

Jesus Is Tempted

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 March 2019

Preacher: Rev. Allan Shearer

[0 : 00] It would be good if we had our Bibles open at Luke chapter 4 and that passage that we read together entitled The Temptation of Jesus.

And as we turn back there, let's seek the Lord's help. Heavenly Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, our Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

Amen. Well, I'm sure many of us remember in history the D.D. evacuations on the beaches of Dunkirk when many Allied soldiers are forced to retreat from the German advance and they end up trapped at the port of Dunkirk.

And for some reason it's been heavily debated by historians ever since. The Germans halt their advance and the British Navy and many little fishing boats are able to evacuate over 300,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk back to the British mainland.

And this was a defining moment in World War II. In fact, if this hadn't taken place then many people believe there would have been no D.D. landings just a short few years later in 1944.

[1 : 23] Very defining point in history and our passage today in Luke's Gospel is much the same. It's a defining moment in the life and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's the first real battle between Jesus and Satan. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ summons the Prince of Hell onto the battlefield and forces him to beat a retreat.

If Jesus had failed here there would have been no cross. If Jesus had lost against Satan here there would be no salvation and we wouldn't be sitting here 2,000 years later in the Harleway Free Church listening to someone preach about the good news of Jesus because it would be no good news, no salvation.

Luke could have ended his Gospel in chapter 4 and not continued for another 20 chapters. In fact, if Jesus had failed there there would be no Luke's Gospel and probably no New Testament.

It's that significant an event. Before we dig into this very well-known passage in scripture let's remind ourselves of where we are in Luke's account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

[2 : 43] This has been clear from Luke 1 to Luke 3. Jesus knows that he is the Son of God. He self identifies as God the Son.

He had already had this insight as a pre-teenager in the temple. Remember the story well. He becomes separated from his parents for 3 days and they eventually find him in the temple.

And what does he say to them? What does he say to them? He basically says, what are you worrying about? Didn't you know I would be in my father's house?

Now he's not talking there about Joseph. He's talking about his heavenly Father. And then at Jesus' baptism the Holy Spirit comes down upon him and ordains him for the work ahead and God the Father at the same time declares from heaven.

Just back in verse 22 of Luke 3, you are my Son whom I love. With you I am well pleased.

[3 : 48] There have been a divine seal placed upon Jesus. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are all testifying that Jesus is not just an ordinary human being.

That he is God in the flesh. That he is God the Son. And then we have the family tree of Jesus at the end of chapter 3. And you look through and you're thinking why on earth are these verses in the Bible?

This list of all the names are very hard to pronounce. But it teaches us something very important and I alluded to it as we did the reading. Back in chapter 3 verse 38 it finishes the genealogy of Jesus going through Joseph's line all the way back to Adam.

And there in verse 38 of chapter 3 it calls Adam the Son of God. And this is extremely important for understanding what's going on in chapter 4.

Because in Luke's mind there's a connection between Adam being the Son of God and between Jesus being the Son of God.

[4 : 56] In other words the background to Luke chapter 4 is actually Genesis chapter 3 when Adam and Eve both faced Satan. Now Jesus the second Adam the last Adam is now going to face exactly the same battle with Satan.

And where Adam failed Jesus is going to triumph. So first then let's consider the temptation of Adam and Eve.

And in Genesis chapter 1 of course we know that we learn that God is the all powerful creator God and chapter 2 we learn that God has a very special relationship with Adam and Eve the first human beings.

They are created in his image, they've got a purpose and a meaning in their lives. And then Genesis chapter 3 tells us how it all goes terribly, terribly wrong.

Very wrong. Not just a little bit wrong but really as wrong as it's possible to go. And this is the backdrop to today's passage.

[6 : 03] You see Adam and Eve as the first human beings don't just stand in their own relationship with God. They stand as representatives for the entire human race.

So if they obey God blessings will come to them and they're offspring. If they disobey God the consequences will not just come to them, it will come to their children and their children after them. And God gives them just one command stated negatively do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

This is where Satan comes in and tempts Eve. And this is where Adam and Eve fail terribly and the consequences come down to them and to their children.

God said in Genesis 3 3 you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not touch it or you will die. Now that involves physical death.

[7 : 05] Death was not part of God's original creation. People were not supposed to die but it also includes more importantly spiritual death. They died inside.

