

Temptation

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning everyone and let me add my welcome to Graham's. My name is Alistair. I have the privilege of being the Assistant Pastor of Brunfield Evangelical Church and the privilege of walking us through a wonderful passage of Scripture this morning.

But before we turn to God's Word, let's bow our heads and pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the age in which we live where you've given us the technology to make this service possible, where we can get the Word of God into people's houses despite social isolation and despite distancing.

Father, we pray that as we turn to your Word this morning, that you would still our hearts. And Father, we pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts would be pleasing to you, our Rock and our Redeemer.

In Jesus' name, we pray these things. Amen. How do you respond to temptation? I recently saw a social experiment video where children were in a room and on a table in front of them was a bar of chocolate.

And they were instructed not to touch the bar of chocolate just for 10 more minutes. And if they did, they would receive an additional bar of chocolate to eat. 10 minutes of restraint.

[1 : 21] 10 minutes of minor temptation. 11 minutes of vacation. 12 minutes of invitation. 14 minutes of abortion. 14 minutes of temptation. 15 minutes of meditation. 16 minutes of meditation. 16 minutes of temptation. But the majority of children didn't last and just died straight in to the chocolate bar.

Now, why? Well, because we can't last long in our own strength in the face of temptation. now it's all good and well to watch those funny videos and laugh but on a more serious note every single one of us faces temptation every single day don't we it could be that we're tempted during this time of uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus to get caught up in the the gossip and the bad news and to spiral into a pit of despair instead of focusing on our great God who is unchanging who is faithful and who is loving or maybe we're tempted to ignore everything the government and medical experts are telling us and instead we start speaking badly and thinking badly of those God has put over us at our own risk and to the risk of others or maybe it's once you've reached day three of your isolation you might be tempted to lose your temper your fuse gets just that little bit shorter you lash out at the children because they aren't listening or if you're a child maybe you're tempted to annoy your parents a little bit more just for some fun we are surrounded by temptation day to day and it isn't always the most obvious things in the world either it could be that hidden sin that no one knows about but that eats you up from the inside out every single time and you just can't stop temptation is all around and we fight it every single day and the passage we're going to look at this morning is all about temptation but it's not about our temptation it's about the temptation of our Lord

Jesus Christ and the reality is that the opposite of temptation for the Christian is obedience to God so if you're obeying God in a specific with a specific thing or in a specific area you can't then be tempted at the same time with that thing obedience is key to temptation temptation this morning we will see how Jesus too faced the most severe temptations but most importantly we will see how Jesus stood firm in his perfect obedience to the will of his father temptation is all around us and we so easily succumb to it this is part of our fallen nature part of the sin that has dwelt in the hearts of mankind since Genesis 3 but this morning we're going to see why it is so important that Jesus was tempted how his temptation can help us and most importantly why it is so important that though he was tempted he remained sinless so turn with me if you will to Luke chapter 4 and we'll start reading at verse 1 through to verse 13 Luke chapter 4 verse 1 says this

Jesus full of the Holy Spirit left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil he ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was

hungry the devil said to him if you were the son of God tell this stone to become bread Jesus answered it is written man shall not live on bread alone the devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and he said to him I will give you all their authority and splendor it has been given to me and I can give it to anyone I want to if you worship me it will all be yours Jesus answered it is written worship the Lord your God and serve him only the devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple if you are the son of God he said throw yourself down from here for it is written he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone

Jesus answered it is said do not put the Lord your God to the test when the devil had finished all this tempting he left him until an opportune time that is the Lord's word now there are two things that we need to be sure of as we come to a passage like this we need to see that this temptation is ordained by God but it is not God who tempts Jesus so look with me at verse 1 it says Jesus full of the Holy Spirit left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness Satan is the one trying to entice Jesus to sin Satan is the voice trying to sow doubt and disobedience in Jesus' mind God is not doing the tempting but God has taken Jesus to the place where he will be tempted remember how in the book of Genesis that we've been studying together we were thinking about how Adam was tempted and yet he failed well Jesus in the New Testament is described as the second Adam therefore the temptation of Jesus is important because all of it is God's will

