

**Intro:** You can find it in every village and every city on the planet. You can find it in lecture halls, dormitories, and quaint walks through the park. Television & technology; Main Street & Wall Street. It surfaces in our thoughts, words, and the deepest motivations of our heart.

It is all around us and it appeals to what is in us. What am I talking about? Temptation. Temptation is a reality that we would love to ignore, if only we could. It hounds us with perfect consistency. In this fallen world, we cannot shake the troublesome presence of temptation. Russ Moore, in his book *Tempted & Tried*, says: "You are being tempted right now, and so am I." If that is the case, then how are we going to overcome it?

Luke is going to do is give us a picture of what it looks like to "Triumph Over Temptation." We are going to look at how we can . . .

**The Point: Conquer temptation through triumph of Christ.**

Please open your Bibles to Luke 3:21. Pg. \_\_\_\_\_. I have titled this sermon...

**"Triumph Over Temptation"**

**Luke 3:21-4:13**

Notice that you can take that title as both a description and a command. First and foremost, it's a description. Why? Because this passage was not written to teach us how to deal with temptation, though that is a nice secondary benefit. It was written to teach us about the person and work of Christ. At the same time, because he has triumphed, we can also experience victory over sin and temptation through him. But how? I want to give you two primary ways. The first is this:

**I. Believe in the Son who triumphed through the Father's love and the Spirit's fullness (3:21-4:1).**

- As we saw last week, John the Baptist had been baptizing many in the crowds. Jesus also came to be baptized. Matthew tells us that John says, "Jesus, I should be baptized by you. You *should not* be baptized by me. You are the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You have no need for a baptism of repentance..."
- So why then was Jesus baptized? The gospel writers don't spend a lot of time on this question. Some scholars say he was baptized to identify with the sin of Israel or validate the ministry of John.
- We do know that Matthew simply says it was "to fulfill all righteousness." From what unfolds after his baptism, it seems that it serves to foreshadow his own death as the suffering servant of the Lord.
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- If you are a follower of Christ or are ready to place your faith in Jesus, is there anything holding you back from believer's baptism? It is an awesome privilege, a step of obedience by which a person identifies with Christ and proclaims to the world that Christ has made them a new person.
- If you have been baptized, I have two questions for you: Are you producing the fruit of repentance? Are you about the work of ministry? You say, I get that baptism is closely related to repentance and faith in Christ, but why ministry? Well, like the baptism of Jesus was the launch of his public ministry, so Christians are to be about the works of God . . . (modify...)
  - How can you be more deeply invested in the works of God? I say this not to shame or guilt anybody into serving. The gospel is better than that. Trust me. At the same time, I want you to know that you will not get to the end of your life and say, "I gave too much to God. I was too involved with his church. I served too hard in ministry." Listen, we are here to help you go deeper with God and to equip you to be used by him. We want to equip you to do ministry where life exists. That's why we're here.
- Luke tells us that after Jesus was baptized, he went to pray. Prayer is a major emphasis for Luke. If you want to diagnose your spiritual health, take a close look at your prayer life. Is it your reflex to go to God in prayer? It was for Jesus.
- While he was praying, three divine events consecutively:
  - the heavens open;
  - the Spirit descends *like a dove*; and
  - God speaks from heaven

- Picture this. The heavens open. The Spirit falls on Jesus, and then you have this awesome, audible statement from the Father: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” This confession is actually the focus of the baptism episode. Grammatically all of the other clauses are subordinate to it.
- This statement would have packed a Messianic punch for those familiar with the OT. It combines two classic messianic texts.
  - The first is **Isaiah 42:1: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.”** This is the first verse of the first of four servant songs that all point to the coming Messiah in Isaiah 42, 49, 50 & 52-53
  - The second is from Psalm 2, which highlights the comprehensive rule of the coming Messiah.
- All of this amounts to a divine endorsement of Jesus. The stamp of God marked *everything* about the life and ministry of Jesus. [He is the beloved Son and God the Father is completely pleased with him.]
- Are we chasing after the pleasure of God? Does the stamp of God mark our lives? Who we are... Stamped. What we do... Stamped. Think about your life. If you need help checking the wisdom or the fruit of a particular action, just ask the question: Would God put his stamp of approval on (you fill in the blank)? The tone of my voice or the tone of that email? The fact that I am hiding that purchase from my spouse? Would God stamp that conversation? that desire? that dessert? that prayer?
- Let’s not miss that we have the presence of the Trinity right here in verse 22. God is Triune: Father, Son, Spirit. We should live our whole lives in light of the Trinitarian Formula: “from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.”
- Now move down to Chapter 4, starting in **verse 1**. “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit...” It says that after Jesus was baptized, Jesus was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit. Luke highlights the role of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus to help us see how the Spirit anointed and empowered Jesus to fulfill his mission of redemption.
- In all of this, don’t miss the foundational nature of belief in Christ as it relates to triumphing over temptation. At the end of the day, the only thing that will free you from every sin and temptation is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the answer.

