

How To Deal with Temptation Luke 4:1-13

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Luke 4:1-13 is the second time in all Scripture that a human has come face to face with Satan.

But, unlike the first encounter with Adam and Eve, Jesus was successful. Satan threw his three best punches and all of them missed the mark.

Now, you're in a church that believes in a real Satan, an evil being that is nefarious to the core. In fact, a recent survey indicates that only 58% of people believe in Satan.

The encounter here in Luke 4 between Jesus and Satan was real and represented more than just an inner psychological conflict.

By examining how Jesus successfully fought off temptation, we're going to see how to fight off temptation when it comes our way.

Today's story follows the second of two genealogies in the Gospels. Last week we examined Matthew's genealogy, warts and all.

But, unlike Matthew's family tree, Luke connects Jesus back to Adam – the first man to encounter Satan face to face.

Luke shows in his version of Jesus' family tree, Luke 3:23-38, that Jesus was truly human as he connected Jesus to the original man.

Though Matthew only takes Jesus' family tree back to Abraham, Luke goes all the way back to Adam.

Now, Luke's genealogy is worth noting because he communicates something about Jesus' unique relationship to the Father.

Adam was God's special creation; he was God's son. Yet, regardless that he was God's son, Adam failed when it came to his time to face Satan in Genesis 3.

Therefore, when Adam failed the test, he doomed not only himself but also every human being along with him.

Yet Jesus had a special relationship with the Father as He was the virgin-born Son of God. Where the first son failed, the second Son succeeded for all of us.

In fact, just one chapter earlier, Luke recounted the very public and special connection between Jesus and His Father, God.

Luke 3:21-22, "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Will this Son also fail Satan's test? No. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeds.

And Jesus' success didn't just benefit Himself; every believer today enjoys the benefits of the Second Son's success. Let me explain how.

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Luke 4:3, "The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Notice the language the devil used in Luke 4:3, *"If you are the Son of God."*

Satan used this same ploy in his third temptation later in verse nine, but what we must understand is that Satan's strategy hinged on Jesus' unique relationship to God.

Satan knows history's timeline. He knew the success enjoyed, up to this time, was because the first son, Adam, failed.

Satan also knew what was at stake in the life of Jesus. So, his first of three offers hinged on Jesus' special status to the Father.

Notice that Satan's offer made a lot of sense. Jesus had to be hungry after fasting for forty days. Even though Jesus was 100% God, he was also 100% human.

He had needs just like any other human. Adam was in paradise in the Garden of Eden when he failed.

Adam had not fasted when he failed. He could eat from any tree but one, but Jesus had been denying Himself food for forty days.

So, unlike Adam, Jesus faced Satan's test in an extremely weakened condition. But in doing this, Jesus taught that our surroundings aren't the determining factor in overcoming temptation.

Jesus not only had to endure what Adam faced but also the residual effects of habitual rebellion against God the Creator. There was more pressure on the Second Adam than the First Adam.

So, by fending off Satan's appeal to feed Himself, Jesus did something Adam didn't. Jesus was a good and faithful Son who choose to obey even it when it led to suffering.

Remember, Jesus had powers that no other human possessed, but was Jesus going to use His power for personal ends, or would He use His power for the good of others?

Later, Jesus does use His special power as God by providing bread to others, but by refusing Satan's bread, Jesus was being content with what God had supplied Him.

Look at Luke 4:1, "*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*" Note the double reference to the Holy Spirit in this verse.

Jesus' exposure to temptation wasn't His fault; it was God's design. Jesus wasn't fasting forty days by accident, nor was He facing Satan's best efforts in the desert by chance.

Instead, Jesus' physical hunger was God's will. God had set Him aside for a special time of training and prayer before He launched His all-important three-year public ministry of teaching and performing miracles.

By rejecting Satan's offer of turning stones into bread, Jesus was saying, "*I am content with God's will for My life. Physical needs are important, but loyalty to God is more important.*"

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Luke's second temptation, which was the third in Matthew's account in Matthew 4:1-11, shows Satan's hand even more clearly.

Luke 4:5-7, "*The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."*

Here Satan offered Jesus the world's most alluring and attractive enticements. Just as with the first temptation, Satan's offer was for things all of us desire. Yet, Jesus refused.

