

The Temper Comes Calling

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[0 : 0 0] Well, please do have a seat. It sounded like the strangest chant I think I've ever been involved with. It was beautiful. But Jesus is the Son of God, and we come to his word this morning expectant.

So can I invite you now to turn to Luke chapter 4, and let's finish our reading for this morning, reading from verse 1 of chapter 4 down to verse 13.

Verse 1 of chapter 4, Luke writes 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. And the devil said to him, If you are 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.

[1 : 1 4] It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. 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 the 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. Amen. This is God's word to us this morning. Let's just pause for a brief moment, and let's pray together.

Father, we thank you so much for this morning. Lord, thank you for the gift of being able to sing your praises, that you are the incomparable, you are the indescribable God.

[2 : 2 6] And our prayer, Father, now as we come to your words, is that you would blow our minds with the greatness, the incomparable greatness, of your Son, Jesus Christ.

And it's in his name that we make this prayer. Amen. Well, it's fantastic to see so many new faces this morning, and so many returning faces as well, and so many familiar faces.

It's wonderful to be here together as a church family. If you are joining us this morning for the first time, as John said, you're joining us one sermon in. This is the second sermon of this new series we're on in Luke's Gospel.

We're just going to be spending the next while as a church, and our morning service is just hanging out in Luke's Gospel, spending time getting to know this man, Jesus Christ. Dr. Luke, Dr. Luke, the good doctor, he's taking the time to write this Gospel so that Theophilus would have, and so that we would have as his readers, certainty about this man, Jesus Christ.

This is why he's written this thing, certainty. His generation, he wants certainty. Every generation following it, we are included in that. He wants them to have certainty about Jesus Christ, who he is, what he did, what he's all about, and why that infinitely matters for your life, and my life.

[3 : 48] This is the story of Jesus Christ. And we began last week by looking at John the Baptist. We met him in the first half of Luke chapter 3, and we saw that John the Baptist was the great preparer, the great forerunner, if you like, the voice in the wilderness, whom God had sent as God had promised to get people ready for the coming of the Messiah.

And we thought about the fact that John was kind of like a best man. He didn't want the spotlight to shine on him, he wanted the spotlight to go over him to the one who was to come. That's John the Baptist. And if John the Baptist, we thought, was a bit like a best man, well here, verse 21, Jesus the groom, steps into the limelight.

Question is, what will Jesus be like as we meet him here at the outset of his public ministry? Well, a few months ago, I had, or we had the pleasure rather, of taking a family holiday down in Cornwall.

Anyone meet to Cornwall? Keep your hands up. Have you driven from Edinburgh to Cornwall? Nan has. Deb has. A few of us have. Okay, can you join with me in telling everybody that it's a long way?

Yeah? The road, it just keeps on going. Now, I would love to stand here and tell you that I had 10 hours of sparkling conversation in me on that road trip. But I don't. So what do you do when you don't have conversation on a car journey?

[5 : 14] You stick on the radio, don't you? You stick on the radio, and you listen to what's on there. My wife, Alex, she's determined to make a cultured man of me. So now and again, we ditch the football phone in on 5 Live and we head to Radio 4.

So we're listening to Radio 4 on this car journey and we're tuning in to what I think was the Today program on Radio 4. And it's two days after the Brexit referendum.

And they're having a phone in. They're having a phone in. I love phone in. So they're having a phone in. And they're inviting callers to phone up and tell the whole listening audience how they are feeling, their concerns, their thoughts, their doubts.

And we're listening to this phone in. And we're listening to this one caller who phones in. The presenter says, what's your concern, caller? And the caller, as he perceives the world around about him that's changed so much, not just Brexit, the whole thing, the whole world that he doesn't understand, his comment is, we're in a mess.

We're in a mess. The presenter says back to him, what are we going to do about the mess? And he says, we need a leader. We need a leader who's going to take us out of our mess.

[6 : 29] Now think about that sentence for a minute. Brexit aside, is that sentence our sentence? This morning, is that sentence your sentence?

As you look out on the world out there, as you think about the contours of your life, as you look out on the world, as we see it in our TV screens every day, the conflict, poverty, famine, the mess of this world.

And then you look at your own heart, and you don't even know where to begin with the mess that's going on in your own heart and in your own life. The thoughts, the words, the deeds.

It's not true that we live in a messy, messy world. I wonder if you are like me. Every time I see the mess, every time I experience the mess, there's a bit inside me that thinks, where is the leader who is going to take us out of this mess?

Where is he coming from? Now what do we need in a leader? What do we need in a leader? We need a leader who is not like us. He's not of the mess.

