

Victorious Over Temptation

Luke 4:1-13

One day Toad baked some cookies. "These cookies smell very good," said Toad. He ate one. "And they taste even better," he said. Toad ran to Frog's house. "Frog, Frog," cried Toad, "taste these cookies that I have made."

Frog ate one of the cookies, "These are the best cookies I have ever eaten!" said Frog.

Frog and Toad ate many cookies, one after another. "You know, Toad," said Frog, with his mouth full, "I think we should stop eating. We'll soon be sick."

"You are right," said Toad. "Let's eat one last cookie, and then we'll stop." Frog and Toad ate one last cookie, but there were many cookies left in the bowl.

"Frog," said Toad, "let us eat one very last cookie, and then we'll stop." Frog and Toad ate one very last cookie.

"We must stop eating!" cried Toad as he ate another.

"Yes," said Frog, reaching for a cookie, "we need willpower."

"What is willpower?" asked Toad.

"Willpower is trying hard not to do something you really want to do," said Frog.

"You mean like trying hard not to eat all these cookies?" asked Toad.

"Right," said Frog.

Frog put the cookies in a box. "There," he said. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog.

Frog tied some string around the box. "There," he said. "Now we won't eat any more cookies."

"But we can cut the string and open the box." said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog. Frog got a ladder. He put the box up on a high shelf.

"There," said Frog. "Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can climb the ladder and take the box down from the shelf and cut the string and open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog.

Frog climbed the ladder and took the box down from the shelf. He cut the string and opened the box. Frog took the box outside. He shouted in a loud voice. "Hey, birds, here are cookies!" Birds came from everywhere. They picked up all the cookies in their beaks and flew away.

"Now we have no more cookies to eat," said Toad sadly. "Not even one."

"Yes," said Frog, "but we have lots and lots of willpower."

"You may keep it all, Frog," said Toad. "I am going home now to bake a cake."

In the first 3 chapters of the book of Luke, along with the other gospels, its author gives us strong evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.

There is proof in the announcement to Mary.

There is proof in the virgin birth. Just as Isaiah prophesied the virgin gave birth to a son.

There is proof in the announcement by the angel that a Savior has been born.

There is proof in the announcement of John the Baptist to **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."**

There is proof in the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at His baptism.

There is proof in the affirmation of the Father as He speaks from heaven **"You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."**

There is proof in the genealogy of Jesus.

In our passage today, we will see another proof that Jesus is the Messiah. It is here that we encounter the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness. His victory over these gives us an example to follow. With that, turn in your Bibles to **Luke 4:1-13**.

I am unique. You are unique. We may have some similarities, likes, and interests but we are different in many ways. Our ethnicity may be different. Our socio-economic status may be different. Our occupation may be different. Our taste buds may be different. Our eye color may be different. Our height may be different, but there is one thing that we all share in common – temptation.

Temptation has been defined in this way: *to try the strength of, to persuade, entice or induce, to rouse desire in.*

Comedic writer Robert Orben has said “Most people would like to be delivered from temptation but would like it to keep in touch.”

Similarly, Lane Olinghouse wrote: “Those who flee temptation generally leave a forwarding address.”

Irish writer and poet Oscar Wilde quipped “the only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.” He also said “I can resist anything but temptation.”

Jesus shows us that it is possible to resist temptation. But before we go any further I want to make something abundantly clear. Temptation itself is not sin. I can say that with the utmost confidence because Jesus was tempted, yet without sin.

Let me share some other misunderstandings about temptation. These come from the pen of Charles Stanley.

It is a misunderstanding to think that we fall into temptation.

It is a misunderstanding to think that God is displeased or disappointed when we are tempted. It is a misunderstanding to think that to be strongly tempted means we are as guilty as if we had actually committed sin. It is a misunderstanding to think that we overcome all temptation by separation from it. It is a misunderstanding to think that when we are spiritually mature, we will no longer be harassed by temptation.

