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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

November 3, 2019

Communion Sunday

Mark 1:12-13

Prayer: *Father, we just again, we just praise you and thank you for the gift of your Son. We just thank you for the body and the blood, Lord, that we are celebrating today. Praise be to you for your precious gift. And Lord, again, as we enter into communion Sunday we pray for a special anointing of your Spirit, that you would open up your word that as we sit and hear and learn from it, that you would again use it to be of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, once again this is the first Sunday of the month, the Sunday that we celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ and his cross. Jesus on the night before he died, celebrated his last Passover supper with the disciples. It's in *Matthew 26*, we read this each time. It says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for*

the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that I day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Well, again, Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked the disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood, and then he asked his disciples to repeat this remembrance on a regular basis. This is what we call the Lord's table. And this is how we celebrate it, we celebrate it once a month by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us at the cross, then by examining ourselves, again asking God's Holy Spirit to point out areas where he is convicting us of sin and then by confessing our sins and then participating in these elements. *John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well, again, this is our second entry into the gospel of Mark. We went through the whole gospel of John. It took us a couple of years, we're now in the gospel of Mark and I think we as saw last time, this is a very different gospel than the gospel of John. And all four gospels present four different aspects of who Jesus was, I mean Matthew presents Jesus as king, Mark presents Jesus as servant, Luke presents Jesus as man and John presents Jesus as God in the flesh. And because Mark presents Jesus as servant, he gives

us precious little details of many of the instances of what took place in Jesus's public ministry. I mean his gospel opens up with John the Baptist baptizing the Lord Jesus which he treats with this bare bones type of reporting. I mean we get just the facts with very little besides. And so we wound up looking at all of the other gospels to kind of fill in the blanks about Jesus because we wanted to focus not so much on an individual gospel but on Jesus himself. And this morning we're going to look at another instance in Mark's gospel that again has the same type of reporting.

As I said, Mark barely mentions the baptism and then he devotes only two verses describing Jesus's temptation by Satan in the desert. Now understand, this is not a knock on Mark's gospel, I mean, again, Jesus is being presented here as a servant and Mark wants to highlight his servanthood. Mark begins and ends his treatment of the temptation by describing Jesus as a servant being driven by the Holy Spirit out into the desert. There's quite a contrast as you look at the different gospels, I mean, Matthew's gospel says: *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.* Luke's gospel says essentially the same thing. But Mark's gospel, the gospel that presents Jesus as servant says this in *Mark 1:12-13: The Spirit immediately drove him.* That's not in the car, that's driving somebody as you would drive a slave, a servant. *Then the Spirit*

*immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. That's pretty much all that Mark has to say. That's it in his description of the temptation of Jesus. But like I said, we want to focus here on Jesus and what he did. What he did there in that desert just begs to be examined. So I can't resist revisiting a study that I did many years ago about what Jesus endured during that temptation. So with apologies to Mark's gospel, I'm going to park for a bit and describe through that study just what Jesus did for us there. And to do that, I want to refer to Russell Moore in his terrific book, I think we have a copy of it downstairs, it's *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ*. This is Russell Moore describing what we're going to be looking at this morning, Jesus's encounter in the desert. He says this:*

In three of the four Gospel accounts in the New Testament, we're told of a strange experience at the beginning of Jesus' public mission in which Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil. He was away from his family and followers, out in a desert place in Judea; literally, he was in the "the wilderness" or "the wild places." He went out there to meet his ancestors' ancient foe -- and ours -- and to undo what had been done. If you will ever see the kingdom of God, it will be because of what happened under

that desert moon, where the kingdoms approached each other, surveyed each other, and, long time coming, attacked each other. Somehow the evil spirit of Eden appeared to Jesus. Poets and artists have speculated for centuries on what this must have looked or felt like. Did Jesus, like Eve before him, see the figure of a snake out there in the desert? Did Satan appear, as the apostle Paul warned us he could, as a glorious "angel of light"? Did he appear as some icons and paintings depict, as a hideous goatlike monster bearing a tantalizing morsel in his hoof? Or did the Devil manifest himself, as he most often does to us, invisibly but with the painfully personal suggestiveness, that disguises itself as one's own thoughts? The Gospels don't tell us. They simply tell us the Devil was there, and he was not silent.

