

Testing The Beloved Son

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 4. As we come to this passage today, there should be two backdrops in your mind.

The first is a setting in Genesis 2 and 3. It's a garden. It's a beautiful garden. Adam and Eve were placed there.

In the course of time, the serpent came and tempted Adam and Eve. Adam fell. He failed. And mankind was plunged into sin. The second backdrop you need to keep in mind for today's message is the nation of Israel.

Remember, they were in bondage in Egypt. It was sore bondage. And they called out to God and God delivered them. He delivered them with a mighty victory.

[1 : 11] He led them out of Egypt and on the way to the land of promise. But if you've read through the book of Exodus and the book of Numbers and even a little bit of Leviticus, you'll find that they did a terrible job of following the Lord.

In fact, more often than not, they refused to believe God's word. Now, hopefully, as we read, I'll not make a lot of...

I'll not reference these a lot, but I'm hoping that you see the connection as we go through our text today from Luke chapter 4 and as we look at that together.

Luke chapter 4, I'm going to read the first 13 verses. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.

[2 : 28] And Jesus answered him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And he said to him, To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours.

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

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, 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.

And Jesus answered him, It is said, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

[3 : 47] Let's pray together. Father, this is an amazing situation. We read, or we sang a verse in our last hymn that talked about being humbled for a season.

And we recognize that this is the Lord Jesus. This is God the Son having taken on flesh, walking on earth, veiling his glory, and submitting the use of his divine power only to the Father.

Humbled. And I thank you, Father, that that humbling was for his people. And what he's about to do here is a great part of what we needed.

And so we come today thankful, pray that you would open our eyes to the wonder of what Jesus has done here. And help us to see it for what it is as best we can.

Not as something that was easy, but as some great work that he has done for his people, for us. I pray that you would be with us, that you would bless your word.

[5 : 02] You would be with me. Help me to speak clear. And I pray that you would bless us in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. The circumstances that Jesus was facing here, I wanted to point out to you, and I want you to notice that Jesus has not fallen into a circumstance.

He's not fallen into a situation. This is just after his baptism. And remember, we talked last week as he has been baptized in his praying, the heavens open, God declares from heaven, you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

And this dove comes down and rests upon him as a picture of the Holy Spirit. And so, he's been declared to be God's son. And there he stands.

Luke has taken some time and declared that he, Jesus is not only the divine son of God, and then Luke has gone on to share that Jesus is indeed the human son of God, tying him to Adam.

And we're going to see doing a work of the second Adam today as we look at this temptation. So, he's just after his baptism.

[6 : 25] The baptism took place in the wilderness, but along the Jordan, and there were a lot of people there. And it goes on to share here that he's led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days.

I want you to know, like I said, this is not something he fell upon. This was God's direction. The Spirit took him into the wilderness for a specific purpose, and that was for a 40-day period of time where he would be tested.

It says that he was being tempted by the devil. We don't know what temptations he faced during those 40 days. It says that he was tempted of the devil.

And it talks about, and when it was finished, we look at these three temptations that Jesus faced.

We don't know, again, what kind of temptations that he faced, but we do know that in the course of Jesus' life, that he was tested in every respect.

Hebrews says, Hebrews 4.15, in every respect, he has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. So whatever those temptations were, in the scope of things, when it's all said and done, by the time that Jesus had come to the cross, he had been through every kind of temptation that you and I, what would be common to man, he had endured it all.

[7 : 55] And it may have been that those 40 days were just packed with temptations so that Jesus Christ might have experienced what you went through yesterday or this past week.

Everything, yet without sin. We mentioned the Garden of Eden. This is not a garden. This is a desert wasteland. It's a place where there was no food.

And God, his Father, took him there on purpose, knowing there was no food. God, the Father, took Israel to the wilderness on purpose, knowing there was no food.

He was there for 40 days. That means he went 40 days without food. The Bible says at the end of 40 days, when it was ended, he was hungry.

And I really want you to understand this is not a dinner's late, I'm hungry. This is not a I worked all day, I didn't get a chance to stop for breakfast and I missed lunch also.

[9 : 17] This is 40 days of not having eaten. Now, the body goes through a whole cycle of things as you don't eat for a long time.

And we don't have time to go through all those. But let me just say that after 40 days, the body begins, it gets to a point where it begins to turn upon itself and a person becomes ravenously hungry.

They are just crazy for food. I need to eat. Jesus was fully human. He did not go into the desert and for 40 days just felt fine and dandy.

He was truly human and the end of 40 days when it says he was hungry, it means he was the hungry of a person who hadn't eaten 40 days.

He was ravenously hungry. And at this point, then, the devil does these three particular temptations.

[10 : 29] As we go into these temptations, I'm going to try to point this out. I'll say it here so that you're looking for it. I want you to realize that these were, first of all, true temptations.

