

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] The desert fathers and mothers were extreme monks who practiced a tradition of faith called asceticism. Which basically means they avoided all kinds of indulgence or pleasure. They sold all their possessions, avoided sleep, good food, even baths. They hoped that by avoiding anything comfortable that they could avoid all temptation and become holy. This is why they moved to the desert to spend time doing nothing but simple work, prayer, and worship. Their extremism makes them a bit of a mixed bag of wisdom. But there is no denying their devotion to Jesus. One of the desert fathers named Isidore the priest said that for forty years he had been tempted, but he had never given in to covetousness or anger. Now I don't know about you but I haven't made it forty years without giving into anger or coveting. I haven't even made it 24 hours.
2. [Need] I am assuming that none of us are jumping at the chance to spend 40 years in the desert to learn how to resist the temptations of sin. But as Christians we do want to resist temptation. After all, temptations comes for all of us non stop. We continually hear the whispers of Satan and the enemy in our ears. So how can we resist?
3. [Subject] This morning we will study the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. We will look at three primary things that Satan whispers in our ears. And we will see how Jesus responds to them. Because this does not only remind us that Jesus is our perfect sinless Savior. But it also teaches us how we can be able to avoid temptation. We can follow the example of Jesus to learn how to resist the enemies voice.
4. [Text] Luke 4:1-14
5. [Read and Pray]

The first question we are tempted by is **Satan whispers, "God isn't enough." Satan whispers, "God isn't enough."**

This is not said outright by Satan.

But it is what he implies in his questions.

And this is a question that we ourselves hear whispered in our ears.

Will God really provide for us?

I am referring to these as whispers because
Satan rarely says outright what he means.
He is the father of lies and never talks straight.
Today the enemy also speaks to us primarily in whispers.
Demons don't normally appear before us and tempt us to sin.
If they did, we might be better at resisting.
Most of the time they simply whisper quietly in our ears.
So that we don't even recognize that it's them.

Let's look at the first temptation in this passage.

Verse 1, **"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry."**

Notice that Jesus is **"full of the Holy Spirit."**
Temptation comes for even Jesus.
Even when He is riding a spiritual high.
Temptation does not just come when things are bad.
You will find temptation to sin everywhere you go.
No matter your spiritual maturity.

I would be hungry too.
For 40 days Jesus is fasting in the wilderness.
This account could just be the last three temptations before it was over.
Or it could be the three primary temptations Christ faced.
But I believe this is 40 days of nonstop temptation.

Let's look at the first temptation.
Christ is hungry.

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

What is going on here?

Why is this a temptation?

I don't think this is Satan tempting Jesus to prove His divinity.

I also don't think this is Satan tempting Jesus to use His power selfishly.

Look back to verse 1.

"Jesus... was led by the Spirit in the wilderness."

The Holy Spirit has led Jesus here.

God has told Jesus to spend 40 days fasting.

So this temptation from Satan is to go against God.

It is to eat when God has said not to eat.

I cannot imagine how hungry Jesus must have been in that moment.

I wrestled and often had to cut weight.

The longest I ever went without eating anything was two days.

It was unbelievable brutal.

I hated every minute of it.

All I did was think about food the entire time.

But Jesus went even longer than that.

"He ate nothing during those days."

Not a single crumb, or a nibble.

And here Satan tempts Him to take and eat.

To ignore God's command to fast for forty days

But ultimately what Satan is whispering **God isn't enough.**

Satan is saying, "look you are hungry! God's way isn't working. Make yourself some food."

He whispers that God is not enough.

That God will not give Jesus what He needs.

40 days doing nothing but spending time the Holy Spirit isn't good.

He should eat instead!

And how does Jesus respond?

Verse 4 **"And Jesus answered him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."**

Jesus says that **God is enough.**

God is enough.

God is better than even food.

All of us have to eat.

We have to drink.

Or we die.

But without God we are dead.

And we need God more than bread or drink.

Because spiritual death is infinitely worse than physical death.

Having no food is better than not having God.

This is the reason Christians are supposed to fast.

It is to remind us that God is what we need.

We cannot live by food alone.

We need God more than anything.

We cannot live by bread alone.