[7 : 30] God's will was for Jesus to be tempted but not be overcome by it he is the second Adam who came to save us from the sin which originated with Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3 and the second thing that we need to remember is that Jesus is both fully God and fully man this passage is not here so that we can know how to face our temptations today but this passage is here to show us the perfect obedience of the Son of God in this passage Jesus God in the flesh is tempted and his allegiance to God the Father and his obedience to the will of the Father is put to the test but he did what we never could he remained obedient this is an important message because if Jesus did not stand firm in his obedience to the will of the Father then forgiveness through the death of Jesus would not be possible for anyone today if Jesus would have sinned then he could not be our great high priest or the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world so please keep Luke chapter 4 open in front of you and follow along with me in the passage as we see Jesus' perfect obedience to the Father so the first temptation that we see is in verse 3

Jesus has just been baptized in the river Jordan in that wonderful scene where he identifies with mankind and God identifies Jesus as his Son so if you look over the page with me to Luke chapter 3 verse 22 God speaks and says about Jesus you are my Son with whom I love with you I am well pleased and it's from there that Jesus was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness where he fasted for 40 days can you imagine how hungry and weak Jesus was at this point we have no idea the kind of hunger that Jesus must have felt he hasn't just skipped breakfast or skipped lunch so that his tummy would be rumbling a little bit he would be absolutely starving because no food has passed his lips for just under six weeks and so Satan takes the opportunity and comes in in verse 3 and tempts Jesus by saying if you are the Son of God tell this stone to become bread if you're anything like me then you're already hungry after a few hours never mind 40 days and if I was in Jesus' position

I wouldn't be tempted to turn a few stones into bread I'd be tempted to turn them into a whole bakery at first glance verse of verse 3 we can think that Satan is trying to sow doubt in Jesus' mind of his identity it seems that Satan is contradicting what God has just said in chapter 3 Satan says if you are the Son of God but a more accurate translation of the word if would actually be since and so the verse reads since you are the Son of God Satan is saying Jesus you are the Son of God you have rights you don't need to go hungry you have every right to change these stones into bread and look after yourself so if temptation is the appeal to do something that's morally wrong what's so wrong about Jesus turning rocks into bread later on in his ministry he would multiply bread and feed thousands of people but it's the heart behind it that would be wrong

Satan isn't saying this out of a genuine concern for Jesus he is tempting Jesus with the subtle message Jesus you can do it yourself forget about God for a second you don't need God the Father you can do it yourself now we're not Jesus and we're not going to be tempted to turn stones to bread because that's impossible for us yet aren't we tempted to rely on our own strengths or to think that as Christians as children of God that we should be free from the pains and struggles of this life

sin and temptation are constantly pulling at our thoughts constantly trying to distract us with the desires of the flesh constantly trying to draw our attention away from God from his goodness from his plan and instead focus on ourselves focus on our own means we're tempted to think that we can do it on our own to rely on our jobs our money our influence our social standing we're tempted to rely on everything else in this world but God but the reality is that we are called to live in accordance with the word of God to submit to and obey the Father so Satan was trying to trip Jesus up and get him to disobey the Father he wanted Jesus to take matters into his own hands but thankfully Jesus stood firm and he responds to Satan in verse 4 read with me it is written man shall not live on bread alone now do you see how Jesus doesn't just say no and walk away but he resists the temptation by quoting from God's word and he does the same in all three temptations Jesus quotes here from Deuteronomy 8 verse 3 which recounts the time when Israel was wandering in the wilderness for 40 years Israel's time of testing during those years how did the Israelites have food well the Lord miraculously and wonderfully provided for his people the Israelites didn't plant crops they didn't provide for themselves they needed to trust in the Lord God to trust in his provision because if God didn't provide then they were doomed to die of hunger in the wilderness so Jesus here is saying

[14:26] God is good God is faithful God will provide history proves it the Lord continues to provide physically for his people but he also provides spiritually through his word Satan's goal is to distract Jesus from his God ordained task on earth but Jesus resists by quoting scripture and trusting in God even when he is weak and hungry now it's important to note that even now in the midst of this temptation Jesus is fulfilling the will of God remember verse 1 it was the spirit of God who led Jesus into the wilderness friends we need to know this we need to know that we can be walking in the perfect will of God walking obediently and trials and temptations will still come our way even in those times we are not immune to the attempts of Satan to draw our attention away from God and the goodness of the gospel and yet we know that he is a defeated foe and standing with us in our deepest in our darkest times of temptations is the Lord