They were real temptations and they were not easy temptations. As we go through these things, I hope to point out that these temptations were specifically designed for the Son of God, the Messiah. And so, I don't want you to go into this passage thinking this was easy for Jesus. These were real temptations that he really had to fight.

He really had to deal with. So, the first one, the devil takes advantage in verses 3-5 of speaking of Jesus' hunger. The devil sees that he's desperately hungry and he comes to Jesus and he begins to tempt him.

You heard what he said. If you're the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. You're about to die from hunger? You have a solution.

[11 : 41] You're God. And you don't need to wait. You don't need to wait on anybody. You don't need to run to the nearest town. You don't need to do anything.

You are the Son of God. You can just say, bread. And a stone would be turned to bread. bread. Now the difficulty here is the fact that the Spirit had led him into the wilderness.

What does that mean? I've already hinted at it. It means that God the Father wanted Jesus in the wilderness. He wanted Jesus to be in the wilderness where there was no bread.

Being in a place where there's no bread is exactly where the Father wanted him to be. And the Father's not being cruel. the Father is putting Jesus in places where he is able to fulfill all that we need as a Savior.

And so the difficulty is, I'm here where my Father wants me. I am ravenously hungry. I mean, we can put ourselves in those kinds of situations, nothing like this, but we can face temptation and it gets so strong and so difficult.

[13 : 03] We feel like, well, the only course at this point is for me to go ahead and sin and ask forgiveness. I mean, I'm so struggling and I just feel like I can't resist any longer.

We get that way and we usually or often or at least sometimes fail. and here is Jesus at the very edge of what it feels like human people can endure.

But he's here and he's saying, this is where the Father wants me and the Father hasn't provided bread, must be the Father doesn't want me to have bread right now.

And so in answer to the devil's temptation, he quotes from Deuteronomy 8.3. Interestingly though, Deuteronomy 8.3 is part of where Moses has been rehearsing Israel's incidences back to them before they go into the promised land.

And what is going on in Deuteronomy 8? He's recounting in the first part of this chapter, he's recounting that Israel wandered in the wilderness and they said, we don't have any bread, it would have been better if we died in Egypt or lived in Egypt, at least we'd have bread.

[14 : 24] And then God gave them manna and this particular verse goes on to say how they loathed this manna, 40 years of the same bread. And yet Jesus quotes this verse back to Satan and says, man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

That's what he told the tempter. He told the tempter what God wanted Israel to learn in the desert. Don't shortchange what God is doing.

Don't go out of God's will. God knows your needs. Trust in the Lord. And that's what Jesus did. He quotes God's word.

He chooses not to exercise not to exercise his deity. Now Israel, all they could do was wait. Jesus had an option. He could, he had the power.

This was a real temptation to him. He had the power. He could have transformed the stone into bread. And yet he chose not to. He chooses to trust his father.

[15 : 37] He chooses to live by what his father says. His father says it's time to be here. There's no bread. I'm waiting until the father says it's okay.

And by the way, just so you know, God did take care of him. At the end, God provided for him in time and in such a way as he could continue his ministry.

As we go on, verses 5 through 8, the devil comes to him again. This is the situation where somehow the devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory.

And, you know, that might puzzle us a little bit. Why would he do that? Well, I think the answer is in Psalm chapter 2 verses 7 and 8.

he says, I will tell of the decree, the Lord said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you. Oh, doesn't that sound like what just happened? Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of your earth your possession.

[16 : 56] So the devil has taken Jesus up to a point where he could see all the kingdoms of the world. and Jesus knows, according to promise, those are going to be mine.

But there's a difficulty. Jesus' way of getting those kingdoms has a cross that stands in the way.

You say, oh, he was the God man. that was nothing for him. Luke 2, verses 40 to 44. This is Jesus in another garden.

And he came to the place and he said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation. And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed saying, Father, if you're willing, remove this cup from me.

nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. There appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly the same thing.

[18:19] And his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. I read that to say that cross that stands in his path is not simple.

That cross that stands in his path, he knows is so agonizing, and it's not just the physical, it's what God would lay on him as far as wrath for our sins.

that situation is so terrible that the God-man prayed if there's another way.

and he prayed it again. Father, we know from another gospel that he prayed three times. Luke only talks about two, but he emphasizes that his prayer was so intense that the sweat ran from him as if blood was gushing.

What one of us have ever struggled with a temptation that we struggled with it and saw such agony before us that we prayed so earnestly that our sweat was like drops of blood falling from us.

[19:38] And so the scene is here, Satan has taken Jesus up to where he can see everything that he would gain. And yet, the Son of God knows that coming in the future is something beyond comprehension as far as suffering.