The relationship with God was broken and there is nothing Adam and Eve could do about it. Now the Son of God fails quite catastrophically.

Sin enters the world, enters the hearts of Adam and Eve and interestingly you've got a little summary of this in Genesis chapter 5 verses 1 to 3.

Often Genesis repeats itself and there it's very interesting Genesis 5 1 to 3 we read there when God created man, so referring back to Genesis 1 and 2, he made him in the likeness of God.

He created them male and female and blessed them. When he created them he called them man or human. This is Adam and Eve before Genesis 3 but then we read something very interesting in verse 3 of Genesis 5 when Adam had lived 130 years he had a son and what are you expecting?

[8 : 14] You should be expecting there he had a son in the image of God. That's what we'd be expecting but that's not what it says. He said he had a son in his own likeness.

He had a son in his own image. You see the difference? Human beings the image of God in them is now broken. It's marred, it's graffitied, it's defaced because of sin and when Adam has a child this child too enters into that broken relationship with God.

Man faced Satan and failed and he turns the paradise of God into a wilderness. You don't have to read very far in the Old Testament to discover just how bad things get.

Genesis chapter 4, it came in able and at war with each other came ends up killing able. Murder comes very quickly after the fall.

Satan apparently succeeds in destroying God's creation but God will not allow that to continue because before the beginning of all things God had already planned that his son the Lord Jesus Christ would come and conquer Satan.

[9 : 28] There's a wonderful hymn called praise to the holiest in the height and one verse goes like this. Oh loving wisdom of our God when all was sin and shame a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.

Jesus is the second Adam. For man is helpless in the case of sin. God comes down from heaven and the person of his son to rescue us from Satan's clutches and just like Adam's failure has dire consequences for humanity.

Jesus triumph has wondrous blessings for humanity. He stands as representative of the human race when he dies on the cross of Calvary.

And now in Luke's gospel as Jesus identity is established as the second Adam the son of God Satan moves in for the attack.

Perhaps Satan is thinking well I succeeded with Adam maybe I can do the same with Jesus and any comes but he completely underestimates who he is dealing with.

[10 : 36] And as we go through the text you see many differences but also similarities between the temptations of Adam and Eve and Jesus and this passage has huge consequences for human beings descended from Adam.

So you can't switch off this morning because you're descended from Adam. Every one of us can say Adam is our great great great great skip many generations grandfather.

This text is directly applicable to us today. So second then let's consider this temptation of Jesus and in verses one and two you have the background to the temptation and then we'll walk through the temptations one at a time briefly.

So verses one and two are the background and in these verses you find two references to the Holy Spirit and as many verses it says that Jesus is full of the Holy Spirit and that he was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert.

So in other words you can just skip over those verses and think it's really a matter you know so what Jesus is full of the Holy Spirit so what he was led by the Spirit but these are significant because it teaches us who was in control during this temptation and it wasn't Satan it was not Satan the Holy Spirit was in control.

[11 : 58] God himself dominates these events. You see there's a thinking in today's culture that good and evil are equal and opposite forces now they're opposite but they're certainly not equal.

You know there's little cartoons that you sometimes see you know there's an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other shoulder the angels whispering in the good things were to do the devil's whispering in the bad things and it's almost like there's a tug of war equal and sometimes the devil wins sometimes the angel wins that is not biblical.

Satan and God are not equals. God is infinite. Satan is a creature and God is sovereign and ruler even over Satan and Satan himself one day will have to bow the knee to God and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father before God deals with him once for all.

Satan and God are not equal let's never fall into that trap but here we see in these verses that Jesus faces a very real temptation.

He was tempted for 40 days now what we have here is probably the climax of the temptation these last three temptations of Jesus but he probably underwent more temptations than that.

[13 : 19] He's tempted for the entire period and also Jesus hadn't eaten for 40 days so he's extremely hungry and he's physically weak.

He's also in the desert with all the conditions that come along with that. Now just think for a minute the distinctions between Adam and Eve and Jesus. Adam is tempted in a paradise of Eden. Jesus is tempted in a desert. Adam has plenty of food he's tempted in a full tummy. Jesus is tempted on an empty stomach.

Adam had Eve. Jesus has no human companion. Adam is tempted for a single second. Jesus is tempted for a full 40 days.

Jesus undergoes a far more sustained and stronger temptation than Adam ever did but Jesus overcomes. He wins.

