

Jesus Overcomes Temptation

Scripture: Luke 4:1-13

Objective: Consider Christ's example in facing and overcoming temptation and experience victory in Him.

Golden Text: Hebrews 2:18

Heb 2:17-18

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. NIV

1. Introduction

- a. Our martyr of the week
 - i. We mentioned this last week, but we will feature Pakistan's Shabaz Bhatti
 1. He was Pakistan's only Christian cabinet member
 2. Four months ago, in an interview with the BBC, Mr. Bhatti predicted his own death (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBTBqUJomRE>)
 3. Pakistan has a law forbidding blaspheme of Islam or Allah and the penalty is death
 - a. No one has been sentenced under the law
 - b. But over 30 people have been killed by mobs or vigilantes
 4. He is the second recent government official to die for opposing the law as Salman Taseer was murdered by his own body guard in January
 - ii. This week, on Tuesday, a local radio talk show host, Fred Grandy, formerly of WMAL was censored by his managers and forced to resign for speaking out against radical Islam
- b. We begin a new quarter this today
 - i. The first segment will have to do with the life and ministry of Jesus
 - ii. The second segment will have to do with the stories of Ruth and Ester
- c. Today we open with the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness
 - i. We will see that this is a lesson about discipline
 - ii. In our modern culture, there is a debate about the value and form of discipline as it applies to rearing children
 1. I replied to a person on a forum this week when they asked if we should use spanking for children as they maintained that they wouldn't do this to a dog
 - a. My point was that dogs learn in a different manner

- b. Children differ in that they are gifted by God with intelligence and can receive be told why they are being disciplined
- 2. I could have gone further and explained that God disciplined his own son
 - a. We shall see in the lesson today that discipline played a role in the preparation of Jesus for His ministry
 - b. The writer of Hebrews explains that God disciplines His children

Heb 12:7-11

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. NIV

- c. Temptation is a part of this discipline process
 - i. While we are told in scripture that God does not tempt us

James 1:13-14

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed NIV

- ii. God does permit temptation and He uses the occasion to discipline us
- iii. If even Jesus was required to endure temptation, how can we expect less for ourselves

- 2. Overcoming By God's Word
 - a. Time of Preparation

Luke 4:1-2

4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. NIV

- i. It is unlikely that the Hebrew in His day would have conceived of an event like this happening to their messiah

1. But it is understandable that King Jesus would have to confront and defeat the Prince of the Powers of the Air in the course of airing His throne
 2. So we see Jesus the man, on the threshold of His kingdom, attacked by the enemy of our souls
 3. The weapons of our enemy were the same for Him as they are for us
 - a. He tempted Jesus with sin
 - b. Appealing to his humanity
 - c. Satan tried to bring Jesus down
- ii. It had already begun
1. Jesus was announced as the Son of God at His baptism in the river Jordan
 2. Several of the Apostles had already taken notice and attached themselves to Him
 3. Where and when Jesus the man studied the scriptures is not told us
 - a. One of the mysteries of His life
 - b. Did He have to study as other men?
 - c. The Pharisees ask this question

John 7:14-15

15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" NIV

- d. By the time that Jesus began His ministry, He was ready to answer any challenge with and from the Word
- iii. We are told that John heard the voice of God placing His divine approval on Jesus
1. This occurred at the time that Jesus had reached the age of thirty
 2. The age at which Levitical Priest were permitted to begin their Temple service
 3. Until now, He has merely been John's cousin
 4. But now John understood that this man was anointed by the Holy Spirit
 5. It had begun
- iv. After this startling announcement, He retreated into the wilderness to fast
1. Driven by the Holy Spirit
 2. The man Jesus was tempted
 3. His flesh was put under stress by fasting for 40 days
 - a. An experience that would bring any man near death
 - b. He was not restrained or imprisoned
 - c. A powerful test of the will and obedience
 - d. Every day, continually he had to answer the hunger pains, the voice of His humanity, by telling them no
- b. A Test of the Flesh