And the devil says, you can have it all. All you got to do is worship me. You and I have never known temptation like that.

You and I never could know temptation like this. We have no idea what the cross was like to Christ. He did. And he knew it was in his way.

God and yet, even though the devil had tried desperately to get him to sidestep that and gain what supposedly the father, I say supposedly because if Satan gave it to him, it wouldn't have come the right way.

But what Satan promised, what God had truly promised, he could have shortcutted. Jesus chooses to worship and serve God alone. And he quotes Deuteronomy 6, another passage where Israel is choosing to serve other gods.

[20:57] Deuteronomy 6, 13, it is the Lord your God you shall fear, him shall you serve. It's not that he made light of the cross, it's not that he said it's nothing, he said I worship the father and even though there lies in my path something that no other human has any sense of or could have a sense of, I choose to obey the father because that is his will for me and it was the only true path for him to be able to get indeed what the devil had tried to give him by cheating means.

and then in verses 9 through 13 we see that the devil takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple. Among other things Jesus had come to announce and to bring his kingdom in and it's spoken of even here and it's mentioned in all the gospels that Jesus came and he's bringing his kingdom into being.

That means the Messiah is come on the scene and the Messiah should be known and the kingdom should be spread. And it's very interesting several commentators made note of this.

That the rabbis in those days truly believed that the Messiah when he comes would appear on top of the temple.

Interesting. Interesting. The difficulty for Jesus here, I say this reverently, I'm just trying to point out some of the things that are here.

[22:47] The difficulty is how many in Jerusalem would really come to know him. Luke 13:34, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to him.

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hand gathers her brood under her wings and you would not. They were looking for the Messiah this way, coming on top of the temple. And the devil says, cast yourself down. Now the devil becomes tricky here. He takes and says, I don't know if he says, well you've been quoting scripture to me, I'm going to quote some scripture to you.

He quotes Psalm 91 verses 10 and 11. 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.

The devil says, God's promised to protect you. What's wrong with this method? Jump. everybody will see.

[24:07] Everybody will know. And since everyone's expecting the Messiah to come from the roof of the temple, then problem solved. Jesus answers with another quote again from Deuteronomy 6 where Moses is recounting how Israel had put God to the test.

Is God among us? Can he provide water in the wilderness? And Moses told Israel what they should have thought because they did tempt God.

provide. And Jesus quotes what Moses said to the people. He says, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested him at Massa, which is the place where they said, can God provide? And so Jesus would not make God provide, or prove rather, he would not make God prove that he was Messiah. Messiah. He chose to go about his work and his service in God's time and in God's way.

So you might look at this passage and say, why is this here? And I'm going to admit to you that there is certainly instruction in dealing with temptation here.

[25 : 39] It is here. There are good principles. We need to depend on the enabling of the spirit when we face temptations. We need to know God's word and use his word when facing temptations.

Those are good things to point out here. But I want to take you in two different directions. I want first to show that Jesus suffered that he might be a merciful and sympathetic high priest.

Christ. You could turn to Hebrews chapter 2. We'll read two verses in Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 2. Taking you there because I want you to hold on to this.

I want you to think about this and be able to lay your hand on it. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 18. you could start back in verse 14 but for time's sake for because he himself has suffered when being tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted.

[26 : 54] I want to take today your eyes off from what I can do in temptation. There are good applications here. And I want to put your eyes on Jesus and see what Jesus has done for you in temptation.

Jesus has suffered in temptation so that he can help you in temptation. Now I've tried to show you today as we've looked at these different scenes, these different tests, I've tried to show you because I think too often Christians today look at Jesus as the God man and say well that was nothing for him.

He could do this in his sleep. But I want you to see rather that Jesus was truly human. He was 100% God and 100% man. Don't ask me to explain that.

But it's true. And as he suffered these temptations, he chose to suffer them as human. Helped by God but as human.

So that he might be able to come to your aid in the midst of your temptations. You can turn over just to the next chapter in my Bible, it's the same page, verses 14 and 15 of chapter 4.

[28 : 19] Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

I'm going to read the next verse. I didn't have it in my notes. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What Jesus did in Luke chapter 4 in the account of his temptation was to go through in the course of his life everything that you would be tempted with.

And he knows exactly what you're going through and what you feel. And he did that so that he might know what you're going through and what you feel.

And he also did that so you can be assured that he knows how to help you and that he's willing to help you. And so the writer of Hebrews calls us to go right to the source, right to the strength.

[29 : 43] When we're going through trials and temptations, your first plan, and I'll just say it, your first plan is not what can I line up, how can I have my spiritual gun ready so that I can shoot down this temptation.

Those things are good, but your first plan is to go to the person who's been successful and ask for grace in that time of need, and he will help.