[14 : 19] He triumphs. The author to the Hebrews picks up this theme many times in chapter 2 verse 18 he says because Jesus suffered when he was tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted.

You know due to the fact that Jesus undergoes temptation he's able to help us as Christians when we are tempted and what a comfort there is in that.

But when we are tempted we can run to Jesus in prayer and know that his grace will be sufficient. We come to one who understands again in Hebrews chapter 4 we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are yet without sin.

You know just think for a minute if you've ever had the misfortune to have to lie on an operating table and just before the surgeon or the anethnotist gives you the anesthetic the surgeon leans over and says I don't want you to worry you're the first patient I've done this operation on.

You know if that was the case you'd be having nightmares under anesthetic if that was possible. But Jesus is one who understands. He is someone who has been trained who is qualified to the end degree.

[15 : 36] Here is a saviour that can be fully relied upon. Here is a saviour who has been tempted in every way but has overcome. It doesn't matter what we come to the Lord with he understands he knows he gets it.

He's been there to a worse degree than we could ever possibly be. He knows he says to us don't worry I understand exactly what you're going through I have been there to trust in me trust in me trust in me to see you through.

Because you know the devil will make us try to compromise as Christians by trying to find an easier way and that's ultimately what Jesus is doing you know the Christian life is not an easy one it's not. Maybe in this country we haven't faced deep deep persecution because of the Christian heritage of our country but the Christian life is not an easy one and we don't have to go too far to stand up for the Lord and we face maybe it's more subtle but there's persecution coming in different ways and Satan wants us to say well the Christian life is hard so why bother take an easier option you know sharing the gospel is actually a hard thing to do so don't do it.

You've been praying for a long time and God hasn't answered your prayers so just stop why bother. No one's listening fighting sin is very hard so why bother just enjoy the sin eat drink and be merry.

[17 : 09] Holiness is too much of a struggle just go back to the ways of the world you can be prim and proper on a Sunday and live loose and free the rest of the week and that's absolutely fine to do. That's what Satan wants and that's what he says take the easier option but in Jesus and Christ as his followers we acknowledge that yes sharing the gospel is hard but we're commanded to share it and we will strive to share it and we will have the joy of seeing people one for Jesus.

God might not have answered my prayers yet but I will keep on praying claiming his promises and becoming ever stronger for it. Fighting sin is hard but I will continue to do it because I love the Lord Jesus Christ and one day I'll have the joy of knowing infinite pleasures at God's right hand.

Holiness is hard but I am to be holy as the Lord my God is holy and by his grace one day I shall be perfected in Christ and because I love him I strive to be holy.

You know that's the balance that's the Christian battle and that's the battle that Jesus went through and we can go through it because our Saviour went through it and in these temptations look at them very briefly one at a time.

We're going to see how Satan never changes. He never changes. It is the same tactics all the time that he uses and we can learn a lot from it and the first temptation in verses 3 to 4 Satan comes to Jesus and challenges him on the basis of a human need.

[18 : 48] It is a very real one you know Jesus is hungry and Satan says to him you need to doubt God's provision for you. That's exactly what he's saying. Jesus is hungry so Satan comes to him and says if you're the Son of God tell this stone to become bread.

Now what Satan is doing here is he's saying to Jesus you have been here a long time now in the desert. Where is your father? He doesn't really love you Jesus.

He doesn't care for you. If God really loved you you wouldn't have an empty stomach. If God really loved you you wouldn't be here alone in the desert with an empty stomach and very thirsty.

God can't love you. You know he came down upon you in power 40 days ago in the baptism. He said he loves you. Where is he now? Where is the demonstration of that love?

Can you think? If you experience that yourself where Satan has tried to do that with you I know what I have and Jesus replies famously man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God this is a quotation from Deuteronomy chapter 8 which we read from and the context there is Moses is preaching to the people before they enter the promised land.

[20 : 03] They were to be God's people in the land to follow his law and he recounts God's plan to the people in the wilderness. The people had been grumbling and complaining that they had no food.

See the parallels to Jesus? Very close. And God gave them manna and quail and it says back in verse 3 there the reason for that God 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 by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

In other words God was teaching his people that what he said he would do he would do. He said every morning you will go out apart from the Sabbath day and you will find manna on the ground and every morning the people went out what did they find on the ground?

They found manna on the ground. God had provided for them they could trust it was an object lesson to teach them and that's what Jesus is saying. My father has said he loves me.