We need the Holy Spirit.

But the temptation of Satan is to whisper and lie.

So many of our temptations are from the lie that God is not enough.

The lie that created things can give us what God cannot.

We are tempted to look outside of God for what satisfies us.

We talked about this a lot in our study through Ecclesiastes.

We can chase money, pleasure, power, fame, and more.

We do so believing that these things can satisfy our hungry.

But they are all vaporous and vanity.

They satisfy our stomachs for a moment and then the hunger returns.

What Satan offers to us is an elaborate feast.
He stands in front of the table filled with fresh fruit, beautifully cooked meat, and elaborate dishes like what you see on cooking shows.
But this feast is sin.
It is all the things we are tempted by because they look delicious.
Things like money, sex, pornography, the freedom of just doing whatever we want,
Being true to ourselves no matter what it costs us or others.

These and other sins look like delicious food.
And our bodies hunger for them.
But they are deceptive food.
You will take a bite and it will taste great, but you will need another.
And no matter how much you eat, your stomach will never be full.

You will always hunger and thirst for more.
But Jesus reminds us that He is the fount of living water.
Whoever drinks of Him will never thirst.
Because God is enough.

[transition] The first temptation is to doubt that God is enough. But Jesus tells us that God is enough.

Our second is the temptation of worship. **Satan whispers, "God's way doesn't work." Satan whispers, "God's way doesn't work."**

This is the heart of what Satan tells Jesus next.
He is trying to get Jesus off of God's path and on to another path.

Verse 5 **"And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,"**

It seems as if Satan either takes Jesus physically or takes him in a vision to a place where you can look at all the kingdoms of the world.

Verse 6, **"and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."**

Satan says that he is in charge of all of the kingdoms on the world.
Because God has given control of the world over to Satan.
Ultimately God is in control but because of our sinfulness, Satan is allowed to rule.

Verse 7, **"If you, then will worship me, it will all be yours."**

And Satan offers to give the kingdom over to Jesus.
Because Jesus came not just to take over but he came to establish the kingdom of God.
Jesus came to conquer every Kingdom on Earth.
That is part of his mission and what he sent out to do.

But Satan offers a shortcut.
Satan tells Jesus God's way isn't going to work.
I have a better way.

Because what's God's plan?
God's plan to establish and conquer all the kingdoms of the world is slow.
Well Jesus already purchased the victory that conquering still has not happened yet 2000 years later.
It slowly unfolding and it may not unfold for another 2,000 years of Jesus tarries.
But Satan says we can skip all of that waiting and get this done right now.

Do you really want to wait thousands of years Jesus?
Or do you want to have the kingdoms now?

God's plan also involves suffering.
Jesus's mission is not just slow it is filled with suffering.
The primary suffering that Jesus will endure is on the cross.

And the torture that he will suffer even before he gets to the cross.
Jesus is going to have constant conflict with the religious leaders.
There will be crowds who try to kill him throughout his ministry.
His disciples won't always believe him or understand what he's saying.
His family will think he's crazy and try to take him home and lock him up.

He will be mocked and spit upon.
He will have his back torn open as he is flogged beyond recognition.
He will suffocate to death naked in front of a crowd that jeers at him.

That is unimaginable suffering that the god of the universe will have to endure.

And Satan offers a shortcut.
He says instead of doing all that,
why don't you just bow down to me?
Do it my way worship me and I'll give you everything you want.

Seems like Satan's offering a compromise but it is a trap.
The Temptation is to circumvent God's plan and God's timing.
To get the glory without the cross.
To gain power without suffering.
To be king without having to serve.
But Jesus says no.

Verse 8, **"And Jesus answered him, "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."**

Jesus says, **Serve God only.**
Serve God only.

To compromise with sin is to worship a different God.
This is a worship problem.
It is not really a compromise, it is bowing to Satan.

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy again.
And he does not compromise.
Jesus says that he will worship and serve God alone.
He will not turn from the path.

He will not avoid the suffering that is coming to him.
Even though He greatly desires to.
In the garden the night before His death he will sweat drops of blood in anxiety.

He says no.
He is still willing to suffer.
Because Jesus understands to follow Satan's path is to worship him.
He knows that you cannot serve two masters.
You either serve God or you serve something else.

