

“The Temptation of Jesus – Part 2”
Mark 1:12-13
(Preached at Trinity, May 27, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we began looking at the temptation of Jesus.
2. After the baptism of Jesus **Verse 12** also began suddenly:
Mark 1:12 – “And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”
 - A. The text tells us the Holy Spirit “drove” Him. ἐκβάλλω – a strong word meaning to “cast out.” It is the word used in the Septuagint to describe Adam being driven out of the garden.
 - B. It was not an arbitrary action. The wilderness temptation was by Divine design. The same Spirit that descended upon Him was the same Spirit who was driving Him into the wilderness and the same Spirit who would cause Him to triumph over the temptation.
3. Since the entire event in Mark’s Gospel is described in these two verses it is again necessary to look at a parallel passage – in this case **Matthew 4:1-11**
As we saw last time Satan has purposed to destroy God’s holy people and His work of redemption.
 - A. It started early with the death of Able then the corruption of the seed of righteous Seth.
But God continued to sustain His holy seed.
 - B. Satan eagerly awaited the birth of the promised one and then sought to destroy Him. Having failed in this he turned his rage upon the church.
God has assured the victory of His church.
Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
4. Last time I focused primarily upon our adversary the devil. He is a liar, a deceiver, a murderer – a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.
Tonight I want to focus on the wilderness temptation of Jesus in particular.
 - I. Jesus was driven into the wilderness
 - A. Jesus went into the wilderness by design
 1. First, He went for communion with His Father
 - a. Jesus in His humanity knew the importance of prayer
 - b. This was the beginning of His earthly ministry. It was important that it begin with prayer
 - c. He spent 40 days in prayer and fasting

2. Second, He was led into the wilderness to demonstrate His superiority over Satan.

Matthew 12:29 – “Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”

- a. Satan purposed to destroy God's holy Christ. Jesus was the ultimate image of God's holiness, the perfect God-man. Satan knew that if he could bring Christ to follow him God would be forever defeated.
- b. What Satan didn't know was he was already in the process of being bound by One infinitely more powerful than he.
- c. By the time Jesus went to the cross Satan would be forever defeated.

Genesis 3:15 – “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

3. Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted

B. We find in **Matthew 4:3** the first temptation – perform a personal miracle
“If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread”

1. It was an effort to cause the “Last Adam” to sin as the first
2. It was an effort to cause Jesus to use His power to perform miracles to satisfy His own fleshly needs.
3. Our Lord's response – a quote from **Deut. 8:3**

Matthew 4:4 – “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

C. The second temptation – **Verses 5-6** – put God to the test.

Matthew 4:5-6 – “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

1. Again Satan was trying to tempt Jesus into distrusting God. Jesus was the Messiah; He was the Savior. But how was He to be sure? Would this not this strengthen His confidence – the spectacle of God sending forth angels to rescue His Son?
2. In reality, it would be nothing more than a satisfying of self rather than trusting in God.
3. The nature of faith is trusting even in the absence of proof
Satan lies in tempting us to insist on evidence
4. Our Lord's response – a quote from **Deut 6:16**
Matthew 4:7 – “Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”
5. It would have been sinful for Jesus to tempt God to prove Himself
The word for “tempt” here is ἐκπειράζω – to test or put to proof

- D. The third temptation – **Verses 8-9** – bow to Satan and gain the world
Matthew 4:8-9 – “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”
1. This is the essence of all temptation.
Satan tells us, follow me, forsake God, and your every desire will be met – and the whole world has believed his lie.
 2. The question that has troubled many – “Is Satan really the possessor of all things? Were these things his to give?”
In Luke’s Gospel Satan’s words are enhanced
Luke 4:6 – “And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.”
 - a. Satan has been given jurisdiction over elements of this world
 - b. Paul referred to him as the god of this world
2 Corinthians 4:3 – “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”
 - c. Satan has influence over this world’s opinions, aims, goals, values. He influences this world’s ethics, education, politics, philosophy, sociology and economics.
 - d. Satan rules by permission only, yet this world is his kingdom
 3. The fact is Jesus was stripping Satan of his dominion
Jesus demonstrated this clearly in casting out demons robbing Satan of his power
 4. The response to this third temptation
Matthew 4:10 – “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”
- E. There is a common element that our Lord used in His great spiritual warfare – He met Satan with God’s Word spoken in faith.
1. **Eph 6** makes it clear that the Word of God is our greatest weapon against Satan
Ephesians 6:11 – “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
 2. We find in **Verse 11** Satan’s reaction to truth
Matthew 4:11 – “Then the devil leaveth him”
 3. Satan cannot resist the authority of God’s Word
- II. Could Jesus have sinned? Was He peccable or impeccable – Was Jesus exempt from the possibility of sinning?