Trans: After reading verse 1, we might be a little surprised at what we find in **verse 2**. It is here that Luke introduces us the battle Jesus endures with Satan for forty days while he fasted and prepared for his public ministry. As we encounter the temptation of Jesus, we are encouraged to . . .

## II. Defeat every temptation through Christ with the Word and Spirit (4:2-13).

*Context: v.2:* forty days in the wilderness correspond to Israel’s 40 years of testing and wandering in the wilderness (See Deut 8:2-3). Luke tells us Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit where he fasted and experienced intense temptation by the devil. Fasting is one of the most neglected disciplines in the church today, but it is a key means by which we can pray and draw near to God. This was so important for Jesus as he began his public ministry.

### ***The reality of Satan and spiritual warfare.***

- In his preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis said: **“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”**
- This is very true, is it not? Some churches become so obsessed with Satan and demons that they find them under every rock and behind every door. Others are so ignorant that you would never even know there is a spiritual battle raging at all.
- The effects of this translate at a personal level as well. Some of you feel the effects of temptation so closely that you are incredibly weary from the battle. Some are facing addictions and the same sin struggles that you have faced for years. If that is you, there is hope for you in this passage.
- Others are feeling really good spiritually. Your walk with God may be closer than it’s ever been, so much so that you begin to lose your sensitivity to the daily battle and become a little overconfident in the fight.

If that's you, remember the words of 1 Cor. 10:12: **"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall".**

*How temptation works:*

- Satan works by deception. Jesus calls him "the father of lies" in John 8. He makes things look substantive that have no substance. He attacks us when we are weak and vulnerable. He often looks for times when we are tired, stressed, hungry, or alone. But don't be mistaken. He also attacks when we least expect it. Sometimes on a spiritual high. For Satan, anytime is a good time to tempt the people of God.
- James tells us how temptation works in James 1:13-15: **"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."** (James 1:13-15)
- Temptation leads us to sin, but it does not make us sin. The reason the world and Satan can appeal to us and tempt us is because we have evil, sinful desires that dwell within us. But here is some good news . . .
- **"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 Cor. 10:13).**
- Added to that, in Christianity, we have a God, who is not divorced from our burdens and temptations, but one who can identify with us completely. In the words of Hebrews 4:15: **"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."**
- Verses 2-13 detail a few ways Christ was tempted.... Look at **verses 2-4.**

***The Temptations of Christ:***

The first major Temptation was to ***self-satisfaction & mistrust in God's goodness & care.***

- **Verse 3.** "If you are the Son of God..." key phrase..
- After forty days of fasting, Jesus was hungry. Most of us after about four hours begin to think about our next meal, much less forty days! There is nothing inherently sinful about eating bread. The temptation is for Jesus to not trust in the provision of God and use his messianic power to provide for himself.
- When our physical desires go unmet, we will be tempted to take matters into our own hands and doubt God's goodness and care for us.
- Any physical desire can lead us down this road. When a person falls prey to pornography or premarital sex, it's not simply that selfish desires and the objectification of another person made in the image of God have won out, a failure to trust in God's goodness and care is at work as well. God, I know you've called me to purity and I know if it's in your will, you have a beautiful person in mind for me, but I refuse to wait on the goodness of your plan, I think I'll take matters into my own hands.
- We are so prone to satisfy ourselves rather than trusting in God's good care for us.
- Now look at verses 5-7.

