

Hello everyone. Hope you are having a good week. God bless you!  
Pastor Don

"Overcoming Temptation"

Luke 4:1-13

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The young pastor and his wife were trying to conserve money and cut expenses. They made a new years resolution to not buy anything that was not 100 % necessary. One day the wife met the pastor at the door wearing a brand new dress. Honey, the pastor began, I though we agreed not to buy anything we did not absolutely need. I know, said the wife, but Satan tempted me. It is beautiful and on sale. To which the pastor said why didn't you say get thee behind me Satan? I did she replied, but he said it looks super from back here!

A 3 year old little boy was asked to define temptation. He said it is when your mommy says stay out of the cookies and while you're smelling them, one of them gets caught in your teeth.

Someone once said "If you don't want to reap the fruits of sin; stay out of the devil's orchard." The best way to over come temptation is to avoid it.

Just being tempted is not a sin. We are all subject to temptation. Like all good fishermen, Satan baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish. John Dryden once said it is better to shun the bait than struggle in the snare. J. Wilbur Chapman tells us the difference between temptation and sin. He said temptation is Satan looking through the key hole into the room where we are living; sin is us unbolting the door and allowing him to enter.

How do we handle temptation? Do we flee from it like Joseph did? Do we give into it like numerous others? Or do we fight it with God's word like Jesus did? Frederick William Faber once said every moment of resistance to temptation is a victory. Christians need to always be alert because Satan is always on the offensive.

Listen to some of Satan's beatitudes. Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians in Church ~ they are my best workers. Blessed are those who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked ~ I can use them in my business. Blessed are those who are touchy. Soon they will stop going to church ~ they shall be my missionaries. Blessed are those who sow gossip and trouble ~ they are my beloved children. Blessed are those who have no time to pray ~ for they are my prey. Blessed are those who gossip ~ for they are my secret agents. Blessed are you when you read this and think it has everything to do with other people, and nothing to do with you. ~ I've got room for you at my inn.

The only way to overcome Satan and his temptations is the word of God. We can all be victorious over temptation by the power of God through His word. Are we willing to use our sword of the spirit, the word of God, to fight off temptation as Jesus did? Someone once said that temptations are like tramps, treat them kindly and they will return bringing others with them. We must strive to resist temptation. Jesus did and we are to be like Him. How do we meet temptations; with God's word or with open arms? (Pray)

Chapter 4 begins right after Jesus' baptism. He comes up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him in the form of a dove; and God says "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Straight away Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness where for the next 40 days He fasts, prays and is tempted by the devil. God never tempts anyone; all temptations come from Satan. James 1:13 "Let no one say when they are tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone." Verse 14 adds that we are each tempted when we are drawn away by our own desires and enticed. Satan is a good fisherman; he knows what bait attracts each person. Do we take the bait?

Elijah and Moses also fasted for a 40 day period. Fasting is going without food for a certain time, while spending that time in prayer and fellowship with God. After 40 days without food, it is only natural that Jesus was hungry. When we are hungry or tired we are more susceptible to temptations. Satan always attacks us when and where we are most

vulnerable. So Satan attacked Jesus' hunger. After 40 days of no food, Jesus was very hungry. Satan tempts him by saying "If you are God's Son, command this stone to become bread."

Actually there are two temptations here. Satan said if you are God's son. Satan was not only challenging to see if Jesus could make bread out of a stone, but also challenging his authority and identity. Only God can make a stone into bread. This miracle would prove that Jesus was not only God's son, but God in the flesh. As if the voice of God announcing to everyone at His baptism that Jesus was His son in whom He was well pleased had not. Some people will not believe Jesus is God's son and God in the flesh, no matter what we say or do. If Jesus did turn the stone into bread, Satan still would have refused to worship Him. Satan knew who Jesus was. He chose not to love, worship and obey Him. Do we believe that Jesus is God's Son? Do we believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us? Do we love, worship and obey Him?

Jesus did not yield to these temptations. He did not yield to his hunger or to proving his identity. He knew God would provide for him. He had already provided proof of His Identity. Jesus knew he would provide food as well. Do we know God will provide for us? Do we trust Him? Or do we always try to provide for ourselves? Being a Christian means that we totally rely upon God. It means that we do what He tells us, not just what we want to do. Christians must obey God. Are we obedient?

Jesus over came temptation by the word of God. These are the first recorded words of Jesus since His baptism. Isn't it nice that they are "it is written". The baptism of Jesus was the starting point for his ministry. All ministries should be founded upon the word of God. Do the words "it is written" define our ministries? Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:17

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, is the Christians only offensive weapon. We need to use the word of God to fight off enemy attacks. How sharp are our swords? How well do we know our bibles? Do we live by bread alone or by every word of God?

By refusing to turn the stone into bread, Jesus showed that He would not operate independently from God. He chose to wait on God. Do we wait for God? Jesus waited for God's timing. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be prepared for His ministry therefore eating at Satan's command would have shown a lack of trust and dependence upon God. Do we totally trust and depend upon God?

Jesus did not change the stone into bread because it was not God's will for Him to do so. Christians should never do anything that is not God's will. So how do we discern God's will? 1st and foremost is by knowing His word. Psalm 119:11 "Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you." God will never tell us to do something that goes against His word. Do we have God's word written in our hearts? Prayer is the 2nd thing we need to do to discern God's will. Do we pray for God's guidance? And 3rdly we need to seek Godly counseling and advice. Do we ask our Christian friends before we make major decisions?

