “the tempter”. It’s one of the titles attributed to Satan.

Maybe I do, maybe I don’t need to say this, but you do know that the Devil is a real being. He’s not a figment of our imagination. He’s not someone to take lightly or to disregard as if he is a character in an old wives’ tale.

Seniors, this is what Satan would love to trick you into believing! That he’s just a made up, make believe Devil with a pitch fork and red tights on...no real being with no real threat to destroy your life.

Illus. Screwtape Letters - C.S. Lewis' book, *"The Screwtape Letters"* is the fictional story of a junior demon, named Wormwood who is seeking advice from his Uncle Screwtape. Screwtape is a senior level demon and has a bit more experience in tempting humans and causing them to rebel against God. In one letter Screwtape is writing to his nephew, Wormwood, he is answering the question as to whether or not Wormwood should reveal himself to the person he is tempting or remain hidden and "invisible".

Screwtape answers, **"The fact that 'devils' are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that (it is an old textbook method of confusing them) he therefore cannot believe in you."**

The Enemy has done a job of convincing us that he is not real...and in the process we don't take him serious and that's a mistake! Satan is very real and wants to do anything and everything in his power to lure us away from following the Lord and having a heart that is totally and completely his.

Listen to some of the ways in which Jesus described Satan. (Next week: Jesus on Jesus) This is Jesus on Satan! He refers to him in:

John 8:44b – "...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

John 10:10a – "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy..."

This is what Satan wants! This is what he is after...and his primary way to steal, kill, and destroy is to tempt us away from God:

- away from believing in his promises...
- away from trusting his purposes...
- away from leaning on his provisions...

Satan is a powerful being that must be taken seriously. He is the originator of temptation. It started in the Garden with the "first Adam" and it continued in the wilderness with the "second Adam".

Let's briefly look at: **The Tools of Temptation**

What we see is that not much changed from the Garden to the wilderness as it relates to temptation. And not much has changed from those two settings to the settings and experiences of temptation that we face every day. Satan hasn't changed his ways!

Here's the three tools of temptation Satan uses to lead God's people astray. I'm giving it to you so that you can see it when it comes and we'll see it in scripture here in just a moment.

Here's what the tempter tries to do...he doesn't change.

1. **Satan creates doubt**
2. **Satan perverts desires**
3. **Satan distorts and deceives**

Now, if I had time, we'd go to Genesis 3 and I'd show you how the Enemy did this to the first Adam and he caused him to sin. Well, let's just do it real quick and then we'll go back to Luke 4 and parallel them. Satan and the process of temptation hasn't changed!

Gen. 3:1-6 – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” (creating doubt around the word of God! Said it before but putting a question mark where God put a period. This is where all temptation starts! SENIORS BEWARE!) ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. (distortion of truth) ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (desire to know God is a legitimate desire, Satan just perverts the desire from knowing God and being in a relationship with him to being him! It's exactly what got him kicked out of heaven – a desire to be God!) ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (deceived)”

Satan distorted what God said...deceives Adam and Eve...and this is interesting – write these three areas of temptation down because we'll see them again in Luke 4. Within the process of temptation usually the pressure points are the same. Notice from this:

1. **Satan targets physical appetites** (feasts on the flesh)
2. **Satan targets personal ambitions** (life about you)
3. **Satan targets spiritual allegiances** (who will you listen and bow down to)

You see it in Gen. 3 in the Garden, and you see it in the wilderness temptation in Luke 4. The tools he used NOR the pressure points he goes after have changed throughout time.

Luke 4:1-13 – “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. (May be the most gross understatement ever given! 40 days and nights fasting! Of course he was hungry...and probably hangry! I digress!)³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” (In other words, “Use your power as God to turn these stones to bread. Your Father hasn't/isn't providing for

you!” Lie aimed at legitimate desire for food –targeting a physical appetite! “You’re hungry Jesus...you don’t have to rely on God...turn these stones to bread” – creates doubt – “if you are...since you are, why isn’t God taking care of you! but look at what Jesus says) **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.”** (Satan is called the ruler of the world, the prince of the power of the air. He says bow down and I’ll give these to you. Talk about temptation! Jesus was worthy of the glory of all the world’s kingdoms, but the lie was he was going to get it by bowing down. No, he was going to get it by dying on the cross. The target was spiritual allegiance. Bow down and worship me.)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.’”** (Psalm 91 - Essentially what is being said here is people are not going to follow you to the cross, Jesus, do something spectacular. Wow the world. There is a thread...a nod to the target of personal ambition – you are God, prove it! Throw yourself down and when the angels see it, they will catch you talk about people following you! We see the tools of temptation in deceiving and distorting. He uses some of the word of God, but not all of it – it’s a half-truth which is lie and attempts to deceive, and look at what Jesus does. Does he fall to it?)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.”**

So, we’ve seen:

- The Timing of Temptation
- The Definition of Temptation
- The Origin of Temptation
- The Tools of Temptation

Let’s outline now: **The Defeat of Temptation**

This is where the rubber hits the road! How do we...what do we have to do in order to defeat temptation?

Well, just as Satan has tools to tempt you, God in his wisdom has given us tools to defeat temptation.

The first tool he’s given us is: **The Word of God**

How many times did Jesus say, “It is written”? If you want to win this battle of temptation, you are going to have to know God’s word. It’s the only way to battle the Enemy’s lies...to combat his deceptions.

Ps. 119:11 – “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

Your mind is ground zero for this temptation battle and it needs to be soaked in...saturated in God's Word. The scripture is “alive and active” (Heb. 4:12) and it's the only offensive weapon that is listed in Paul's outline of spiritual armor in (Eph. 6).

Illus. college students – get in a good church, find biblical community

Secondly, God has given us: **The Spirit of God**

One receives the Spirit of God when you have trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life. When you surrender and yield to the lordship of Christ, he gives you his Spirit and it is the Spirit that does battle against the sin nature.

It's the Holy Spirit that is your Counselor that comes alongside you and helps you remember his Word. He is living in you and when you abide in him, you are connected to the power source that enables you to say “no” to Satan and say, “yes” to God.

Illus. Power outage in Houston – can't do anything where there is no power! And you can't do anything – ESPECIALLY say “no” to temptation on a regular basis if you are not filled with God's power. See John 15 (abide, abide, abide).

To battle temptation, you have been given the word of God, the Spirit of God and: **The Armor of God**

This is Eph. 6...read it in your own time. But God has given you spiritual armor that you can wear every single day to help you as you wage war against Satan and the sin nature.

Eph. 6:11 – “Put on (tense is continue to...and keep it on...you never take it off!) the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

It's interesting if you read Eph. 6 and look at the armor of God, what you will discover is that Jesus is the armor of God personified.

- He's truth.
- He's righteousness.
- He's salvation.
- He's the object of our faith.

If we want to defeat temptation, this is the way to do it. You wake up every day and you clothe yourself in Christ. You arm yourself and especially your mind with his Word. And you make sure you're connected to the power source – the Holy Spirit.

We do this and we'll walk in victory in our times of temptation just like our Savior.

Let's pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.