[7 : 39] He is outside the mess. And he will come in and deliver us from the mess because he's not tainted by the mess. And we need a leader who will not just look on at a distance to the mess, but will come and be involved in our mess.

And we need a leader who will succeed in the mess where you and I fail every day in the mess. That's the kind of leader that we need. So where are we going to find such a leader?

Great question. I'd argue it's humanity's question ever since the fall in Genesis chapter 3. Where is that king coming from? Well, here's what we need to understand this morning.

And here's what Luke is doing in these verses. He is showing us that Jesus is that leader. Jesus is that leader. In fact, he's more than a leader. He's a king.

He's a king who has come down from above, not to lord it over us, but to step into our mess and rescue us. That's what Jesus has come to do.

[8 : 41] It's what the angels told the shepherds at Jesus' birth. Chapter 2, verse 11, if you've got it there. What do they say? Today in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you.

It's what Simeon, this devout man that we meet in chapter 2, waiting on God's Messiah to come. He meets the baby Jesus and he holds him in his hands and he exclaims, I have seen your salvation, God.

Jesus is the saviour of the world. This is what Luke's trying to be. He's been dropping the breadcrumbs up to this point of the gospel. Jesus is the saviour of the world. So when it comes to finding that leader, this is what we need to understand this morning.

What is Luke doing? He's showing us that Jesus fits the bill. Jesus fits the bill. Come with me to verse 21 of chapter 3.

And see that Luke shows us that verses 21 and 22, with Jesus' baptism, that Jesus has a name that we don't have. So in these verses, Luke tells us about Jesus' baptism.

[9 : 53] John is baptising in the wilderness and as the crowds of people respond to his message, as they repent of their sins, as they turn to God, they are baptised. And Jesus also is baptised.

Now, let's just pause there for a minute. Why is Jesus being baptised? Is he repenting of sins? Of course he's not. Jesus is the perfect one.

There's no sins that he needs to repent of. He's not repenting of sins. So what is he doing getting baptised? Well, here is our Saviour Jesus Christ identifying with sinful men and women.

You see, here is a leader who is getting involved, who is stepping right into the heart of the mess of the very people that he came to save. And as he is baptised, what does Luke record for us at verse 22?

That the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus and the voice comes from heaven, you are my son.

[10 : 59] Who is this man? He is none other than God's eternal son. Now, one of my hobbies is reading.

I know it was something you always put in your CV when you were young and you never actually were into reading, but you wanted the employer to know you were into reading. But I am actually into reading. So every time I go to a bookshop and I pick up a book that I want to buy or I go into Amazon and I click the thing that lets you see the first few pages, do you know the thing that I'm looking for every time is?

Is the endorsements page. I want to see this book. I want to see who's putting their name to this book. I want to see who has read this book and is recommending that I read this book and purchase this book.

Because if it's a name that I trust and I know and I respect and I'm buying that book, but if it's a name that I don't recognize, if it's a name that doesn't really mean anything to me, then I probably will put it back on the shelf.

I'm a guy who's into endorsements when it comes to buying books. What is going on in Luke chapter 3? Who is endorsing to me the son? Answer, God is.

[12 : 05] This is, my son is the voice from heaven, is the cry from heaven. It's a deliberate echo of the language of Psalm 2, the great psalm about God's chosen king.

And with that backdrop, do you see that this baptism here is less like a kind of religious service? And actually, it's a lot more like a king's coronation.

Here is heaven's king, says the voice from above. And how does God feel about his son? He loves his son. And he is well pleased with his son. Jesus Christ gets heaven's affection and heaven's commendation.

Luke is showing us that Jesus, as we meet him here, is coming with heaven's endorsement. And would you notice that all three members of the Trinity, of the Godhead, are involved in this section of Luke's gospel?

They're all involved here in the plan of salvation. You see, the truth is here that God hasn't just advised about the plan to save men and women from their mess. He hasn't just got the ball rolling.

[13 : 07] He's not just financing this gig to save men and women from their mess. He's not just an interested party, an investor, in the plan to save people from the mess. God is the plan to save people from their mess.

That is what's going on here in this section. Charles Spurgeon said this, from the depths of divine compassion come the gift of the only begotten son. That's what's going on here.

God is stepping in. Here is God's son. Here is God's eternal king. You see, our mess, to solve it, the leader, we need a leader who is not like us.

Here is one who is God's eternal son, says Luke. Here's one who is fully divine. See, Jesus Christ, as we meet him here, he's got a name that we don't have. And secondly, verses 23 to 37 of chapter 3, the genealogy, that I'm sure we've never read like that before, Luke shows us that Jesus has a lineage that we do have.

