

Journeying to the Cross: Jesus and Temptation

Luke 4:1-13 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 21 February 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What has been your experience with fasting? How do you respond when you are very hungry?

Worship: [Colossians 2:13-15](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation to you?*)

Sermon Summary for [Luke 4:1-13](#) (*Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

Lent is a time set apart to look at Christ's commitment to be crucified for us. It's a call for us to crucify sin and selfishness in ourselves, giving our lives away as He did. We do this so that resurrection may come to others. Its forty days mirrors the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness, tempted by Satan. Temptation has been part of the human story since the beginning. So it's no surprise that Jesus confronts temptation near the beginning of His, doing what Adam and Eve couldn't – facing and conquering it, as He journeys toward the cross. Here's how:

Who tempts Jesus? // The devil does, trying to keep Jesus from His path to the cross. This account is clear: the devil is very real, not some cartoonish figure meant to scare us into good actions. This was a key battle between him and Jesus; Christ's victory is accomplished by the Spirit of God leading Him and filling Him, countering the devil with the goodness, wisdom, and trustworthiness of God. So often when we fall to temptation, it's because we don't believe that God knows best or gives us His best – that our Father's love is insufficient. We fail to see the fullness of joy that comes from submitting to Him. For "the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh 8:10). When we are rejoicing in and celebrating God's goodness, we are far less susceptible to the lies about God that the evil one hurls at us.

What temptations did Jesus face? // (1) A temptation toward convenience and comfort, easing pain and meeting material need. But Christ did not come for self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction. He doesn't use His position as the Son of God to supply His own (even legitimate) needs. (2) The temptation to compromise, to cheat on the path defined by God. The devil is offering the ultimate shortcut, but Jesus knows that worship is exclusive to God alone ([Deut 6:13](#)). (3) The temptation to expediency, to gain quick glory. But Jesus recalls that we "shall not put God to the test" (Deut 6:15). Instead, we're called to humble trust. Because these challenges are laced with the underlying temptation to doubt God – His wisdom, timing, provision, even the path of the cross. But we can take comfort: Jesus never succumbed to temptation, meaning He knows more about it than we do, not less ([Heb 2:18, 4:15](#)).

What does His victory over temptation mean for us? // Jesus is our champion over temptation. This story marks His first steps toward the cross – the decisive battle where evil is defeated ([Col 2:15](#)). This victory gives us assurance of our liberty from Satan, even in the midst of our messy, broken lives. And it wins our freedom to enjoy and serve in the Kingdom of God. Christianity is never a spectator sport; we are called to participate – to share in the victory celebration as well as the battles to come. We can fight through temptation, but we must learn how.

Standing firm in temptation (or fleeing from it because we know we cannot handle it) gives God the opportunity to show us His love. The real love and fullness comes as we trust Him in temptation's hour. Still we must remember: We will fail and fall to it – even the best of us, over and over again. And when we blow it, we face another level of temptation: to doubt that God could love us in our failure and disloyalty. And this is the great temptation; this is where the enemy will be at his best. But, Jesus is at His best here, too. He reaches down to us from the cross with outstretched arms of steadfast love, to forgive us, to bless us, and to enable us to walk with Him forever.

Discussion Questions *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)*

Jesus Faces Temptation and is Victorious

- Why do you think the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert? Why did Jesus pray and fast for those 40 days?
- Name and describe the ways Satan tried to get Jesus off course.
 - Which of these temptations do you think Satan uses most often in today's world?
 - Do you see temptation as a battle? If so, are you conscious of how you fight against it?
- What was Jesus' weapon against the temptations of His enemy? Why is this important for us to know?
- Think about an area of your life where you are regularly tempted. How might the Spirit be leading you to apply Jesus' example in fighting temptation?

Jesus is our Champion and Captain

- What does it mean to you that Jesus remained fully obedient and faithful in the wilderness temptations?
- Read [Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15](#). Discuss what this means for us in our fight against temptation.
- What lies do we usually fall for in our fight against sin and the temptation to disbelieve God?
- With Jesus as our perfect example, what can and will you do today to resist Satan's schemes against you?
- How does Jesus' victory in the wilderness – His first steps toward the cross – win our freedom and joy?
 - How do you enjoy and celebrate this victory Jesus has secured for us?

Prayer

During this time of Lent, as you pay particular attention to Jesus' journey to the cross, spend time thanking Him for doing what we could never do. Praise Him and rejoice in His victory on the cross.

For the weekly Prayer Guide to use personally, with your group, or family click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generous Grace - Mercy

Acts of Compassion.

“The Lenten season is a particularly appropriate time to ask God to fill you with compassion for the poor and oppressed and to put this into practice in concrete ways. This can take many practical forms. For example, there are Christians who give up one meal a day as a Lenten discipline, and then give the money they've saved by doing so to the poor. Many churches—including ours—have an Easter offering for ministries of mercy, so money saved during Lent could be given at that time.

“There are many ways in which families can practice compassion during Lent. In your neighborhood, there may be a poor family you could help (with or without drawing attention to yourselves). Or maybe you know an older person who lives alone who could use some help around the house—or would simply like having a friend. Some families save their loose change or forego some simple expenditures, then give the money to the poor. Lent can be an excellent opportunity to teach our children the value of compassion.”

*The two paragraphs above are from the article, *On Keeping a Holy Lent* by Craig R. Higgins. You can read the entire article at <https://pacificcrossroads.org/lent/>