God's Will will never make it appear that a Christian is paying heed to the devil. We must never do anything that appears to be shady or underhanded. We must represent Christ in a loving and ethical manner. Since turning the stone into bread was Satan's idea, and it would look bad if Jesus did it, therefore we know it was not God's will. Also, we know that God performs miracles to build our faith. Satan had no faith to build and no one else was around to see this miracle. Performing it would not build anyone's faith; therefore it would have been a sin and would have stopped Jesus from being our perfect sacrifice. The whole point of the temptations that Satan threw at Jesus was to stop Him from being our perfect sacrifice and prevent Him from dieing for our sins. Satan is always trying to prevent God's will from being done. Whose will are we doing in our life? Do we glorify Satan or God? Do we tell others about the miracles that we have seen? Do we totally trust God and seek to do His will?

Satan failed to entice Jesus with this temptation, so he tried another. Satan has a lot of perseverance. We also must have a lot of perseverance if we are to overcome him.

Satan took Jesus up on top of a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. He told him if he would worship him, he would give him all these kingdoms. Jesus again quotes scripture "It is written you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve." We are to praise, worship, and serve God with all our heart. We are to worship and serve only Him. Who do we praise? Who do we worship and serve with all our hearts?

By requesting that Jesus bow down and worship him, Satan was tempting Jesus into idolatry; worshipping false gods; and tempting him with worldly ambition. Satan offered to make Jesus the ruler of the world; which of course Jesus already is! One day in the future Jesus will come again and rule for 1000 years; after that he will rule for eternity.

Satan was offering Jesus something he actually already has. He does this to us as well. Are we aware when Satan tempts us with what we already have? Do we know what we already have? As children of God we have everything that we need. This was just a short cut. Satan tempts us with lots of short cuts too. We, like Jesus, need say no and continue to trust and wait upon God. Are we waiting for God or are we willing to take short cuts?

After failing again to get Jesus to sin, Satan took Him to the top of the temple & sat him on the pinnacle. Then Satan shows us that he knows scripture too. [Read vs.10] Satan knows God's word better than a lot of Christians; does he know it better than us? He twists and turns it to make it say what he wants it to say. Do we do that? Do we take it out of

context? Satan does. He did it here. He quoted most of Psalm 91:11-12. He left out one sentence "To keep you in all your ways" God promises to protect us as long as we are walking in His ways, obeying & trusting Him. Are we obeying & trusting him today? This promise does not mean that we are free to pull some publicity seeking stunt.

We are not free to tempt the Lord our God. Satan was trying to get Jesus to get the public's attention by dramatics rather than by message & life style. Again, he is tempting

Jesus with a short cut. If He leaped off the pinnacle and landed unhurt, surely they would believe him to be the messiah. Or would they? Satan's way is not God's way. Which way do we want to do things?

After this 3rd attempt to make Jesus sin, Satan left him, for a time. Jesus defeated Satan in his attempts to deceive Him & make Him sin, so he left; temporarily. James 4:7 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." This is a picture of that. Then, Matthew tells us that God's angels came & ministered to Jesus. This completed the verse Satan twisted; in God's timing & in God's way. James 4:8 "Draw near unto God and He will draw near to you." Do we draw near to God? Do we resist the devil? Jesus won this battle. Jesus didn't sin. But more confrontations lie ahead. On Good Friday, it will appear that Satan won a battle, Christ died on the cross for our sins. But 3 days later, on Easter Sunday He arose from the dead. The ultimate victory!!! Satan defeated Adam and Eve in the garden and the Israelites in the wilderness, but Christ succeeded in overcoming him. Jesus defeated Satan both here and at the cross. Why was Jesus tempted? Jesus is the Lamb of God; the perfect Passover lamb that takes away the sins of the world. The Passover lamb had to be perfect. It had to be spotless. Satan tried to put a few spots on Jesus. He tried to make Him not perfect. Jesus won the battle and the war. He truly is as John the Baptist said the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is our high priest. Hebrews 4:15 says "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Jesus understands temptation. He faced them all, the same ones we face. Yet He sinned not. He showed us it can be done. Are we willing to fight off sin as hard as He did? Do we use the word of God to overcome sin as He did? Since Jesus was sinless, we know that just being tempted is not a sin. Jesus was tempted, He did not give in. We don't have to either. Temptation comes to all of us at some time or another. No one is exempt from temptation. We must be alert to it. Temptation is often subtle. We are often tempted to distrust God. Jesus was. By being tempted to turn stones into bread Satan was seeing if Jesus really trusted God to keep His promise to meet His everyday needs. Do we trust God to meet our everyday needs? We are often tempted with worldly ambition. Satan offered to make Jesus ruler of the world. Do we follow God's calling on our lives or do we have our own agenda to follow? Idol worship is another temptation. Satan said bow down and worship me. Do we have idols in our lives that we worship? D. L. Moody said anything that gets between me and God is an idol. What do we worship? Are we presumptuous? Satan said cast yourself down and God's angels will protect you. Do we do things we shouldn't figuring God will protect us any way? Do we seek God's will before we make decisions? Most every temptation we face falls into one of these categories. Do we keep our guard up against

them? To overcome temptation, it is important that we keep up our daily feeding on the word of God. Every time we read the Bible, we feed upon Jesus. He is the bread of life and the word of God. We ingest Him every time we read the bible. We need to keep our sword sharp. A good soldier always has his weapons ready. They are always alert to the enemies attack. Peter says our adversary Satan walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He did not devour Jesus because he was ready; even though he was tired, hungry & alone. He with stood the enemies attack. He fought off the temptations. He won the battle.

Do we stand & resist temptation when it comes our way?

When we flee from temptation, do we leave a forwarding address? So how do we over come temptation? Do we over come temptation? Jesus, our example and our inspiration, overcame them by the word of God; Joseph overcame them by getting away from them. Daniel overcame them by continually serving only God. Who do we continually serve? Do we resist temptation? Is our sword sharp? Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written u shall love the Lord your God & Him only shall u serve. Amen. (Pray)