And to help us see that, Luke tells us Jesus' family tree. That's what was going on there in these verses. Luke tells us about Jesus' family tree. Now why has Luke included a family tree at this section?

[14 : 30] Great question. Full of great questions this morning. Great question. Why is it there? Well, I was speaking to a pastor the other day and he was telling me a wonderful story about a group of Bible translators who were working in the Philippines.

And these Bible translators were working to translate Luke's gospel from English into the native tongue of the people who they were amongst. Days passed, months passed, they were slogging away at this, translating it and reading it every day to the people.

And if truth be told, they had not seen one single ounce of inspiration from the people. They weren't that interested in Luke's gospel. They'd almost translated the whole thing except they hadn't translated this part of Luke's gospel.

They hadn't translated it because why would people need to know about a bunch of names? It's probably what we thought this morning as we came to this passage. Why do people need to know? And so they thought to themselves, we've got nothing to lose, we may as well translate the genealogy.

And would you know it, as they read this out to the people, as they translated it and read it out, the people applauded, they clapped and they cheered. Fascinating. Why did they do that?

[15 : 43] Well, people were hearing for the first time in their native language, in their native tongue, that Jesus Christ was not a mythical figure. He was one who had a family tree and was one who was truly one of us.

Maybe that's a word for some of us this morning. But here is one who can sympathize with us in every single weakness. He is God in the flesh.

He is one who is unstained by the mess, yes, but what a glorious truth that he is one who can sympathize with those who are living in the mess because he knows what it means to be in the mess. You see, Luke is telling us that Jesus Christ is not just a savior for a certain demographic, for a certain group of people.

Jesus Christ is the savior of the entire human race. For all those men and women around the globe, boys and girls, who would come and put their faith and trust in him as their savior, he is their savior. That's what Luke is telling us there.

But if that's all we take away from that genealogy, then I think we're probably just falling a little bit short of the entirety of doing Luke's, of what Luke is trying to do there. Look at the last name on the list at verse 38.

[16 : 54] The son of Adam. Now why is Adam in there? Well, of course, it's with Adam's rebellion, Adam's failure in the Garden of Eden to worship God fully, Adam's failure to resist the lure of Satan that sin enters the creation equation, and what God had made as good, as perfect, is now marred with brokenness, frustration, and mess.

And we read it in Genesis 3.15 that God addresses Satan, and what does he promise? He promises that one of Adam's descendants is going to come and end the reign of sin.

He's going to defeat Satan and defeat his power. Genesis 3.15, what do we see? That God promises the serpent crusher who will come from Adam's line, and God says to the serpent, he will crush your heads, and you will bruise his heel.

So from that point on in the Bible story, we're asking ourselves the question, where is this serpent crusher? And in passing, notice just one other name on this list. Notice David at verse 31, Israel's greatest and most celebrated king, and God had promised David in 2 Samuel 7, it's recorded for us, where David is thinking about building a temple for God, and what does God say?

No, David, I'm going to build a temple for you. I'm going to build my temple, and I will ensure that one of your descendants will establish the kingly throne, and will sit on that throne and rule forever.

[18 : 37] And David dies, and his son Solomon dies, and as the kingdom of Israel crumbles, we're left thinking to ourselves as the readers, where is this promised king?

Where is this king who will come from David's line and who will sit on the throne of David as a king, God's king, and do that forever? So let's pull Adam and David together.

What is Luke telling us? That Jesus is in that line. That Jesus is that promised serpent crusher. That Jesus is the descendant of David who will rule as a king forever.

Jesus Christ is God's promised king. When God promises something, God delivers. See, we need a leader who is not like us, but we need a leader who is like us.

Here is one who is fully divine, says Luke, and here is one who is fully human. Jesus fits the bill. He is a name that we don't have and he has a lineage that we do have.

[19 : 45] And thirdly, Luke wants us to know that Jesus is the king who has the victory that we need, that we must have. Chapter 4, verses 1 to 13.

And it's no coincidence that Luke takes us from thinking about Adam, in verse 38 of chapter 3, straight into the temptation in chapter 4. Adam, in the garden of Eden, he lost his battle with Satan.

He succumbed to the lure of sin and as a result he is banished from the garden and he's sent into the wilderness as it were. That's where mankind's been ever since, in the wilderness.

And so where is Jesus here? He's not in a garden. Actually, he's in the wilderness. And he's there by choice, will you notice, in passing.

He's there by the Spirit's leading. He's not there by accident. He's not there hitting his faulty sat-nav saying, I knew I should have updated the software before I left this morning.