Temptation is not a matter of having exercise in my spiritual muscles so that I am a strong Christian and I can resist temptation. Sure, we should grow, sure, we should know truth, but the real truth is we need to be people who run to Christ.

Our strength is not in what muscles we built up, our strength is the one who's done it. Our strength is resting in him. And so be that person who runs to him and trusts in him for rest.

But I think there's another thing and it's not bigger, it's as big. The first one's gigantic, the second one is gigantic. And that is in this, I want you to see, now it's only part of it, but it's a big part of it. [31 : 09] The temptations that Jesus faced here were immense, they were real, they were true temptations. And he went through those temptations to earn a perfect righteousness for you.

How are you doing at earning righteousness as you go through temptation? temptation? How about this afternoon when you drive out Pecora Boulevard and turn on the 93, whichever way you go, or maybe go this way, and someone cuts you off.

How are you doing at earning a righteousness that will be accepted before God? Now some of you will do great. Me, on the other hand, failed.

see, when we get to heaven, or to get to heaven, we don't need just our sins taken care of. That would make a clean slate.

We need to be perfect and holy and good to be in God's presence. And so Jesus, he lived a life full of temptations, so that he was the one who always did what the Father commanded.

[32 : 32] He always obeyed God's law. He always rested in his Father. He trusted the help of the Spirit to do these things. And when it was all said and done, 2 Corinthians 5, 21, for our sake, he made him to be sin who know no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ's enduring temptation is part of his earning a perfect righteousness for you.

God clothes us in Christ. We are in Christ. And when we stand before the Father, we've been washed, we've been cleansed, if we've trusted Christ as Savior, we've been washed and we've been cleansed, but we don't stand there in ourselves.

We don't stand there in anything that we have done, nothing. We stand there, rather, clothed in Christ, having on garments of the person who resisted every temptation, who always obeyed the Father, who always did everything that the Father required.

God and so he is our new Adam. We don't have a lot of time to go into this.

[34 : 05] This passage has been structured in Luke, quietly behind the scenes, to show as Jesus was declared to be the beloved Son of God, and then as Luke takes time to trace the genealogy back to Jesus, Luke has set up a theological argument that this one who's coming, he's related to Adam.

He's not a son of, he's a son of Adam, yes, but he is the second Adam, the one who stands, and remember I talked about being clothed in Christ, that's the idea, Adam, in the original Adam, we all got our sin nature, in the new Adam, we get all this perfect righteousness, because he resisted sin and temptation, he passed all the tests, his temptation was much greater, much more strenuous environment, wasn't surrounded by trees with fruit on them, water flowing through four rivers, he wasn't even in just the desert situation of Israel, he was here in the wilderness, hungry after 40 days, and tempted by Satan, now he represents all those who are joined to him by birth, by a new birth, and by adoption, all men joined to him are justified, all men joined to him are righteous, all men joined to him are pleasing to the father, all men,

I'm speaking of men generically, don't shoot me for that, all people, all people are joined to him, reign through righteousness to eternal life, so brothers and sisters, what Christ did here was for you, he earned a perfect righteousness that's credited to your account, and this righteousness was not just because he was the God man, this righteousness was earned by him, he lived a real life, he faced real temptations, he resisted them so that a real human righteousness is what God sees when he looks at you and me, we are to resist temptation, but we're to do it because we love him, and we want to serve him, but this shows that our righteousness was earned by Christ, and that frees us,

I can rest in that, I fail all the time, but what Christ did, he didn't fail, and when God looks at me, one who's trusting in Christ as Savior, when God looks at you, if you're trusting Christ as Savior, when God looks at you, the one trusting Christ as Savior, he sees the beauty and the holiness and the righteousness of his son, that's what he did, I mentioned earlier, how do you do, how are you doing when you face temptations, and we talked about Christians, but if you're here and you don't know Christ, how are you doing when you face temptations, how are you doing at paying back where you messed up, when you failed, when the temptation came, Bible says all our works, all our good works are as filthy rags, so if you're here and we've talked about this perfect righteousness, if you don't know how you're going to deal with your sin, if you know

God's going to hold you accountable for that, and you don't know what you can do, then you need to turn to Christ, he has a perfect righteousness that he's willing to give you, he shed his blood and

willing to cleanse your sin, but you have to trust him, you have to look to him as the only hope for your salvation, let's pray, Father I thank you for what Christ has done, and Lord now as we go into the Lord's Supper, I pray that these truths will be ringing in our ears as we hold and eat the bread and as we hold and drink the cup, may we be rejoicing in what Christ has done for us, in Jesus name, amen.

[38 : 52] If the gentlemen will come forward, who are helping to serve the Lord's Supper, Isaac, I forgot the remote mic, thank you.

As we come to the Lord's Supper, we can hear the Lord's