Every one of us encounters every day some kind of temptation. Yours are different from mine, but we all encounter temptation in some form. While there are countless ways in which we are tempted, they all fall into three basic forms. We see this clearly in **I John 2:15-16**.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.”

Every temptation we face can be placed in one of those three categories:

The lust of the flesh

The lust of the eyes

The pride of life

That is what Eve faced in the Garden of Eden. That is what Jesus faced in the wilderness.

Here are my three points this morning.

The temptation Jesus faced questioned God’s love.
The temptation Jesus faced questioned God’s plan.
The temptation Jesus faced questioned God’s deliverance.

We will see the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life in these temptations.

I. THE TEMPTATION JESUS FACED QUESTIONED GOD’S LOVE – v. 1-4

This event comes right on the heels of Jesus' baptism. He had just left the Jordan. Notice that He was **"full of the Holy Spirit."** **"Full"** is the Greek word *pleireis* and means to be covered over, to be completely full or to be saturated with. Put a sponge in water and it gets saturated with water.

Many, many years ago when our family first moved to Camp, there was a week especially made for handicappers. My Mom cooked for the deaf camp. I would try to converse with some of them and ask how dinner was or if they got enough to eat. They would give me this sign (hand moving from waist upward). Sometimes it would come up all the way to the head indicating that they were very full.

Keep in mind that Luke is depicting for us the humanity of Jesus. When Scripture speaks of Jesus as being full of the Holy Spirit it means that He was fully under the control of the Holy Spirit. There wasn't a moment of His life that wasn't yielded.

It's the same word used in **Acts 6:3** when the Apostles chose seven men who were to be full of the Spirit in order to help the widows.

Then in **Acts 7:55**, we read that just before Stephen was stoned that He was **"full of the Holy Spirit."** When Barnabas arrived in Antioch to teach them the good news of Christ, He was **"full of the Holy Spirit."** (**Acts 11:24**)

According to **Ephesians 5:18**, to be filled with the Spirit is the constant goal of the believer.

That's the first thing we notice about Jesus, He was full of the Holy Spirit. So never think that just because you are spiritually mature that you are somehow devoid of temptation.

The second thing we notice is that He was "led" out into the wilderness. Mark says He was "driven." Luke uses the word 'agw' and Mark 'ekballow'. Both mean to drive or lead out.

For many years the place where staff at Camp took their trash was to the dump that was near the garage where Dad worked. When there was a large pile of garbage, Dad would take the bull dozer and push it into a big pile to burn. Now what do you usually find among garbage? Rats, and there were lots of them. When Dad started the dozer, the other staff men would grab their .22's and head to the garage to shoot the rats as the garbage was pushed around. Some would scurry down their holes. Dad would pour some gas down the hole and light it in order to drive the rats out their other holes.

Jesus was driven into the wilderness to experience these temptations.

Notice a third thought from this passage. Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. As I read the passage, I believe that Jesus was tempted the entire 40 days and it was at the end of that time that these three specially crafted temptations were given.

Notice a fourth thought. It was the devil that did the tempting. It was not God and it never will be God.

James 1:13-14

Genesis 22:1

Satan is a liar and a cheat and a murderer and a deceiver and his intent is always to lead astray. You need to understand that the same Greek word for tempt can have two meanings.

On one hand, it can mean to entice or lure to do something that is wrong. Satan will always tempt us to do what is wrong. It is never a test.

On the other hand, the word can also be used in the sense of testing as when gold is tested or assayed to determine its quality. God will never tempt you to do wrong because that is against His holy nature. He may, as is the case with Abraham, test your character. Please note the difference.

Jesus was led out to be tempted by Satan. Some theologians believe that it was possible for Jesus to

sin. I do not. So if Jesus couldn't sin, why was He tempted, what did it prove?

II Corinthians 5:21

Hebrews 2:18

Hebrews 4:15

John MacArthur includes in his book on Luke this quote from theologian Wayne Grudem. "If Jesus as a person had sinned, involving both His human and divine natures in sin, (they cannot be separated), then God Himself would have sinned, and He would have ceased to be God. Yet that is clearly impossible because of the infinite holiness of God's nature. Therefore if we are asking if it was actually possible for Jesus to have sinned, it seems that we must conclude that it was not possible. The union of His human and divine natures in one person prevented it."

