

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

Today's topic is temptation. Every day, we face temptations—those moments when we're pulled to do something we know we shouldn't. Temptation can come in many forms: maybe you feel the urge to tell a lie or perhaps someone asks you to join in gossiping about a friend. And in each of those moments, there's a feeling, an urge, that pulls us away from what we know is right.

Temptation is personal. It's not just a random feeling or an urge. Temptation is a battle, and there's a real enemy behind it. Temptation is an attack, not just on you, but on God's creation, on what He originally made good. It's more than just a bad thought or a wrong feeling. Temptation is the work of Satan himself. Satan tries to destroy the good things that God has made. He tries to twist them into something evil.

To understand this better, let's look at an important moment in Jesus' life when He faced temptation—an event that shows us how temptation works, how Satan tempts us, and how we can fight temptation with God's Word. That moment is found in Luke 4:1-13, where Jesus goes into the wilderness and faces Satan's temptations.

In our Gospel reading today, we see something important about Jesus: He took temptation personally. After Jesus was baptized, He was led into the wilderness for 40 days to pray and fast. It was during this time that Satan came to tempt Him. Satan didn't just whisper some thoughts in Jesus' ear—he came at Him directly, trying to pull Jesus away from His mission. This was a personal attack, and it was designed to destroy Jesus' relationship with His Father and prevent Him from fulfilling His purpose.

Now, think about this: Why would Jesus be tempted? Jesus was the Son of God. He could have easily used His power to stop Satan. Why didn't He? The answer is simple—Jesus took temptation seriously because He came to earth for one reason: to save us. Jesus knew that the battle against sin, Satan, and death was real. He resisted temptation not just for Himself, but for you and me. He was helping us to face temptation long before we even came to this earth.

Let's look at what happened in the wilderness. Jesus had been fasting for 40 days. He was tired, hungry, and weak, physically speaking. And at that moment, Satan came to Him. Satan didn't wait for Jesus to be strong. He attacked Jesus when He was at His most vulnerable, trying to take advantage of His human weakness.

Imagine you're in a football game, and the other team is waiting for the perfect moment to tackle you. They know you're going to be tired after a long play, and that's when they'll come

for you. This is how Satan works—he waits for the moment when you're weakest, and then he tempts you with things that seem like the easiest way out. He tempts us when we're tired, stressed, or feeling down. But Jesus didn't give in in that situation.

Jesus didn't use His raw divine power to resist temptation. Instead, He relied on something else of power. He relied on God's Word. Three times in this story, Jesus answered Satan with the words: "It is written." Jesus didn't just quote anything—He used specific, powerful words from the Bible to fight the devil's attacks.

This is so important because it shows us that even Jesus, the Son of God, didn't fight temptation on His own. He didn't say, "I'm too strong to be tempted." No, He showed us that God's Word is the real weapon to wield in the battle against temptation.

Temptation is not just an urge or a feeling we have inside. When we feel the urge to do something wrong, we tend to think of it as just a bad thought or a bad feeling. But temptation is more than that. There's someone behind it. Satan is the one who tempts us. Satan is real, and he's always trying to get us to turn away from God and follow his lies. He is the enemy of everything good, and he wants to destroy what God has made.

Think of Satan like an enemy who wants to attack everything that belongs to God. He doesn't just attack us for no reason—he's attacking God's creation. He's attacking what God has made good in our lives. And that includes you. Satan doesn't just want to tempt you; he wants to destroy you. He wants to separate you from the love of God and pull you into sin, death, and hell.

The Bible describes Satan as a roaring lion, constantly seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Imagine a lion hunting its prey, watching for the perfect moment to pounce. That's how Satan works. He waits for us to be vulnerable, and then he tempts us, trying to lure us away from God's protection.

But Satan isn't just a force or a power. He's a person—a mighty but fallen angel who chose to rebel against God. In the beginning, Satan was an angel who was good, but he became proud and wanted to use his greatness for his own advantage. As a result, he was thrown out of heaven, and ever since then, he's been working to mess up everything God has created.