My father has said he will provide for me and although human circumstances seem to dictate the opposite I trust him. I believe in him.

[21 : 19] That's what Jesus is saying here and that's what the quotation involves. Satan was trying to make him doubt God's promises by pointing to his personal circumstances. Satan was saying look what you're going through God has forgotten his promises to you how can you trust him now and human circumstances by our sight might say yeah I'm going to doubt but our faith clings to the promises of God.

The story is told of a small boy who was in a house when it caught fire he fled to the roof his father was on the ground ready to catch him and he says to his son jump I'll catch you but all the boy could see was the flames and the smoke and he was afraid to leave the roof.

His dad said to him come on son jump I'll catch you and he said but dad I can't see you I can't see you for all the flames and smoke and his dad said jump I can see you jump I can see you the flames and the smoke are circumstances which Satan uses to cloud our view of God the father speaking is God telling us to trust the promises you know some things we can't see God because of our human circumstances but through faith we can see God and claim those precious promises and we jump into them we jump into those promises knowing that they will always always always catch us every single time.

The second temptation in verse five is about claiming worldly power again a very real temptation for us as well and Satan comes to Jesus and suggests there is something defective in the father's plan you know God's plan was for Jesus to live a human life and through the suffering of the cross to claim the crown and be exalted to the highest place.

Satan says to Jesus you don't have to go through all that that's silly all that suffering and pain you don't have to do all that if you bow down and worship me right now I'll give you it all you can have it all now you can have the best life now.

[23 : 32] In other words as one commentator said the option for Jesus was the crown without a cross that's Satan's way or the crown because of a cross that's God's way Satan wants Jesus to claim power instantly and not endure the suffering but we understand from God's word Messiah had to suffer in order to save a people who are under suffering of sin.

His path was suffering and then on to glory and that's so comforting for us because that's our path as well. It's suffering and then on to glory Satan was offering glory and then suffering you see that's all Satan can do he will promise you everything he'll promise you power and recognition and freedom of choice the world even and what you end up getting from Satan is suffering and shame and powerlessness and slavery and the light of eternity all Satan can offer you is hell because that's what he is destined for but Jesus knew that the first commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength and ultimately what we worship we serve or to worship God and as the first time reminds us not idols you see suffering is part and parcel of the Christian life because we now serve God and all his enemies become our enemies suffering never means that God is cast as a way if we are true believers that's a lie of Satan God is always working his purposes out even in the midst of suffering you know Satan tempted Eve in a very similar way Genesis 3 for God knows that when you eat of this tree your eyes will be opened and you will be like God claiming good and evil in other words what he was saying to Eve is you eat this and you will be God you will understand these things you will beat the top of the game that's a temptation Satan tries to do with us as well and it's a half truth you know Satan says to Jesus I have power over these things and I will give you this now it's true in a sense that Satan does have a lot of power the apostle Paul calls him the ruler of the kingdom of the air and Jesus himself calls Satan a prince in this world so he does have a bit of power but ultimately who's in control even of Satan God is Sam 24 verse 1 the earth is the Lord's and everything it contains again in Colossians chapter 1 Jesus created all things in earth and heaven whether visible or invisible thrones or powers or rulers or authorities and that includes Satan we see again that Satan uses half truths and that's the difference with

Satan or the subtlety he'll come to you with something that sounds right but it's only half right and something can't be half right something's half right it's wrong but it's got an echo of the truth and that's why we have to know our Bibles that's why we have to know our Bibles very well and he does it in the church power struggles in the church of divided congregations you know you'll say well who's got the power in the church a dominant elder who tries to take power over the other elders in the session you know a weak member who's not doing something that they should be doing and power struggles break out and in churches it can break out over terrible things like who's doing the baking this week and who's doing this and who's teaching the Sunday school this week and you know the minor things but Satan likes to stir division up so we become powerless and it's about saying no the greatest in the kingdom are the servants true power is in weakness and not in strength is what Paul tells us last the last temptation here is to presume on God's promises and the third temptation Satan comes to Jesus and suggests that God will reward disobedience again a really temptation that we face he is trying to play Jesus at his own game you see the last two temptations Jesus has quoted scripture straight back at Satan so what Satan does now is he decides to quote scripture to Jesus and Satan knows his Bible better than we do so let's remember that Satan knows the Bible extremely well and he can quote it for his own ends and purposes and he says to Jesus takes him to the top of the temple like going to the top of the church roof and says like Jesus jump off because something to one says that God will send his angels and lift you up now that is not what that

