

# Tempted and Tried

**Scripture:** Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

## **Introduction:**

I grew up in the Inola Church of Christ. There was an older man there name Jack Scarbrough. Jack was a pipe line welder and most of the time was away from home putting pipe lines together across the country.

One Sunday night we were almost at the end of service when someone slipped a note to the preacher and I remember seeing despair fill his eyes. He told us that Jack had been in an accident and was buried alive for a while. He explained that they had rescued him but he was in bad shape.

Well Jack made it but with a broken back and other horrible problems he had to quite work. He took up rebuilding old cars in his garage and this is where him and I became buddies. I started going over to sit and talk with him all the time. We talked cars and guy stuff.

After a while I got tired because the conversation always ended in Jack complaining about his situation. I tolerated it for the most part and tried my best to encourage him and even anticipate when the complaining would start so I could plot my escape.

Brother Jack died a few years ago and boy do I miss him. He was really good to me and now in my older years I can better understand his frustration. He wasn't able to provide for his family any more and he hurt all the time.

Have you have heard the expression “You can only really know a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes?”

## **Transitional Statement:**

Church, Jesus has walked a mile in our shoes. He was faced with all the temptations that the world has to offer and He remained sinless. He, as our high-priest, knows our struggles and uses that personal experience to mediate between God and us.

## **Lesson:**

### **I. The Holy Spirit directed Jesus to the desert.**

Matthew 4:1-3a

*“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

#### A. The Spirit led Jesus

1. Mark 1:12 ekballo (impelled) doesn't have to carry force

2. Jesus did not go out into the wilderness against His will
  - a. But, Jesus went willingly at the Spirits direction
  - b. Because, Jesus and the Father are one John 10:30
    - Operating on the same page and toward the same purpose.
3. He was not forced

#### B. Into the wilderness

1. Away from people
  - Off and alone with no-one watching
2. Israel had spent much time in the wilderness
3. The place of greatest temptation

#### C. Different ideas on the Purpose of Jesus being tempted

1. Jesus must conquer Satan to give us reason to trust Him.
2. To show us examples of how to overcome temptations
3. To teach us that God does give a way of escape 1 Cor. 10:13
- \* The closet bible text that gives direct indication is Heb 4:15 that says in Jesus we have a sympathetic high priest because He was tempted in every way and did not sin...Pointing to Jesus' perfection.

#### D. And the word "tempted"

1. Basically in the Greek means to Test or to Prove
2. So the perfection of Christ comes under consideration here in this text.

*"2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him,..."*

#### A. Jesus was fasting

1. He didn't go sight seeing
2. In the place of greatest temptation Jesus focused on God and His will
3. He willingly deprived himself of food in order to focus on His trust to God.

#### B. Jesus weakened by hunger

1. Forty day fast is possible I have personally witnesses it.
2. And this is when Satan attaches him
  - a. He is a schemer waiting for the right moment
  - b. Like a lion seeking some weak prey to pounce on

#### C. Here, Satan is called "tempter" because of his mission

1. He is out to destroy God's redemptive plan
2. He want Jesus to cave in and look to him for help
3. He wants Jesus to yield to his authority
4. Entice set a snare or a trap

## II. Temptation # 1 If you are God's Son, You can use your own will

Matthew 4:3b-4

*"...If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

- A. Satan comes face to face with Jesus
  - 1. Here the full force of evil meets the divine in the flesh.
  - 2. This is the greatest showdown that has ever taken place.
  - 3. And through God's word we can be a fly on that wall so to speak.
  
- B. First rattle out of the box Satan plants an explosive charge at the feet of Jesus
  - 1. He says *"If you are the Son of God."*
    - a. Satan begins with calling Jesus' identity into question.
      - Jesus, was just been baptized and declared God's Son
      - And nobody likes to be openly mocked or described to be something that they are not.
    - b. Maybe Satan thinks that Jesus will be more interested in defending Himself than relying on God.
    - c. Or maybe Satan could get between Jesus' humanity and His heavenly nature and plant a seed of doubt.
    - d. Church this is Satan's favorite tool against us as well. He wants to somehow get us second guessing about who we are and create a seed of doubt in our hearts.
  
- C. Now Satan knew Jesus had been fasting for forty days and was extremely hungry and as is his M.O. Satan struck at what he thought was Jesus' weakest point...the need for food.
  
- D. He basically tells Jesus "If you are God's Son" feed yourself
  - 1. Change these stones into bread.
  - 2. i.e. you've got the power to take care of yourself.
  - 3. Maybe employ a little situational ethics here....
    - That is you could easily justify feeding yourself or you will die, the situation demands the action !
  - 4. The real catch perhaps is the idea that Jesus had his own will and could act independently of God.
  - 5. Church this kills so many Christians today, not denying ourselves and seeking our own will independently of God.
  
- E. Also by implication maybe Satan is saying:
  - 1. Why doesn't your Father feed you?
  - 2. Maybe He doesn't love you
  
- F. The fact is, Satan knew exactly who Jesus was
  - 1. But Satan was setting a trap, so that Jesus will feel compelled somehow to prove who He was and in doing so would resort to using His own strength independent of God and thus make the first mistake the devil himself had made.