Jesus Christ who through his spirit enables us to deny ourselves and follow him obediently Satan will try to sow seeds of lies in your minds getting you to question God's goodness God's provision getting you to doubt God's good will and getting you to rely on your own means but they're all lies God from the very beginning of time has proven himself to be faithful trustworthy dependable God provided miraculously for his rebellious people in the wilderness for 40 years and today we know that God provides because he has given us the greatest provision of all by sending his son to deal with the effect of Genesis chapter 3 Satan said to Adam and Eve take and eat and sin entered the world through their rebellion

Satan said to Jesus take and eat and yet he stood firm trusting in our heavenly father but he did go on to taste poverty and death so that those words take and eat have now become symbols of our great salvation through his death and through his resurrection Jesus is the second Adam who stood firm in the face of temptation that is why the author of Hebrews can say in Hebrews chapter 4 verses 14 to 15 forward Jesus the son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who is able one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin friends when you are tempted take courage in the fact that your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ knows your struggle he has walked the path before you and he promises to be with you the second temptation is in verses 5 to 7 it says this follow along with me the devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and he said to him I will give you all their authority and splendor it has been given to me so I and I can give it to anyone I want to Satan is tempting Jesus with power and authority and shows him all of the kingdoms of the world and offers all of their power and influence to him so you can imagine the scene Jesus can see all of the ancient equivalents of Washington DC New York London Brussels Tokyo Beijing Sydney Paris and all the other influential cities in our world today laid out before Jesus and Satan stands there with a grin on his face and says it's all yours Jesus it's all yours for the taking but there's a catch verse 7 Satan says if you worship me it will all be yours do you see Satan's devious plan he's trying to get the son of God the creator and sustainer of this world to bow down and worship him a created being Satan the lesser one is wanting Jesus to bow down to him but is this really something that Satan can offer Jesus has it all really been given to Satan we're tempted to think that is the case when we read passages like Ephesians chapter 2 verse 2 where Satan's described as the prince of the power of the air or

passages like 1st John 5:19 that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one but the reality is that Satan's at it again telling half truth sowing deceit and lies because there are plenty of passages in scripture that say that everything belongs to God he is the one who is in control for example just a few you've got Genesis chapter 3

Ephesians 1 Colossians 2 there are plenty plenty more but Psalm 24 summarizes it so wonderfully the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the world and all those who dwell therein for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers Satan is spewing empty promises he could not follow through on what he's offering and so we might look at this and think well this really isn't a temptation at all is it Jesus being the son of God knows that everything belongs to God and so why would he even entertain this idea but this temptation is even greater than the first because Satan is tempting Jesus to have all the power all the authority that he deserves and is rightfully his without going to the cross

[21:39] Satan is saying Jesus you can have it all everything is at your fingertips without the pain without the suffering without the rejection and rebellion you can have it all without dying if you bow down and worship me Satan is offering Jesus a way out a path that doesn't lead to the cross a path that doesn't lead to him dying as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the Lord's people Satan is offering Jesus an easy life and if we understand that then aren't we even more thankful that Jesus resisted temptation and didn't succumb to it because of his perfect obedience not only do we have a high priest who understands our struggles with temptation but we have a great high priest who deliberately went to the cross suffered was stricken smitten and afflicted so the sinful people like you and like me can be saved and brought back to God so Jesus responds to Satan's attempts in verse 8 read with me it is written Jesus said worship the Lord your God and serve him only

Jesus is quoting from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 13 a passage that speaks about the greatest commandment for the Lord's people to follow and yet a commandment that we fail to follow every single day but Jesus in his perfect obedience is able to resist the temptation to bow down and worship a created being now we're never going to be in this same position as Jesus to be tempted to bow down in order to gain power and authority of the whole world it's just not going to happen but aren't we tempted to forsake God and worship other things all the time it's so easy for us as Christians to take our eyes off of God and stop worshipping him and instead turn to material things lesser things, meaningless things we turn to money, fame, popularity, relationships, jobs, comfort good things in and of themselves but terrible things to worship

John Calvin, a pastor and theologian from many years ago said that the human heart is an idol factory and we all know that to be true in our own lives, don't we?

we are just as tempted to take the path that leads to comfort the path that leads to us being liked by everybody instead of standing firm in the truth of scripture and holding fast to our convictions friends, Jesus has not called you to comfort but he has called you to pick up your cross and follow him daily as Christians we will be mocked we will be tempted, we will be persecuted and we will suffer but let me encourage you that the eternal weight of glory that awaits those who persevere far, far outweighs any struggles that we face here on earth when you're tempted to take the easy way out remember that Jesus in perfect obedience chose the path which led to suffering and pain but the path that brought about our redemption the path that meant we went from being in darkness and death to being alive and in light therefore we can stand firm because he has gone before us because of the perfect obedience of the son of God to the will of the father we have a high priest who has been tempted in every way we have and yet is without sin which means that he is the sacrificial lamb to take away the sins of the world