[20 : 49] He's there by choice. You see, yes, we see Jesus on the defensive here, but that defensive is in the context of him being on the offensive. Jesus is there by choice.

And what is he doing? Well, there's a purpose to what he's doing. Luke wants us to see that Jesus goes to the wilderness to defeat the enemy, to win the battle, to undo the effects of the battle that Adam lost.

And the battle that all humanity ever since, and the battle that you and I lose every moment of every day. and Jesus goes there to take on the greatest enemy and to defeat him by defeating him, rescuing people from the position and the mess that sin has left us in.

And this battle sees the devil tempt Jesus. We get three little accounts of it. Firstly, verse 3, to a hungry entire Jesus. Look with me. What is the devil?

What does he go for? If you are the son of God, let's turn these stones into bread. Now what's the devil up to there? Well, he's questioning Jesus' identity, isn't he?

[22 : 07] Has anyone ever questioned your identity of something that you know is true about you and your first reaction is, yes I am? We don't see Jesus doing that here. What's the devil doing?

He's trying to get Jesus to doubt God's provision and doubt God's goodness. You see, Adam in the garden, he had absolutely everything going for him.

He had absolutely everything that he could ever want and yet he and Eve, they doubted the goodness of God. What did the devil say then? Did God really say?

As if to say, can you really trust God? Adam who had everything going for him, Jesus here has quite literally absolutely nothing going for him.

And what does he do? He trusts in the goodness and he trusts in the provision of God. You see, Jesus will not fail where Adam failed and where you fail and where I fail.

[23 : 03] What does he say? God is good and his word is good and man shall not live by bread alone. And the second temptation, verses 6 to 7, what does the devil say?

If you worship me, all authority and splendor will be yours. All authority and splendor. And I'll be honest, I found it quite difficult this week understanding what's going on here.

I'm indebted to a guy called Sinclair Ferguson for helping me to see what's going on here. Because the devil, as he offers Jesus all authority and splendor, not only does the devil not have all authority and splendor, but that's already all authority and splendor is already coming to Jesus later on.

He knows it's coming, he knows it's his, so what's the devil trying to do here? Well, he's trying to offer Jesus a shortcut to all authority and splendor. You see, that road to all authority and splendor, it is a road that goes via the cross, not around the cross.

Devil offers Jesus a shortcut to that authority and splendor. Jesus says, no, I know what I've come to do. Jesus will not fail where Adam failed and where you fail and where I fail.

[24 : 16] Worship the Lord, your God, and serve him only, says Jesus. Third temptation at verse 9, if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. After all, is that not what God's promised in the scriptures that you love to quote to me?

But no, Jesus will not fail where Adam failed and where you fail and where I fail. What does he say? Do not put the Lord, your God, to the test. Jesus wins in the wilderness.

He wins in the wilderness. Praise God that he wins in the wilderness because it is massively significant, as we'll come on to see in just a second. But incidentally, notice in passing how Jesus wins in the wilderness.

I don't think that's the immediate purpose of why Luke is recording this for us here, but we can't help but notice it as we read it. What does Jesus arm himself with? How does Jesus defend himself?

Every time he gives an answer, what does he say? Verse 4, it is written. Verse 8, it is written. Verse 12, it is said or it is written.

[25 : 25] Jesus defends himself with scripture. Or more particularly in this case, he defends himself with Deuteronomy. Jesus knows what God has said.

And Jesus knows what God has not said. Jesus knows the real deal and Jesus knows the fake. I was here this week about the U.S.

Secret Service. I've never been part of the U.S. Secret Service, but I heard a story this week that I didn't know. U.S. Secret Service, I've got two jobs. Firstly, defend the president.

Secondly, defend the currency. Did anybody actually know that? Nope, we didn't know that either. Great, we're learning stuff this morning. Defend the president, defend the currency. How do you recognize fake money?

How do you recognize a faulty transaction? By being so in touch with the real deal that you spot the fake a mile off. Same for us as Christians, is it not?

[26 : 25] As we take our stand against the schemes of the devil who would seek to steer us off course and away from worshipping our God. How do we know what God has said? By immersing ourselves in the scriptures.

By getting our noses in the Bibles. Because it's not going to go in by osmosis, is it? It's not like if I hold it there and I just stare at it funny that it's going to go in.

We need to work at this. Because Jesus worked at this. We need to get this into our minds. We read God's words. We meditate on God's word. We devote ourselves to learning God's words.

And we find times in our massively busy schedules to make that happen. Pull out all the stops to make that happen. Read it with friends.