Well, what was the point, what was the point of this encounter? Well, for Jesus this was a test. Actually there was two different reasons for this test. And the first reason is that for Jesus to enter into our world, he had to be a real part of it and that included real temptation. *Hebrews 4:15* says: *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.* Now when we say that Jesus was tempted as we are in every respect, does that mean that, like Adam, Jesus, too, could have fallen? Well, the answer to that is no. James tells us that God

cannot be tempted with evil. And Hebrews is telling us that Jesus has been approached externally by all the very same things that tempt us but there is one very important difference. What we find tempting, Jesus never, never would. You see, we already have this bent towards sin, I mean, we go there naturally. Jesus never, never went there. Jesus was perfectly holy. In fact at the end of his time on earth, Jesus said of his adversary, he said this in *John 14*, he said: *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me."* Just think of that, think of how audacious a claim that is. What he's saying is there was no fallenness in Jesus the enemy could even form a temptation with. You see when we, when we are tempted, James tells us that we've already begun this process of sin that starts with temptation, it goes through to sin and then it ends in death. This is what James says in *James 1*. It says: *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God", for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown, brings forth death.*

Let me just illustrate what it means to be lured and enticed. I know I'm dating myself now but when I was a youngster I used to watch a cartoon *Sylvester the cat*, anybody ever heard of *Sylvester*

the cat? You're dating yourself if you did. It's an ancient cartoon and I remember one cartoon that had Sylvester, he's just kind of walking down a country road, he's minding his own business, and then there's a cut to a woman putting a pie on a windowsill and the pie is freshly baked, and it's got this wonderful aroma coming off it and the aroma comes off the pie and it goes right to Sylvester is and it becomes a hook, it lifts him up off the ground and it pulls him directly to the windowsill. That's what being lured and enticed basically means. Well, that sense of being lured and enticed never, ever got traction with Jesus because he was perfectly holy. There was nothing in him that would have been the least bit attracted to anything that was unholy or imperfect. I mean there's some things that will never lure and entice me. If somebody, instead of a fresh baked pie put a nice platter of freshly cooked liver and onions on a windowsill, it's not going to work. That would not be able to entice me in the slightest because I can't stand the thought of eating liver. So that's not going to tempt me, I mean, liver has no hook that it can use to kind of draw me in. Well for Jesus it was sin that had no hook whatsoever to draw him in, but he was still presented with all the temptations that we are. I mean he was -- quote -- *one who in every respect had been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* He was just never lured and enticed by sin as we are.

And the other reason is that Jesus's perfection, it was not a theoretical one, it was not an untested and untried perfection but an actual one that had gone through the fires of temptation. I mean, we all know that Adam was perfect when he was first created, but we also know that he was also untried, and we know that when it came time for his test to not eat that forbidden fruit, that he failed miserably. And there's a great difference between a theoretical and an untested perfection and perfection that is tested and tried and still true. We have the FDA, we have the Consumer Product Safety Commission and a host of other agencies that are all designed to test products that prove whether or not they are theoretically perfect. More often than not that testing process itself proves that they're not. When a product really does get through that, it's usually wholly different than it was before. Well, Jesus has been tested and approved on a whole other level. He's been tested on a level involving spiritual perfection. I mean, Adam in the garden had a perfection that was untested and untried and when it was tried and it was tested, it was proven to be a complete and utter failure. Jesus' life was one of trial and testing and triumph, and the very beginning of his public ministry was just such a test, and it's important to understand that everything that Jesus did in his life and ministry was oriented towards the ultimate test. And that, of course, was the cross. He was there to glorify his Father by rescuing his children, and part

of that process involved his offering on the cross of the perfect sacrifice of his body. And part of that process was the testing that he willingly underwent to verify that he was in the perfect sacrifice, tried, tested, and approved.

So I want to look at these different tests that Jesus had. I want to consider Jesus' tests compared to the tests that Adam had that Adam failed in. So the very first thing that we look at is location. Okay. Adam's test took place where? Adam's test took place in the middle of paradise. Jesus' test was in a God forsaken wilderness inhabited by demons. In fact Jesus went there specifically to be tested by these demons. And the scripture says in verse 2: *And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.* Well, Adam's test involved food as well. Adam was given access to every type of food and all of it was perfect. Just imagine the greatest food you could ever consume and multiply that hundredfold, pleasure that you wouldn't even imagine a taste could provide is there in everything that Adam gets to participate in, and it still wasn't enough. Adam only wanted the one food that was forbidden. Jesus denied himself food itself for forty days while he's in a place of absolute solitude and loneliness inhabited by demons.