But today we face the same temptation all the time, don't we?
Look at the world to think God's way clearly isn't working.
The best thing that you can do in a wicked and lost world is to Faithfully follow Jesus in your ordinary life.
To stand firm and do not compromise and to just follow Jesus.

If we are honest all of us want glory and power without the suffering.
We want to grow in our faith without any struggle.
Often we want shortcuts to spiritual growth.
We want ways to become like Jesus that are easier than continually reading our Bibles.
Easier than going to church each week.
Easier than having to listen to someone preach.
Easier than worship with music we might not like.
And Satan is always happy to offer us a shortcut.
But the wide path of Satan's way leads to death.
Only the narrow way of service to God alone leads to eternal life.

[transition] Let's look at the last whisper of Satan.

The third temptation is this. **Satan whispers, "You can't trust God."
Satan whispers, "You can't trust God."**

Every time we are tempted to test God, it comes down to this.

We do not believe God.

We don't think we can trust Him.

We are tempted to test Him because we think He is a liar.

You may notice that Luke and Matthew have these three temptations in a different order.

It is not because they have forgotten.

They made an intentional choice because they are making different theological points.

Luke has this temptation last.

And you will find the reason why in verse 9.

"And he took him to Jerusalem"

Right there is the key.

Because Luke is very intentional with his geography.

And the entire gospel is working its way up toward Jerusalem.

All of Jesus' ministry is headed towards Jerusalem and the cross.

So he changes the order to keep this emphasis.

Look at the rest of the verse, **"And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the son of God, throw yourself down from here,"**

Jesus is taken up, whether in vision or reality to the top of the temple.

We believe that the highest point of the temple was right over a ravine.

And that ravine dropped all the way into the valley.

Looking down from it would have made you queasy.

I get queasy just standing on a step ladder.

And up there Satan tells Jesus to jump.

Now it isn't to kill himself, or to end His hunger.

Verse 10, **"For it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."**

Now Satan himself quotes Scripture.

Jesus has been quoting the Bible in response to every temptation.

But now the devil uses the Bible itself to tempt our Savior.

The Scripture he quotes is Psalms 91:11-12.

That is a deep reference.

It is not obviously a reference to the Messiah.

It would take special knowledge of the Bible to see it.

So Satan is showing off his knowledge of Scripture.

Don't miss this.

Every heretic has Bible verses.

The Devil himself knows his Bible.

Just because someone quotes a Bible verse, doesn't mean they are using it correctly.

Just because someone says, "this is biblical" doesn't make it holy."

Just because someone used Greek or Hebrew words doesn't mean they are right.

Demons probably know the Bible better than we do.

Do not be fooled.

Always check and study it for yourself.

Because Satan is happy to misuse and manipulate Scripture in order to tempt us to sin.

But what is the temptation?

This is not a temptation to show off Jesus' power.

It isn't because this would be a public scene in the most important religious place.

Instead this is a temptation to test God.

To see if those promises in the Psalms really are true.

Will God really project you?

If you jumped would angels come and catch you?

But Jesus responds again by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16

"and Jesus answered him, "It is said, You shall not put the LORD your God to the test."

Jesus says, **Don't test God.**

Don't test God.

There is something of a double fulfillment here.

Jesus quotes this as a reminder that we are not to test God.

But it is also a rebuke of Satan.

Because Satan is testing God Himself.

This is partially why Satan flees after in Luke's account.

Jesus's quotation refers to Exodus 17.

And the story Israel is refusing to trust that God will provide for them.

And they demand that Moses and God give them water now.

In his grace God actually gives them what they want,

but he tells them that they should not test him but should trust him.

Jesus could have jumped and God would have saved him.

But it would have shown that Jesus didn't really trust God.

Because true trust does not demand proof.

Jesus doesn't put himself in unnecessary danger to see if God is going to save him.

Satan is basically asking Jesus to do a trust fall with God.
If you don't know what a trust fall is.
You stand with your back to someone.
You cross your arms and then fall backwards.
And then the other person is supposed to catch you.
I have always hated trust falls.
I don't like most games like that groups get roped into.
But it has always seemed silly to me.
Why do I need to put myself in danger to see if I trust you?