- A. As human beings we are plagued by a sinful heart
1. Temptation plagues our sinful hearts
We are tempted to steal because we are thieves – whether we steal or not
We are tempted to lust because we are adulterers – whether we actually commit adultery or not.
We are tempted to kill because we are murderers
We are tempted to covet because we are idolaters
 2. We are easily given over to sin
- B. We know that Jesus was in every way human
1. He was made under the Law – that is He was given the same standard as every other human being
 2. He was tempted in every way human beings are tempted
Hebrews 4:15 – “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.”
 3. We also know that He never sinned - Jesus remained sinless
2 Corinthians 5:21 – “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
1 Peter 2:22 – “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”
- C. Jesus temptation was real but His response to it was different
We are sinful by nature, our inward lusts draw us to sin.
Jesus did not have a sinful nature – no inward lust to sin
1. Satan tempted Jesus in the same way he tempts us – there was the inner whispering urging Him to sin
 2. When we are tempted, however, there is also an inner desire to heed the devil’s prompting – we have a natural lust
James 1:14 – “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”
 3. With Jesus the temptation was an outward stimulus but there was no inner evil or lust as an incentive to co-operate with the voice of temptation
 4. William Hendriksen
“The sense of need, the consciousness of being urged by Satan to satisfy this need, and the knowledge of having to resist the tempter was real even for Jesus.”
 5. Louis Berkhof – “We ascribe to Christ not only natural, but also moral integrity or moral perfection, that is sinlessness. This means not merely that Christ could avoid sinning, and did actually avoid it, but also that it was impossible for Him to sin because of the essential bond between the human and the divine natures.”
 6. Some hold that if it were impossible for Jesus to sin then His temptations could not have been genuine. The problem with this reasoning lies in trying to compare Jesus to our condition which is impossible. Jesus did not possess our sin nature. His temptations only came from without, not from within.
- C. That Jesus remained sinless was essential for Him to be our spotless Substitute – our Redeemer.

1. As we consider His sinless perfection and His almighty Deity we must never forget that He was thoroughly human. His impeccability does not imply that He was hard or without feeling.
The New Testament teaches us that He had affection, sympathy, anger, compassion, gratitude.
He also felt all of our weaknesses – weariness, hunger, thirst, pain.
2. But He did not possess any of the corruptions of original sin. This did not make Him less human. It made Him the perfect human.

III. Then Angels came and ministered to Him

A. Angels are God's messengers

ἄγγελος – a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God

1. They are sent forth to minister to the elect
Hebrews 1:14 – “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”
2. The ministry of the angels are a source of consolation for the saints of God.
3. They are sent to our aid or even encamp around us with great power day and night defending us from unseen enemies.

B. They came to the aid of Jesus at the time of His weakness

1. Notice, however, during His greatest hour of need, Jesus denied their care
Matthew 26:53 – “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”
2. Jesus went to the cross alone

Conclusion:

1. Thus we come to the end of this period of our Lord's preparation. He was tempted by Satan, yet He resisted the temptation.
2. Satan can be resisted by appealing to Scripture. Jesus did it three times.
We are commanded to resist him
James 4:6-8 – “. . . God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. ⁷
Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸
Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”
3. Jesus demonstrated with His life that He was our perfect Representative. He never succumbed to temptation. As the Representative of His people Jesus rendered perfect obedience which Adam as mankind's representative failed to render.
Where Adam failed when tempted, Jesus was victorious to the end.
4. Satan has been defeated. We can resist his temptations. We must not underestimate his power and deceit but the power of Christ is infinitely greater.
1 John 4:4 – “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

“For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal. The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, One little word shall fell him.”