Verse 3 says: *And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are*

the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

So at first look you say, okay, what's so terrible about Jesus it's forty days, he's starving, what's so terrible about turning a stone into some bread? Well, we have to remember what Jesus was there for in the first place. I mean, he had left heaven itself and had come down to earth, taking the form of a bondservant, living his life so that you and I could live it in the exact same way, utterly dependent on his Father. And so for Jesus to use his miraculous power would be for him to step out of that servant role to claim an advantage that we would never, ever have ourselves. I mean each of these temptations you really have to see us as basically the enemy attempting to offer Jesus a shortcut, a way to avoid the cross itself. And this first temptation was a shortcut to get Christ to trust in his own resourcefulness rather than in his Father. And we know that because of the answer that Jesus gave. This is Jesus' answer: *But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* Jesus is not just speaking here. There's an awful lot of hidden stuff that's going on here. He's speaking in a form, in a way code words that he and Satan basically understood but he was quoting from scripture. He's quoting Deuteronomy 8. *Deuteronomy 8* is describing God and here it says: *And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by*

bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Here God is emphasizing that Israel's utter dependence was not in their own resourcefulness but in God's own provision and we understand that God's ultimate provision which is symbolized by the manna was his own flesh offered up for us on the cross. Jesus' response to the devil is connecting the dots right from the bread to the manna to the Christ. Jesus made that connection clear in *John 6:31*. This is a conversation that he has with the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders says: *"Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* Jesus made that even clearer in the scripture that we speak right at the very beginning of each of these messages in *John 6:53*, he said: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."* That's the gist of what Jesus is responding to Satan with and now the devil's not about to be put off by that response alone. He doesn't even miss a beat when he hears Jesus' response. He simply picks up

on what Jesus has said and he implies, okay, Jesus, since you have so much confidence in your Father, surely you can prove that confidence with a flashy display of the Father's protection. This is the next verse, verse 5, he says: *Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"* You get what's going on here? The devil literally is quoting scripture back to Jesus. He's saying God's going to protect you even if you force his hand. I once had a conversation with somebody who was upset with my claim that God is one hundred percent sovereign, that he controls every single molecule in this universe, and this person said, "Well, if you really believe that, why don't you just get in your car and close your eyes and floor it and just trust that God's going to protect you." Okay. I said, "well, how do I know that God in his sovereign good pleasure would not allow that I would die by presumptuously assuming that God is my auto pilot protection system?" I mean, this is basically the situation the devil is trying to put Jesus in.

Listen to how *Baker's New Testament Commentary* describes it. He says this: "He realizes that for him to do what Satan is urging upon him would amount to substituting presumption for faith,

effrontery for submission to God's guidance. It would have meant nothing less than to risk self-destruction. The false trust in the Father, which the devil demanded of Jesus in this second temptation was not any better than the distrust he had proposed in the first. It would have amounted to experimenting on the Father." And Jesus would have none of it. The scripture says Jesus said to him, "*Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'*" And again, like I said, there's a great deal going on here that's taking place kind of behind the scenes. There's a great deal going on here that Jesus and Satan both know because they both know scripture and it tends to go right over our heads. What Jesus is doing here is he's actually bringing the devil not just back to scripture but also back to the cross, and here's how he does it. He quoted to Satan *Deuteronomy 6:16: You shall not put the LORD your God to the test*, but there was a missing last part which says: *as you tested him at Massah*. There at Massah, Israel, too, had demanded a miracle. Israel was camped out there and they found there was no drinking water and their reaction was swift and it was vicious. And you think about, Israel has just come out of Egypt all of the slavery, God's done all this miraculous stuff, and after all the miracles that God did in Egypt, after the miraculously escape, after the manna that God provides them every single day, after this cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the Jews in the desert come to this in *Exodus 17*. It says: *But the people*

thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" They were thirsty, and so they demanded a response from God. This is how God responded. This is Exodus 17:4. It says: So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Okay. There's no water at Massah, they're in the desert, I mean there's no water to be found anywhere. The only thing there is there is this gigantic rock. Well, God tells Moses to strike the rock and he says and water, lifesaving water is going to start gushing out from that rock. And there in the middle of the desert speaking to the Jews, God is pointing them to the cross. You see, the only way for Jews to find life was for that rock to be struck and when that rock was struck, out of it would pour life itself, and we don't have to guess what that means because the scripture tells us. It tells us that the rock was Jesus Christ and that the water was life itself and that the striking of that rock was the

cross. We find that in *1 Corinthians 10* in the New Testament. It says: *For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This is describing them coming out of Egypt. And all ate the same spiritual food -- it's describing them eating the manna -- and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them and the Rock was Christ.* So Jesus responds to Satan by quoting the testing that led to the rock being struck. It takes Satan right back or actually forward to the cross. And the goal in this temptation is to test God by getting Jesus to somehow circumvent the cross, to find a shortcut that would somehow eliminate the need for it. Well first the devil appeals to Jesus to rely on himself by turning stones into bread and now he's appealing to the love of the Father to circumvent any need for suffering. And so he tests Jesus by insisting -- quote -- *"'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"* See, Satan wanted Jesus to act just like Israel did. He wanted Jesus to kind of put God in a position where he was forced to do a miracle. And in both instances Jesus goes right back to the cross insisting first that he is utterly dependent on his Father and his word to become the bread of life for his people. He says: *"'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from*

the mouth of God.'" And secondly, that he would not presume to test God's wills like the Jews did when they demanded that he produce water. Jesus instead points out to Satan that the Father struck him in order to produce that living water. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