The second major temptation was to ***self-promotion & false worship***

- We all want power: that long expected promotion, increased respect in the sight of others, a new responsibility, even within the church.
- Satan is always looking for ways to tempt us to elevate ourselves in our own eyes. In the process, he seeks to steal us away from our allegiance to God by worshiping idols that serve as God-substitutes.
- How is your worship? Has Christ been your chief pursuit this week? Have you raised up anything else as supreme in your life? God is the only one worthy of our worship.
- Finally, check 9-11...

The third major temptation was to ***"self-protection & mistrust in God's plan"***

- What could be appealing about this temptation? We get self-satisfaction and self-promotion, but "Jump off the pinnacle"??
- Russ Moore says, "What Satan is asking Jesus and what Satan is asking us is to test by sight what God has said to us by faith."
- App: So often, we want to affirm by experience what God asks us to embrace by faith. And at the root is mistrust in the plan and heart of our Father. Every proposition and promise of God must be accepted by faith.
- All of these temptations were designed to derail Jesus from his messianic mission, but every time he resisted

### ***How do we battle temptation?***

I'm not going to give you a formula. I'm just going to give you a simple answer: We battle temptation like Jesus did: by the Word of God, full of the Spirit of God.

#### The Word

- Every time Jesus was faced with temptation, what did he do? Look in verse 4, 8, & 12. What does he do? Went to the Word. And this is not just simply knowing the Word and rolling through a couple of memory verses.
- **“and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” (Eph. 6:17)**
- Trusting our Father. Believing in his goodness. Holiness & spiritual productivity(?) are built on our relationship with our Father.
- Luke 10:20... Maybe... The disciples had just returned from a mission in which they healed people, preached the good news, and even had power of demons, and Jesus says, “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”
- You have to know the Word to fight with the Word (value Scripture, medimemo (explain).
  - Satan knows the Word, but twists it...
- Resist the lies of temptation, and replace it with the truth of God's Word. Do this by...

#### The Spirit

- **“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:13 ESV)**
- Put sin to death by the Spirit. Put temptation to death by the Spirit. Kill it as soon as you are tempted with the desire to sin.

### ***Why is putting sin and temptation to death so important?***

- The mission. It's implicit in the text, because we are not reading the next 20 chapters, but I can tell you that this episode in the wilderness, following his baptism, is the launching pad for his mission.
- Purity and progress in sanctification are essential for our service in God's kingdom.
- Is holiness one of the great concerns of your life? The mission is at stake. Jesus understood this and this is the best news for us this morning...
- Let me prove it by going back to the genealogy. I know some of you thought I skipped it!
  - “Matthew was tracing the royal succession of Jesus moving from David to Solomon and Luke was tracing Joseph's actual physical descent moving from David to Nathan, a little known son mentioned in 2 Sam 5:14)
  - He is not just one with the whole Jewish race, Abraham. He is one with the whole human race.
  - Where Adam failed in the garden when he was tempted by Satan... Jesus triumphed in the wilderness. Jesus is the true and better Adam, who has triumphed over sin and Satan.
- This passage also teaches us that Jesus is the true and better Israel... where Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years in disobedience and unbelief, Jesus obeyed and won one of his most crucial victories over Satan.

The ultimate and most crucial victory of Jesus over Satan would come in Luke 23 & 24 with his crucifixion and resurrection, not in the wilderness here in chapter 4.

- BUT What happens here in the wilderness is foundational to what would take place at the cross. Why? Because if he could tempt Jesus to sin in any way, he would no longer be our sinless sacrifice.
- Thank God for the active righteousness of Christ. It was not enough that he took away our unrighteousness, which he did! Jesus canceled the penalty of our sin on in his death, BUT Jesus also gives his righteousness to everyone who confesses him as Lord.
- Before we pray, I want to encourage many of you, who are reflecting on the many times you have given in to temptation and sought your own satisfaction, your own promotion, your own plan... When we think about God's standard and how we have failed him, sometimes the guilt and sadness can be a crushing weight. If that's you, I want to call you to turn back to God and know that God's love, God's grace, and God's forgiveness is full for you in Christ.
- While we sing, I want to invite you to meditate on the depth of the love of Christ and how Jesus Advocates for us when Satan accuses us as guilty before God.