H.A. Ironside adds "He was not tempted to find out if He could sin, but to prove that He was the sinless one." That proof was for us.

Jesus didn't need to prove that He wouldn't sin. He already knew that as God, He would not and could not sin. And just because He could not sin, didn't make the temptations any less real. He experienced sin in order to be a more faithful High Priest and know what we experience. He understands the struggles we encounter and is able to help us out of them. His temptations showed us that we have a Savior who is holy, a Savior who is able to save us.

I Corinthians 10:13

Hebrews 7:25-26

The temptations weren't to prove anything to Him or even to the Father. His victory over these temptations are a proof to us that He is the Messiah, and He can give us the victory over temptation as well so that we don't yield.

Let's look at the first temptation – verse 3.

"The devil said to Him, 'If you are the "Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." The word

"if" can be translated **"since"** or **"in view of the fact"** and that's the intent here. Satan isn't questioning the deity of Jesus. He knew who He was and He plays on that acknowledgement.

Jesus had been out in the wilderness. It was the most rugged and desolate region just north of the Dead Sea. It was barren with large rocky outcrops and steep ravines. It was uninhabitable. He's been there 40 days without eating a thing. He's famished and the devil comes up and whispers in His ear. "You've been out here a long time and you haven't thought of yourself at all. You're God. Take that stone and make some bread to satisfy your hunger. If you are God, act like it and make some bread."

You might ask yourself, what's wrong with making a little bread. After all, bread is the staff of life. We need it to live. Yet for Him to use His divine powers to satisfy His own need would have been selfish. He will face a similar temptation on the cross when the taunting crowd dared Him to come down from the cross if was truly the Christ. Save yourself they shouted. In a sense they were saying that if He really was the Christ He claimed to be He didn't need to go through all the physical pain.

This first temptation was to meet a physical need. **We face similar kinds of temptations don't we?**

There is the temptation to want more, to get ahead and people will cheat and steal and lie and kill to get what they want, to meet a physical need. **This last week Real Housewives stars Teresa and Joe Guidice pled guilty to fraud.**

Baseball star Alex Rodriguez has been suspended for 162 games because of his use of a performance enhancing steroid.

The news is filled with people who were tempted by some physical need who yield to the temptation and now are paying the price for listening to the devil.

Jesus was famished. He could have had instant sustenance. He could have met His physical need. It was lust of the flesh. Satan was tempting Him to

question God's love. Maybe he reminded Jesus that when the Israelites were wandering around in the desert for 40 years God met their need every day with manna. "You've been out here 40 days and haven't gotten a thing. Are you sure God really loves you. If you're His Son, He should show it and give you what you need. If He's not going to do it, take matters into your own hands and do it yourself, make your own bread."

I think there are many times when we might be tempted to question God's love. If He really loved me, He would give me this new car or this new house or this new kitchen or this new (and you fill in the blank). Just because we don't get them is no proof that God doesn't care. Satan was questioning God's love, God's will for Jesus. Jesus knew why He was there. He outlines His mission in **19:10** **"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."**

Mark 10:45 "For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many."

He didn't come to earth to be served, but to serve. So He responds with a quote from **Deuteronomy 8:3** that man doesn't live by bread alone. That means it is more important to do the will of God, to obey His Word. Jesus knew He wasn't going to starve to death out in the desert because He came to die on the cross. No word had come from God to change the stone to bread, so He knew it wasn't God's will and He knew that God loved Him.

John Philips writes of Jesus "His life was not run by circumstances no matter how demanding; it was run by the Word of God."

Like Christ, when we realize that our lives are not run by circumstances no matter how difficult, but that our lives are run by God's Word, that God does love us and has a will for us, even in the trials we are going through right now, we will be able to overcome this temptation of the flesh, to doubt

God's love. But sadly, many believe that if God really does love then we shouldn't experience pain or tragedy. **What about you? Have you been tempted to question God's love?**

The temptation Jesus faced questioned God's love.
The temptation Jesus faced questioned God's plan.