And having resisted the first two temptations, Jesus now endures the third and the final one. This is *Matthew 4:8-11*, it says: *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.* Well, this one's the ultimate in shortcuts, I mean, the devil is offering Jesus a way to eliminate the cross altogether. And he's also giving the Messiah a chance to rule all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. Luke's gospel expands on this temptation and he quotes it this way, he says: *And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all*

be yours." We don't know what the devil showed Jesus. He may have showed him Rome in all of its glory, imperial England ruling the oceans and Germany during the Third Reich and probably America as a superpower. Being the liar that he was, he laid claim to all of this power and to all of the kingdoms and said they were his, they belong to me, I can give them to whoever I will, I'll give them to you. That was a lie. See, that was a lie because all of this was strictly temporary. At the end of Matthew's gospel Jesus says: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* See, liar that he was, Satan was still offering Jesus a way to become the ruler of all the kingdoms in space and time without even having to go to the cross. All he would have to do is throw his lot in with the devil and it would all be his. Of course the ones who would never be able to share in that glory and joy would be the rest of his fallen creation. And once again Jesus would have none of it. *Romans 5:8* says this, it says: *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* And I know we say that verse all the time, it just kind of rolls off the tongue. But understand, it was the love of God for us that made him resist Satan's offer. *Hebrews 12* says: *Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.* It was Tim Keller who raised the question: What was that joy that was set before Christ? Well, we can know a whole bunch of things that it

wasn't 'cause we know Jesus already had his joy of the fellowship with the Father. He had that before him. He had to give that up in order to save us. We know that he already had the joy of fellowship with the Holy Spirit which was, again, shattered at the cross. We knew that he already had the joy of the glory that he had with the Father before the world was even created. All of that he had to give up. And so we ask the question what was the joy that was set before Christ that would make him want to do this? You were that joy. I was that joy. We were that joy. We were the joy that was set before Christ that enabled him to endure the cross while despising its shame. The joy was in glorifying his Father by rescuing his sheep. For that joy, Jesus found himself alone in this God forsaken wilderness surrounded by demons testing his every motive and action just so he could be proven perfect enough to be slaughtered on our behalf. The devil was looking for, he was probing for some kind of weakness in his perfection, but praise God there was none.

As the elders begin to pass out the bread, I want us to take a few moments and just dwell on the enormity, the enormity of the sacrifice of Christ for us. As the elders are passing it out, let me continue to give you God's warning as found in *1 Corinthians 11*. It says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an*

unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Once again I repeat the warning about communion being such serious business and to say that to enter into communion in an unworthy manner as to literally court disaster. And to beg with you, if you are absolutely not confident that you are a child of the King, if you have not by faith trusted Christ as your Savior, do not participate, just pass the elements on. And again on the other hand, I say this as well, you can make the mistake of thinking, okay, I have to be flawless in order to participate in this, and that unless you're spotlessly perfect you're not worthy to receive communion, and that, too, the devil loves that because that's a mistake on the other side. See, being a child of the King doesn't mean that you are spotless and flawless and that you have no sin and that you never fall. Being a child of the King means that you've been given the gift of salvation, you've been given the righteousness that belonged to Christ, it's now yours. It means that salvation is a gift and no one is capable of earning that gift by their -- quote -- "good behavior." And again I quote Dane Ortlund as I do each month because it so perfectly sums up what we're talking about and he says: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't

qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." Again it also means that when we fail, we are aware of the fact that we've sinned. Why? Because God's Spirit now lives inside of us. It's the Holy Spirit who convicts us, and so we grieve as children, we know that we have a Father who longs to forgive us and cleanse us, but it grieves us that we've sinned against him. God says in *1 John: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So again, it just means that being a child of the King doesn't mean that you're spotless. It means that when you sin you understand that you have an advocate with the Father, someone speaking on your behalf. Again *1 John 2:1: My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But -- big but -- if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And that's the reason why, what that tells us is that we have Jesus's righteousness, it's an alien righteousness, it's not ours, it's his, but it now belongs to us and so now because we have that righteousness, we are free to eat at his table. And so I plead with you, if you love the Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus purchased for you. He lived the life that we were supposed to live and he died the death we all deserved to die so that we could be made worthy of this moment, so we, too, could receive a gift that we will not begin to understand this side of heaven. Take a moment to just thank God for what he's

given you.