That's why home groups, small groups are such a vital part of what we do here is we encourage each other with God's words. Find ways of getting God's word into your bloodstream.

[27 : 25] It was said of the old Puritan John Bunyan, most famous for writing Pilgrim's Progress, that his peers used to joke that if you pricked him, he would bleed the Bible. That's what they used to say of that man.

Would that not be a wonderful thing to someone to say about you? But more than that, I think that's exactly what we can see and say about Jesus here. That he breathed scripture.

That he lived it. He breathed it. He trusted it. And when trial came, he wielded it and used it. And where Adam was faithless, and where you and I are faithless, Jesus was faithful.

Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. You see, that is what Jesus has come to do. To live a life of worship to God, to defeat the schemes of the devil, to defeat the power of sin.

And by doing that, to deliver his people from the rain of darkness. You see, Jesus, by his perfect obedience, he wins the victory that his people needs.

- [28 : 30] And when I trust in him, when we trust in him as our king, living for us, pleading for us before the Father, his victory becomes our victory. This is the king that we need.
- This is the leader that we need. Here is Jesus, not like us of the mess, but one with us in the mess. And one who has come to win the victory that you and I couldn't win for ourselves.
- Here is God's king, says Luke, as he introduces them here. You know, I was telling you just about Radio 4. Let's go back to Radio 4.
- I love Radio 4 now. Radio 4 caller. He called up and he said, there's a mess. We need a leader who's going to take us out of the mess. Well, the presenter turns around the very next question and says, who is that leader?
- I wonder what you would answer to that question. Who is that leader? Caller said, don't know. All I know is that we're in a mess and we need a leader who's going to take us out of the mess.
- [29 : 37] Let me ask you this morning, are you in the hunt for a leader? Are you aware of your mess? Do you feel the pain of living in a messy world?
- Luke says, here is the king who has come to deliver you from that mess. Trust in him. Come to him. I was reading this story this week in this book by Tim Keller called Walking with God through pain and suffering.
- It's a chunky book. It's got a cracking cover. Great endorsement. It's worth a read. Reading this book by Tim Keller this week and he's got real stories from real people at the end of his chapters as he teases out what the Bible is saying about this stuff.
- You can come and borrow it off me when we finish. Let me read this story to you from a woman called Mary. Mary's life, I'm presuming she's American, I'm not sure. Mary's life is a life of mess.
- From dysfunctional parents. From violent partners. You can read it here. A string of broken relationships. Her own family, her own children being arrested. And on top of that, complex and terminal health problems.
- [30 : 44] Mary's life is a mess. Some of it are a result of our own sin. Some of it are a result of just experiencing the pain of living in a messy and broken world.
- I'd love to sit here, stand here and read you this Cinderella story. Like that's how it's going to end. Like she tries on the golden stripper. She meets the guy. She goes to the ball and everything's happy ever after.
- But this is what Mary writes. Life has not changed. But God is changing me. I have come to believe that life will not always be as it is now.
- I find even more comfort in being able to stop focusing on all the heartache. And instead focus on the one who will someday take that heartache away completely and forever.
- I spent my entire life looking for and never finding a recipe to go from despair to hope. It did not come from anything I did or didn't do.
- [31 : 44] No. Hope comes not in the solution to the problem but on focusing on Christ, the one who facilitates the change. You see Mary knows what it's like to live in a messy world.
- And Luke tells us this morning that we are messed up people. We are messed up people living messed up lives in a mess messed up world.
- But here is Jesus Christ, the leader who fits the bill and the leader who has come as God's king, the savior of the world to come and to rescue us from our mess.
- And Luke says, come. Come to Jesus Christ. Come and see him for who he is. Come to him as you are and come to him and say, Jesus be my king.

Save me from my mess. Here is God's leader, says Luke. And just before we stand to sing our final song, let's just have a moment of quiet.

[32 : 51] And let's pause and just reflect on what we've been hearing this morning from God's word. Maybe for many of us, your heart's cry is, thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, for what you've done for me. Maybe for some of us this morning, a cry of our hearts is, I need you, Jesus. But whoever you are, whatever's going on in your life this now, just take this moment of quiet and bring your prayers to our great God this morning.

Mercy and grace are mine. Forgiven is my sin.

Jesus, my only hope, the savior of the world. Great is the Lord, we cry. God, let your kingdom come. Your word has let me see.

Thank you for saving me. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being the savior who came to rescue us from our mess.

[33 : 57] By your spirit working in us, would you this week help us to know you more, help us to trust you more, and help us to love you more.

Our gracious father, this is our prayer in our savior's name. Amen. Amen.