Jesus, thank you the third temptation is in verses 9 to 11 follow along with me verses 9 to 11 the devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple if you are the son of God he said throw yourself down from here for it is written he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone again Satan is appealing to Jesus' identity and saying since you are the son of God he is tempting Jesus to put God to the test saying because you are the son of God surely the father won't let any harm come to you prove it throw yourself off this temple and prove to the whole world who you are do you see how devious the devil is?

[27:29] he quotes from Psalm 91 in an attempt to back up his claim that God will protect Jesus but this is why it is so important that we don't cherry pick Bible verses out of context or base our understanding on one verse because Satan's understanding of Psalm 91 is absolutely atrocious

Satan quotes from Psalm 91 which speaks about the Lord's protection over his people how the Lord is a fortress and refuge for those who trust in him and in Luke chapter 4 verses 10 and 11 Satan is quoting Psalm 91 verses 11 and 12 however he conveniently misses out Psalm 91 verse 13 which says this you will tread on the lion and the adder the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot

Satan is quoting from a psalm which tells about the Lord's strength for his people to overcome evil the devil's trying to distract Jesus from his mission to become the suffering servant and he's trying to get Jesus to test God's faithfulness Satan is twisting scripture and so Jesus responds with a quote from Deuteronomy 6 verse 6 in verse 12 read with me Jesus answered it is said do not put the Lord your God to the test Satan is telling Jesus that he doesn't have to suffer because God will protect him but Jesus knows that God's divine rescue only can only come through suffering and death but death will not have the final say friends we're never going to be in this same situation as Jesus but aren't we tempted to test God maybe it's that scripture is crystal clear on an issue and yet because we don't like it or because society doesn't sit well with them we're tempted to make wrong decisions we're tempted to deliberately go against

God's word and yeah sure maybe we do say to God God I know this isn't perfect but if you help me through this I will give you all the glory I promise but the reality is that that's half-hearted obedience that's us putting our own will above God's and that's not us submitting to him or maybe you're not a Christian and you're listening in this morning maybe you've thought to yourself God if you give me a sign if you just do this or that then I promise you I'll believe in you but friends the Bible is enough no amount of signs can make this any more true the Bible is sufficient to know who God is and how to be made right with him that is all we need because it points us to our saviour Jesus as the perfect obedient one faced temptation that we couldn't even begin to imagine and yet every time he stood firm in the face of it because he knew that

God's plan was good because God is good he knew that he needed to become the suffering servant and go to the cross the main point of this passage is Jesus perfect obedience it's not here to tell us about how we should fight against temptation but I think that that is a secondary application friends when we're faced with temptation we need to remember that Jesus was tempted and yet in his obedience he did not crumble but instead he used the word of God to defend himself one of the times we're most susceptible to temptation is when we're alone at home as many of us will be this week maybe the coming weeks let us dwell in the word of the Lord so that we can stand firm as we face temptations and let's live obedient lives we need to know scripture we need to have the word of God on our lips as our defense against the lies and attempts of Satan to distract us from God we cannot do this by our own strength but we must rely on the power and presence of the spirit of God to enable us to be obedient to the will of the father friends as we draw to a close think back to where we began with those children and that chocolate bar that just illustrates quite funnily but it just illustrates how easy we are to crumble in the face of temptation and yet knowing that Jesus went through temptation and stood firm should give us the confidence to live obediently to the will of God friends we need to be equipped to face temptation well we need to rely on Jesus and we need to give thanks that he did not succumb to temptation or to the schemes of the devil but instead he obediently went the way of the cross knowing that should give us confidence for us to take up our cross and follow him daily let's pray together heavenly father we thank you so much for your goodness we thank you for your faithfulness we thank you for your love and your care for your people father forgive us for the times when in temptation we doubt you forgive us for the times when in temptation we crumble and we forget to live obedient lives but succumb to our temptations father would you give us strength through the enabling of your holy spirit to stand firm and Jesus we thank you that though you were tempted in unbelievable ways you stood firm and obediently went to the cross which means that we can be forgiven Jesus we thank you so much for the great salvation that you've given to us in Jesus name we pray amen and please you your sorry