II. THE TEMPTATION JESUS FACED QUESTIONED GOD'S PLAN – v. 5-8

Satan led Jesus to a high place where we don't know, but somehow had the ability to cast a vision of all the kingdoms of the world. Satan told Jesus that all these kingdoms belong to him and he will give them over if Jesus bowed in worship to him.

That might sound pretty tempting to some. Who wouldn't want to be leader of the world, or maybe leader of a country, or perhaps just CEO of a global enterprise? In the first temptation Satan told Jesus He was famished. In the second temptation he told Jesus He had been a failure. "Look at you, Jesus. You've been on earth for 30 years and you haven't accomplished a thing. You're supposed to be a king and you're nothing but a carpenter. You're poor. I can change that in an instant. Bow down to me and I'll set you up as king right now, just say the word."

How many know that Satan has always wanted to be worshipped, that he has wanted to usurp the throne of God and take the glory that rightly belongs to the Lord? That's been his goal all along and some are all too willing to bow to him, to take a quick road to success. But how many know that success won't last?

Isaiah 14:12-14

Satan offered the nations unchanged, but God says that if we want to enter God's kingdom, we must change and that change only comes through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Later on Jesus will attest that His kingdom is not of this world.

Besides, how many of you would agree that Satan's

rule of this world is only temporary? How many of you would agree that God is still in control of the nations? How many would agree that God is the One who sets up and takes down rulers and that in a day yet to come, Jesus will rule over the nations?

Satan was claiming Jesus had failed, but could have instant sovereignty if He but bow and worship. He was tempting Jesus to question God's plan. He was tempting Him with the lust of the eyes. **Doesn't it look pleasing?** The outside looks beautiful, but inside it is rotten to the core. But Jesus knew the plans of God involved the cross before the kingdom. Temporal gratification or eternal glory. **Jeremiah 29:11 "For I now the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"**

Would you say that verse also applied to Christ? He knew God's plan for Him was to seek and save the lost, that His kingdom was yet future. Satan wanted Him to claim His kingdom without going to the cross, but Jesus knew God's plan for Him was to go to the cross. That was the only way to save mankind. Jesus told Nicodemus that **"no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3).**

Jesus knew God's plan for Him and He knew that plan could be trusted because God is trustworthy. That was the temptation Abraham faced and failed. He was promised with the plan to be made a great nation. The problem was he was old and getting older and had no son. Sarah told him to take Hagar and have a child through her. "Hey, Abraham, God's plan isn't working; it's taking too long, let's take things into our own hands." And we know the problems that have resulted ever since.

Jesus responded with another quote from **Deuteronomy 6:13.** There is only one God to worship. That's what He told the Israelites when He gave the law, and it's the same for us today.

And let's also not forget that one day every nation, tongue, and tribe, and people will fall down and worship the rightful king of the nations.

Daniel 7:13-14 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

There are only two plans: God's or Satan's, which one will you follow? No matter what, don't be tempted to doubt His plans or to bypass those plans.

The temptation Jesus faced questioned God's love.
The temptation Jesus faced questioned God's plan.
The temptation Jesus faced questioned God's deliverance.

III. THE TEMPTATION JESUS FACED QUESTIONED GOD'S DELIVERANCE – v. 9-13

Satan wanted Jesus to see that He was famished and to instantly satisfy His need questioning the will and love of God.

Satan wanted Jesus to see that He was a failure and to gain instant sovereignty by questioning God's worship and plans.

Satan wanted Jesus to see that He was forgotten and to gain instant success by questioning God's Word and deliverance.

Since Jesus was going to rely on the Word in His defense, Satan decided to try and use that to his advantage and use the Word also. That was his tactic with Eve. **How many know that Satan will always misquote or misrepresent something the Bible says?**

How many are glad today the Word who is God knows the Word of God?