This means that temptation is personal. Satan doesn't just mess with us for fun. He has a purpose: to lead us away from God and into sin. Every time we're tempted, Satan is trying to pull us away from God's goodness. But we don't have to face him alone. Jesus took temptation seriously, and He gives us the strength to resist.

When Satan tempted Jesus, he tried three different ways to get Jesus to sin. Let's take a look at these temptations and how Jesus responded.

The First Temptation: Turn Stones Into Bread Satan tempted Jesus to use His power to turn stones into bread because Jesus was hungry. Satan was trying to get Jesus to use His divine power for His own benefit. But Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Jesus showed us that it’s not just our physical needs that matter. What matters most is God’s Word.

The Second Temptation: Throw Yourself Down from the Temple

Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself down from the top of the temple, saying that God would protect Him. This was a temptation to test God and to show off His power. But Jesus answered, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matthew 4:7). Jesus knew that trusting God means believing in Him, not trying to control or test Him.

The Third Temptation: Worship Satan for the World’s Kingdom

Finally, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him. This was the temptation to take the easy way out—achieving power and success without having to suffer. But Jesus said, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve” (Matthew 4:10). Jesus showed us that true greatness comes from serving God, not from worshipping the things of this world.

Each time Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus fought back by quoting Scripture. He didn’t use His own strength—He used God’s Word to stand firm against Satan’s lies. But why did Jesus resist the temptation in the wilderness? Why didn’t He just give in and make His life easier? The answer is because Jesus was thinking about you. He wasn’t just resisting temptation for His own sake. Jesus was on a mission to save you. If He had given in to temptation, He wouldn’t have been able to save us from our sins. But because Jesus resisted temptation, He went on to live the perfect life that we couldn’t live. He came to die on the cross for our sins and rise again to give us eternal life.

In a way, Jesus’ resistance to temptation was like a team captain who plays hard for the whole team’s victory. The captain isn’t thinking about himself – he’s thinking about the whole team. In the same way, Jesus resisted for all of us. His victory over temptation is our victory.

When Jesus resisted the devil, He wasn’t just showing us how to resist temptation—He was doing something we couldn’t do on our own. He was living the perfect life that we couldn’t live. He was winning the victory over sin, Satan, and death.

When you face temptation, it’s important to remember that it’s personal. Satan wants to destroy you. He wants to make you believe that sin is no big deal or that God doesn’t care about you. But that’s a lie. God cares about you, and He has given you everything you need to fight temptation.

When we’re tempted, it’s easy to forget that Satan is behind it. We might think that temptation is just a bad thought in our heads, or we might even think that it’s too hard to

resist. But we don't have to fight alone. Just like Jesus used God's Word to resist temptation, we can do the same.

One way to fight temptation is by speaking God's Word out loud. Imagine you're in a situation where you're tempted to do something wrong. Instead of giving in, say out loud: "No! The Bible says I should not lie," or "I will resist because God's Word says I should speak well of others." Speaking God's Word helps you remember what is true and gives you the strength to fight against temptation.

When we speak God's Word, it's like using a sword to defend ourselves. Satan cannot stand against God's Word. He tried to use Scripture against Jesus, but Jesus knew the Word better than Satan did. In the same way, when you know God's Word, Satan can't trick you.

Jesus didn't just resist temptation in the wilderness—He won the battle. His victory is our victory! When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He defeated sin, Satan, and death. That victory is now ours, and because of Jesus, we can resist temptation and stand firm in our faith.

Think of a championship game where the winning team celebrates. If you were part of that team, you would celebrate with them. In the same way, when Jesus won the victory over sin and Satan, we celebrate with Him. His victory is ours, and we can be confident that when we face temptation, Jesus is with us.

So, what does this mean for you today? Temptation is personal, but so is God's love for you. When Satan attacks you with temptation, remember that he is trying to lead you away from God. But Jesus is on your side, fighting for you. He resisted temptation for you, and He has given you His victory.

The next time you face temptation, remember that Jesus is with you. He didn't just come for the world—He came for you personally. When you're tempted, remember the one who resisted temptation perfectly, not for Himself, but for you. And when you resist temptation, you are not alone—you have the power of God's Word to fight back.

The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in him. Amen.

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