## G. Jesus' Answer:

1. *4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"*
2. He quotes this from Moses' fair-well address to Israel in Duet 8:3. In which he reminded the people that they were chosen by God and redeemed out of the slavery of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai giving them the Law of God and establishing a people unto Himself.  
  
Then He took them to the edge of the promise land and told to go and enter it, but you refused, acting independently of God and bringing His wrath on you. There in the desert God taught Israel that he would supply their daily needs with bread from heaven (just as Jesus reminded His disciples in the first century) and that they were to follow God's direction in everything.
3. So Jesus tells Satan, No !, the essence of a mans life is not found in the physical but life proceeds from God's direction through His word in our lives.
4. Church, we must accept nothing less than God's will in our lives and count His provisions as adequate.

1 John 2:16-17 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

## III. Temptation # 2 Is God really with you?

Matthew 4:5-7

*5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 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, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"*

- A. Satan says "so you intend to live by God's Word?"
- B. So, he takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple
  1. Which is some 500' above the Kidron desert floor below
  2. Have you ever went to the mountains and stood at one of those scenic lookouts with nothing between you and death except some government funded handrail.

-It is scary to say the least and both life and death are before you in full view, one wrong step and its over.

C. It's in a situation like this that Satan says:

1. Great what about Psalms 91:11-12

*“For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. 12 They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.”*

2. It is very scary to realize that Satan can and does try to use God's Word against us.

#### D. Jesus' Answer

1. 7 *“Jesus said to him, “ On the other hand,...”*

a. Jesus says you have to stay in Context of all of God's word, not pick and choose what you want to believe.

b. Here, Jesus applies the principle of Psalms 119:160

*160 The sum of Your word is truth,  
And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.*

\*The whole of God's word represents truth.

2. Jesus tells Satan, don't test God, and He goes back and quotes Deuteronomy 6:16

*“It is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.”*

a. During Israel's wilderness wanderings they had camped at a place called Rephidim, but there was no water so the people grumbled and complained and said *“Is the Lord among us or not?”* So Moses renamed the place Massah which means testing. Exodus 17:7

b. Not only is His word sufficient but He is always with us.

3. Church God is always faithful to His Word and He will never leave us or forsake us.

a. Hebrews 13:5b **“I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”**

b. And it is never our place to put Him to the test, but to trust Him

#### IV. Temptation # 3 **Take Worship away from God**

Matthew 4:8-10

8 *“Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;*

- A. Satan took Jesus to an exceedingly high place.
1. From this height Jesus could see the whole package of creation and all the accomplishments of mankind.  
-You know, things tend to look quite impressive from lofty heights.
  2. And there on the top of this mountain, disconnected with the very people that He had come to save, Satan dangled a luscious opportunity in front of Him of self glorification.
  3. Church we must be careful of high places, they can go to our heads.
- B. Here Satan says " *All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me*"
1. The assumption is that they are his to give.  
-Here Satan claims ownership.
  2. He assumes since so many knees have bowed to him that the world belongs to him, that he is the prince of the world by means of ownership instead of by allegiance.
- C. The offer is to acknowledge Satan's power and skip the cruel death that lay before Him on the cross of Calvary for all the pleasures of His heart & eyes.
1. This "*if you fall down and worship me*" comes with fine print  
\*\*"*continued service to Satan will be required.*"

**G. Jesus' Answer**

1. " *10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan!*
2. "Go Satan"...Get away from me !
  - a. James 4:7 says Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.
  - b. What a great example for us today.
3. Then Jesus tells Satan *For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'*" quoting Duet 6:13
  - a. Here Moses is addressing the fact that the Israelites were forever worshipping everything under the sun, worshipping the created instead of the creator.
  - b. It almost seems as though they had a fascination with spiritual prostitution.
  - c. So Moses reminds them not to take one step away from God.
4. So what Jesus does here is render Satan completely powerless by pledging His allegiance to God.
5. Church, in Duet 4:24 God tells us that He is a Jealous God, He has created us and yearns for our attention and love.....but in the same passage / in the very same breath, He also says that He is a consuming fire,

- i.e. if you want to sell out to Satan a fiery judgment awaits.

## V. When the time was right God took care of Jesus' physical needs.

Matthew 4:11

*11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him."*

- A. When you solidly chose to worship God and Him only, there is no more work for the devil to do.
- B. After Jesus had made His choices God sent His angels to take care of Jesus.
- C. And isn't it true that if we chose God, He will use all the host of heaven to help us also.

-Hebrews 1:14 "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"

-2 Kings 6:16-17

*"So he answered, " Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, " O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."*

## VI. So at this point is was pretty much wrapped up and done right?

- A. **NO.....It wasn't over !**
- B. Luke 4:13 "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time."
- C. Satan would try to make Jesus stumble many more times before His death.

-One victory never guarantees freedom from further temptation.

### Conclusion:

#### Is Satan, lately, been working on you with some temptation in your life?

1. Do you ever get scared about how things are going to work out in your life? Have you been tempted to jump in and man handle things yourself instead of faithfully looking for God's will?
2. Does it ever seem that your all alone and do you wonder where God is?
3. Have you been putting anything else on the throne of your heart?
4. The only sure way of resisting temptation is with a "It is written"  
-With a thus saith the Lord
5. God's promise

1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."