John 1:1, 14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

Most scholars agree that the location where Jesus was taken was on the south corner of the Temple up on one of the high towers that overlooked the Kidron valley.

When quoting from **Psalm 91:11-12**, Satan left out an important part. It ends with the words **“in all your ways.”** Satan wanted Jesus to tempt God with His deliverance. “Throw yourself down. Surely God will deliver you. Besides everyone who sees you being rescued will know for certain who you are. That is sure to impress the crowds and they’ll fall in worship of you.” Satan wanted to change the timing and structure of Jesus’ ministry. Satan said they would immediately accept and worship Him. But yet we see that even after they saw His miracles they still didn’t believe. This last temptation is an attack on the pride of life.

Satan hoped that if He did jump, He would die in the fall and not go to the cross or if God did catch Him as promised, Jesus would cease to be under God’s plan in submitting to him and His death on the cross would be meaningless.

But Jesus would take no easy way to the throne. Such an act of casting Himself off the Temple tower was not an act of faith; it was a presumption, daring God to act, testing God’s faithfulness to keep His Word.

It would be the same if one morning Abraham woke up and said to himself, “I’m going to test God to see if He’ll keep His word. I’m going to take my son of promise up on the mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. If God’s word really is true then He’ll

stop me before I carry it out.” That’s presumption. It is never right to tempt God to keep His promises. Jesus knew the Father could rescue Him, but trusted in the plan that was based on God’s love.

Psalm 91:11-12

The account we have about Abraham is faith.

Satan attempts the same strategy with us.

Doubt God’s love.

Doubt God’s plans.

Doubt God’s deliverance.

Satan takes advantage of all kinds of circumstances good and bad to tempt us. He tempts us in the spiritual highs, when we feel particularly close to God. Even then we are still vulnerable.

We attend a Christian seminar or concert and come home pumped up for Jesus.

We have some spiritual victory.

Then wham, Satan hits us with some lust of the flesh, or lust of the eyes or pride of life. He wants us to think we’re not as good as we really are or to remind us, because he is the accuser, that we are still lowdown, worthless, sinners, so what’s the point of trying to be spiritual. Or he puffs us up with pride like the Pharisee praying in the Temple.

But he also tempts us in the storms of life, when we are in the depths of despair, when the world seems like it’s caving in on us.

He knows our vulnerabilities, our weaknesses. He’s a student of our habits and personalities and uses them to his advantage. No two temptations are ever alike. [There is a big uproar by citizens about the violation of privacy by some stores. Stores have incorporated technology to follow you in the mall through your cell phone. They are able to track your spending habits in order to lure you to certain sections to buy products.](#) That’s what Satan does.

He uses what He knows about you to lure you. And the passage ends by saying that Satan left for a more opportune time. Satan won’t give up. He’ll keep coming back.

In closing let me suggest a few things that can help us in times of temptation. We see Jesus employ them in defense against Satan.

1. Know who you are. Remember you are a child of God and as His child, you are loved by Him. Remember that you are not under the jurisdiction of Satan. We are no longer under bondage to sin. Satan is no longer our master.
2. Pray and watch. Stay alert.
3. Live by the Spirit. **Galatians 5:16** “**So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.**”
4. Use the Word of God. **Psalms 119:9, 11** “**Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Thy Word. Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.**”
5. Submit to God and resist the devil. **James 4:7** “**Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**” **Ephesians 4:27** “**Neither give place to the devil.**” Don’t let him hang around.
6. Put on the full armor of God. **Ephesians 6:11-18** “**Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**”

The first Adam had a beautiful environment with everything provided and yet failed when tempted. The last Adam had a harsh environment with nothing and He succeeded. He shows us in the victory over His temptations that He was the sinless one, the one who knows our weaknesses and is able to help us out of them so that we don’t give in.

There is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. **What temptations are you**

facing today that Jesus can help you gain the victory?

There is an old hymn that many of you may remember: *Yield Not to Temptation*. In it we have this truth: “**Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through.**”

Never question God’s love.

Never question God’s plan.

Never question God’s deliverance.

Like Jesus that will help you be victorious over temptation.