Luke 4:3-4

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" NIV

- i. But the beginning was unlike anything any Jewish scholar would have expected
- ii. The honors and respect afforded a priest or a rabbi were nowhere to be seen
- iii. In fact, the basic needs of any human were absent from the experience
- iv. Just when His body was weakened by starvation
 1. And His will could be expected to be at its weakest
 2. As every fiber of His being was crying out for relief
 3. Satan comes and puts the smell of fresh bread under His nose
 4. Pointing out that He was the creator
 - a. Jesus had the power to create bread from nothing or to do as Satan suggested, convert stones to bread
 - b. Satan knows how to attack us from our weakest angles
- v. This certainly seemed innocent enough
 1. How could the creator do anything that would be wrong?
 2. Had He not spoken all things into existence?
 3. Were these not stones He had created?
- vi. But if Jesus had used His power as creator to solve His hunger problem now
 1. What would prevent Him from using His power to prevent the Temple Guards from taking Him in the garden later
 2. Or what would prevent Him from calling for angels to take Him off of the cross
- vii. Then there was the questioning of His divinity
 1. Satan posed the suggestion in a way that cast doubt on the divine nature of Jesus
 2. Implying that if Jesus chose to not make bread then perhaps He was not who He says He is
- viii. Jesus solved this challenge by resorting to the authoritative Word of God
 1. Quoting Deuteronomy

Deut 8:2-3

3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. NIV

2. Like Israel that wandered for 40 years in the wilderness, Jesus had been learning from His experience for 40 days
3. Jesus flesh, his humanity, had learned that life is in God's hands
4. The urgency and persistence of hunger pains had been brought under the control of a will surrendered to God's Spirit

5. Now he rebukes Satan by citing the Word of God, a word of assurance that there is more to life than satisfying hunger, there is communion with God
3. Overcoming By Worshiping God
 - a. Kingship Without the Cross

Luke 4:5-7

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours." NIV

- i. We are told that Satan took Him up to a high place
 1. And there he showed him all the kingdoms in the world
 2. Everyone of those kingdoms were in some way influenced by Satan
 3. Satan had staked his claim on each of them
 4. Satan presumed to be able to share the authority he had with Jesus
- ii. To the flesh, this was a powerful appeal
 1. The imagination could see people bowing before Him
 2. The opulence and wealth of the crown
 3. The power to command life and death
- iii. All He had to do was acknowledge Satan's claim worship him
 1. For the thirty years Jesus had been in this body, His flesh had never enjoyed the privilege of being the King
 2. There was no immediate prospect of becoming King
 3. He knew that there was much to be endured if He followed God's path to the throne
 4. This was offered as
 - a. Immediate gratification
 - b. The short-cut
 - c. The easy way
- iv. The lie behind the offer
 1. Satan did not have the authority he was claiming to have
 2. Satan did not own the kingdoms of the world

2 Kings 19:15-16

5 And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: "O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. NIV

Ps 83:18

18 Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord — that you alone are the Most High over all the earth. NIV

3. They were not his to give
- b. Response From Deuteronomy

Luke 4:8

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" NIV

- i. Jesus responded once again with the word of God
- ii. Israel had been called over and over to abandon idol gods and they were told that the Lord their God is one God and there is no other

Deut 6:13-14

13 Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. 14 Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you NIV

- iii. There are many today who demand that Christians accept the gods of other religions
 1. Insisting that we recognize Allah as equally valid to Jehovah
 2. Insisting that there are conflicting truths that are equally valid
 3. But there is only one God and to acknowledge any other is a failure of faith of the first order

4. Overcoming By Reverence for God
 - a. Satan Quotes Scripture

Luke 4:9-11

9 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. 10 For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" NIV

- i. Again, the sense of the flesh are challenged
- ii. **Have you ever climbed to a death defying height?**
 1. Have you felt the need to control panic?
 2. Have you known the feeling of genuine fear and mistrust of your safety when looking down at certain death?
 3. Have you known the paranoia of anticipating the slip of the foot or the crumbling of the perch beneath your feet?
- iii. As the flesh recoiled at the possibility before it
 1. Satan reminded Jesus of who He is and dared Him to use His powers to secure Himself
 2. Entwined in this temptation was a thread of conceit, you know you can command angels

- a. This temptation would return again when He would be nailed to a cross
- b. He would hear the chanting of the mob, mocking Him and daring Him to call on the angels to rescue Him
- 3. Observe how Satan twists the Word
 - a. It is a tactic he uses every day
 - b. Convincing people the hot is cold, black is white, good is evil and evil is good
 - c. Here is an example of Satan using the Word in a manner it was never intended to be used
- b. Satan Leaves the Scene

Luke 4:12-13

12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. NIV

- i. Jesus gives a stern scriptural rebuke
- ii. With this Satan retreats to return another day
- iii. He was not done testing
- iv. Jesus survived the test
- v. This test produced a growing experience in Jesus
 - 1. Remember the golden text for today

Heb 2:17-18

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. NIV

- 2. He learned what it is to be a man subject to the hardest trials
- 3. He learned how easy it is to slip and fall
- 4. But He did not slip or fall
- vi. We are promised a crown for overcoming temptation

James 1:12

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. NIV

vii.