How about I just trust you?
Why do I need to put you to the test?
Jesus says that God is not interested in practice trust falls.
We are not to test God.

Don't go stand above a cliff and say, "God if you don't want me to die I know you can save me, so I'm going to jump."

That is a manner of testing God.
A relationship with God is not a trust fall exercise.
You don't fall to see if God will catch you.
Instead we just trust him.
Because he made the greatest act of showing how he cares for us by sending His son Jesus.

Verse 13 **"And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time."**

We won't see Satan again until we come to Luke 22:3.
When he enters Judas to help him betray Jesus.
He waits until the end.

And at the crucifixion Jesus is tempted and mocked again.
He is taunted by those who say, **"If you are the Son of God, save yourself"**

We hear that same whisper from Satan.
We hear it in our ears that we cannot trust God.
And so Satan often tries to get us to test God.

The problem is that every time you decide to test God, you have decided that you do not trust Him.
You are asking Him to prove Himself.
And testing God is a serious sin in the Bible.
It is not a minor thing.

When people make declarations like, God if you are real then you had better do "this."
When we tell God to give us a sign.
When we ask God to prove Himself.
We are testing Him.
Those are moments we have accepted the enemies words that God is not to be trusted.

I remember being young and struggling with whether or not I was saved.
So like Gideon I was praying for physical signs that God would do.
But the problem is Gideon's fleece was testing God.
It was sinful and wrong.
It revealed his lack of faith.
What I, and Gideon, should have done is trust what God says in His Word.

There are all kinds of ways that we are tempted to not trust God.
You might be tempted to not trust God with your finances.

You might say God if you really want me to be generous and to tithe than to give to the poor than you need to give me more money so that I can do that.

You might be tempted to not trust that God's word is true.
You might see things that are confusing or hear voices that tell you that there are mistakes and errors and that this old book is not to be trusted.

You might be tempted to not trust that God's ways are best.
You may feel yourself be pulled towards a life of sin and doing whatever you want because you think it promises something better.

If you're not a Christian this is definitely a temptation for you.
Or better yet it is the whole way that you're living.
Because you have not yet put your faith in your trust in Jesus as your only savior.
And I can understand the hesitation.
What kept me from embracing Jesus for a long time was that I didn't know if I could trust Him.
I didn't know if He was safe.
I didn't know if He really would keep His promises.

I'm here to tell you that He does.
That God is good.
God loves you.
You can trust Him.

Last week our call to worship was from Hebrews 4 versus 16 through 18.
It reminds us of the truth that we can trust Jesus because He has been where we've been.
He has felt the same temptations.
He has heard the same Whispers in His own ears
and felt the tug in His heart.
And He resisted.

He went into the wilderness and He beat the devil.
And when He went into the grave He beat him again.
When He comes back He'll do it for another final time.

Because of this Jesus empowers us if you have put your faith in Him to withstand temptation.

He promises us a way out.

And you don't have to fast for 40 days.

You don't have to become the greatest Christian of all time.

You don't even need to have lots of scripture memorized.

You just have to run to Jesus and He will give you an escape

He will help you escape.

All you have to do is call on his name.

Sometimes all that I do is say the name of Jesus.

When you feel temptation coming, cry out "Jesus help me!"

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] This morning we have seen the temptations the enemy whispers in our ears. He whispers, "God isn't enough," "God's way doesn't work," and "You can't trust God." They are all lies from the father of lies. Don't believe him.
2. [Challenge] The men on my side of the family don't have good hearing. Mine is better than most, but it's particularly bad in crowds. I can get overwhelmed in places with lots of noise and have a hard time listening. In order for me to hear you I need to pay attention. I'll have to focus and put my energy into pushing out the noise and listening to your voice. This is much of what we have to do in our lives whether your hearing is bad like me or great. Satan's voice is loud. His whisper threatens to drown everything out. It is in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire. But God's voice is speaking. We have to decide to ignore the whispering temptations of our enemy and heed the voice of Jesus. That still low whisper that tells reminds us of the truth and reminds of who we are. Ignore the voice of the enemy, listen to the voice of Jesus.