1 Corinthians 11 says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." So take, and eat.

We are considering the love and the perfection of Jesus tested. First tested in its self-sufficient. *"If you are the son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread."* Secondly, tested in its unwillingness to put God to the test: *"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"* And third, tested in its willingness to forsake all, including the shortcuts that would have precluded the cross: *And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."* What we're reading about here is really and what Russell Moore alluded to at the very beginning is this is war. This is all out war that's taking place between two kingdoms and it's going back and forth as we're reading and watching. It's a battle taking place and it's a battle that Jesus is triumphing in. Verse 10 says: *Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall*

worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve'".

As the elders come forward to distribute the cup, I want to note how it was that Jesus fought the devil. You see, three times the devil approached him with a temptation, and three times Jesus responded with a statement, three words, three little words: *"It is written."* Matthew 4:4 says: *But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" In verse 7 it says: "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" In verse 10, it says: Then Jesus said, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" See, Jesus didn't fight the devil with wisdom or his strength or his power, although for him any of those would have been sufficient. Instead he fought him the way he wants us to fight him. He fought him with the very same weapon that we have. He fought him with the word of God. Ephesians 6 says: *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 1 Thessalonians says: And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. As**

you approach the cup, just think about the privilege that we have received in having the word of God. I used to say it all the time, for a dollar you can get it at the dollar store right down the street. There are people who will live and die to be able to get this word. We have it everywhere. It is precious. Jesus saw it as precious.

1 Corinthians 11:25 says: In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So take, and drink.

Well, this is the hand, heart and feet -- head, heart, hand and feet part. This is the part where we try to attach some practical understanding of what it means to remember Jesus Christ. And I want to go back to what Russell Moore says, he makes some amazing points in his book. He says this:

Jesus in his taking on of our nature offering himself up in death as a sacrifice for our sins and turning back the curse of death in his resurrection has ended the claim these demonic powers have on the universe. These powers don't want to give up their dark reign so they are lashing back and with fury. This means war. The sheer animal force of temptation ought to remind us of something, the

universe is demon haunted. It also ought to remind us that there's only one among us who has ever wrestled with demons and prevailed. The temptations of Jesus in the desert show us what kind of strategies the powers will use on us. You will be tempted exactly as Jesus was because Jesus was being tempted exactly as we are. You will be tempted with consumption, security and status. You will be tempted to provide for yourself, to protect yourself, and to exalt yourself.

And we have a high priest who has been tempted in all ways yet without sin. He is our champion and he is also our example. I mean, consumption says, turn these stones into bread; security says, leap from the temple mount; and status says, worship me and all of it belongs to you. These are the big three of temptation. And we look to how that translates to our life and realize that consumption is what drives our economy, security is what drives our place in this economy, and status is what drives us, it's this need for respect, it's this need for acceptance. And that's what makes us so vulnerable to the enemy's temptation. And so we look and we see Jesus defeating all of them, and he uses as his primary weapon the word of God. It's our weapon as well. And the enemy has pulled out all the stops here to get us to doubt its power, to keep us unaware of his schemes.

Again Russell Moore says this about why we're focused in, why the enemy focuses in on us. He says this, he says: *We are targeted because we resemble Jesus, our firstborn brother. We all, whether believers or not, bear some resemblance to Jesus because we share with him a human nature in the image of God. As we come to find peace with God through Jesus though, we begin the journey of being conformed more and more into the image of Christ. The demons shriek in the increasing glory of that light. And they'll seek even more frenetically to put it out of their sight.*

You get what he's saying? What he's saying is we are all in the process of being transformed into the likeness of Christ. He quotes *Romans 8:29: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* And what he's saying, the closer we resemble him, the more the demonic host will begin to shriek, the more we need to rely on God's word as Jesus did. Jesus by decree, by instruction and by example said, *"It is written."* His word is our weapon, it is our shield, and it is our victory. Let's pray.

Father, we just again, we can't thank you enough for the gift of your Son. We can't thank you enough for the gift of your word. We marvel, Lord, at seeing the king of the universe out in this God

forsaken desert doing battle with the demonic host and the weapon he uses is the very same weapon he's given to us, it's the word of God. Lord, what a precious thing we have, what an incredibly powerful thing we have. Lord, give us the ability to trust in that weapon, to use that weapon to grow in our knowledge of that weapon, to grow in our love for you and for your willingness to use it as weapon. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.