Psalm is teaching at all that is presuming on God's promises putting God to the test and that's what Jesus says it is also written do not put the Lord your God to the test and that's putting God to the test to presume on his promises and the people know testament that all the time through acts of provado and self-interest they put God to the test you see it next to the 17 the people in the desert are not hungry this time they're thirsty they'll get no water so they start to complain to Moses that God has abandoned them they doubt God's provision they doubt God's care they put God to the test they don't trust do we ever do that do we ever put God to the test I'm sure we do I'm sure we do God has promised us something we say we don't believe it faith gets weak and we put God to the test you put God to the test when we doubt his promises we doubt his word have you ever heard yourself say if you really cared for me God you would do this for me or even worse my God wouldn't do that my God wouldn't do that pair people say that and I often say in response it doesn't matter what your God would do what is the God of the Bible say that's the only God we're interested in the God as he is revealed in the Bible because that makes God's love conditional on ourselves conditional our own promises and how Jesus responds is very instructive he balances scripture with scripture scripture never contradicts itself so Jesus quotes another scripture to provide the balance context is very important in fact if you actually look at the original language Satan is misquoting Sam 91 it's not a direct quote he's adding words in just this point he's adding words in and misquoting it but putting God to the test and the illustration of this there was a missionary from Kirpner

Hill he wanted to travel a way down to the Lake District in the south of England and she's well into her seventies and she'd been used to driving on African roads which are not very good roads at all and she was wanted to have this big van to go down south and everybody else couldn't go so I could go so I helped her pack up the van we take off down the M74 motorway heading south and we're traveling at ridiculous speeds and she's weaving in and out the traffic and I was getting my knuckles were getting white holding on to the sides of the van you know I was like goodness you know and she said Alan do you know your problem you don't trust the Lord enough that's your problem you don't trust the Lord enough and I said well it's also written do not put the Lord your God to the test we're traveling at crazy speeds and putting God to the test that is exactly what Satan was trying to get Jesus to do here in this final temptation you know we're not to play loose and free and expect God to pick up the pieces he might do he might be gracious to us but that's putting him to the test you know this passage teaches us that Jesus triumphs perfectly and as his people we stand in his triumph and never in anything we do in his relationship with a father we stand in that relationship and he triumphs all we get from Adam is failure a broken relationship with God but in Christ that's restored and I want to ask you this morning in closing where do you stand with the Lord are you still in Adam the first because all you can get from Adam the first is failure a broken relationship with God and ultimately judgment in hell at the end of time but if you stand in the Lord Jesus Christ a glorious future awaits you in heaven with him forever and ever to experience infinite pleasures at the Lord's right hand forevermore where do you stand where do you stand let's pray

heavenly Father we come before you and we ask you would help us paint a fresh in our minds the picture of Jesus the victor of Jesus the triumphant Lord I pray for the congregation here in Carlyle way that at this time of vacancy that these precious truths of Jesus would comfort your people would build them up in their faith and would turn those who do not believe to Jesus knowing and finding in him one who is able to sympathize with us and all their weaknesses because he was tempted in every way just as we are and yet without sin and Jesus name we pray we're going to close by singing together in Sam 46 and the Scottish

[33 : 12] Psalter version Sam 46 a great Sam of assurance of God being our strength the city of Jerusalem is besieged by King Sinakarov the people are encamped around on every side but the people don't put their confidence in the army of Jerusalem they don't put their confidence in the walls of Jerusalem on the King of Jerusalem they lift their eyes up and put their confidence in their God God is our refuge and our strength and straights are presented therefore although the earth remove we will not be afraid we'll sing verses one to five and then verses at the end of the sound let's sing the sound to our God's praise we'll sing the sound to our God's praise no hills amidst the seas we pass no waters roaring make and troubled be ye though the hills by swelling see a river to streams to blood the city of our God the holy azan thekte

God in the midst of her death well, Nothing shall her remove the Lord to her, And help her will, and that I tearily prove, Be still and know that I am God.

Among the heathen I will be exalted high on earth, Will be exalted high.

Our God, who is the Lord of hosts, Is still upon her side, The God of Jacob, our refuge forever will abide.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all this day and always. Amen.