This Son would ascend to power but not through the typical path of grasping after power and status.

Instead, Jesus would achieve His rightful place as King of Kings by a different path – a path of suffering and humiliation.

He wouldn't use His power as God to serve Himself. Instead, He would display His power through humiliation and suffering. Jesus grabbed at nothing but instead accepted His eventual death.

Philippians 2:5-11, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

By His faithful obedience, Jesus received more than the earthly powers that were offered to Him in the desert. Jesus was successful in opposing Satan's temptation to grasp at the brass ring.

The path God sets out for each of His followers is much the same as that which was set out for Jesus Himself.

God calls on Christians to experience suffering on their way to everlasting happiness. First, suffering, then happiness. This is God's way.

Jesus was the new Adam. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. Had Jesus failed, like Adam, everyone would've been in the same predicament as we were when the first Adam failed.

Much was at stake. Yet, Jesus succeeded. And when He succeeded, He not only charted a new path for Himself, but He also liberated us

Jesus achieved victory not only for Himself but for those who trust in Him. This is the Gospel – Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourself. Jesus accomplished victory over sin through the cross.

Slide 4

Now, this story does more than just show us the uniqueness of Jesus, it shows us the power of the Bible.

Notice, when Jesus fended off each of Satan's blows, He quoted Scripture. That's what it means when you read the words: *"It is written."*

You see it in verses four, eight, and ten. Luke's version of Jesus' reply to Satan in verse four is more forthcoming when you examine Matthew's account.

Matthew 4:3-4, *"The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Jesus responded as a Man in this story and not someone with a cape and an "S" on his chest. What applies to all humans, applied to Him as well.

Jesus resisted Satan with the same two tools that are available to every Christian today: the Holy Spirit and the Bible. Even Jesus couldn't live by bread alone.

Last week I challenged you to read the New Testament in little more than a month because reading the New Testament is unlike anything else you'll ever read.

Think about it. We read so much in the course of a day. We read the newspaper, some digital, some hardcopy, we read texts, posts, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.

With all this input, do we say, *“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of Anderson Cooper.”*

You read the instruction manual of your new gadget and yet you've never said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of Bill Gates.”*

The reason is that the pages of the Bible are alive. They are unlike anything else you'll encounter. The Bible does something to those who listen to it or read it. It's no ordinary book.

Matthew 4:4, *“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

I wonder if we faced Satan today, would we even know three Scriptures by memory to fend Him off?

Slide 5

Conclusion

As I close this morning, note that forty is a significant number in the Bible. Forty years was how long the Israelites wandered in the desert (Deuteronomy 8:2). It rained for forty days when Noah was on the Ark (Genesis 7:4, 12,17).

Moses fasted forty days alone while receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18). Jesus spent forty days after His resurrection with the Disciples (Acts 1:3).

Notice also that each of the three temptations Satan offered Jesus was to get out of suffering. Look again at the First Temptation in Luke 4:3, *“The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”*

And look again at the Second Temptation in Luke 4:6-7 where you hear, *“And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.”*

And lastly, the Third Temptation, where Satan says in Luke 4:9-11. *“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. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”*

All of these offers were Satan’s way of telling Jesus to quit denying Himself, and grab life by the horns.

He offered Jesus exactly the same kingdoms His heavenly father was going to give Him, if He would just skip the cross.

If He would just bow down and worship him, Jesus could win the world with no pain, no blood, no dying, no humiliation, and no cross.

In other words, Satan wanted Jesus to be the shortcut Savior, because Satan is the master of shortcuts.

When someone asked Martin Luther in life, *“How do you handle temptation?”*

Martin Luther said, *“It is real simple. When Satan would knock on the door of my heart, I used to answer and every time I did he would defeat me. But now, when Satan knocks on the door of my heart, Jesus answers and says, ‘Martin Luther used to live here, but he moved out. I live here now, and the devil flees.’”*

Filled with the Spirit, armed with Scripture, and helped by the Savior, we can always know what to do when we’re tempted.

Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. When you fail, Jesus succeeds. Jesus achieves victory not only for Himself but for those who trust in Him.

And this is the Gospel – Jesus does for you what you cannot do for yourself. Jesus accomplished victory over our sin through His death and resurrection.