

## Sermon Outline

### CHRIST JESUS, THE OBEDIENT SON: A MESSAGE ON THE TEMPTATION OF THE LORD (LUKE 4:1-13)

#### I. Jesus, the Torah-Keeping Jew

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man”  
(Lk 2:52)

(*Torah* is the Jewish word for the Law of God.)

#### II. The Holy Spirit Leads Jesus into the Wilderness (Luke 4:1-2)

- A. At his baptism in Luke 4, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus (Lk 3:22), marking him as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel and successor to the throne of David.
- B. The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness.
- C. Why would the Holy Spirit do that?  
—Because the Messiah must suffer for the sins of his people—and through that, destroy evil.
- D. What sort of hardship and pain is Jesus going to experience at this time?
  - 1. “...being tempted...”
  - 2. “...ate nothing...”
  - 3. “...he was hungry.”

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What significant event had Jesus undergone when Luke 4 opens? (2) Why does the Holy Spirit lead Jesus to suffer in the wilderness? (3) What sort of hardship does Jesus now experience in the wilderness?

#### III. The First Temptation: Stones to Bread (Luke 4:3-4)

- A. The devil comes to Jesus, who is now hungry, and begins the first of his three tests.
- B. The purpose of each test is *to get Jesus to disobey God, disqualifying him from being the Messiah.*
- C. The first test: “...‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’”
  - 1. The devil knows that...
    - a. Jesus is hungry.
    - b. Jesus, as Messiah, has power over nature.
  - 2. But Jesus was hungry out of obedience to God.
  - 3. By asking Jesus to turn stones into bread, the devil was asking Jesus to disobey God.
- D. Notice that the devil also starts with, “If you are the Son of God...”

1. He is asking Jesus to prove that he is indeed the Messiah.
  2. While the devil's ultimate goal is to get Jesus to sin against God, the way he goes about doing that is indirect.
    - He asks Jesus to prove himself in a way that disobeys God.
- E. How does Jesus respond?
1. “And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”
  2. “It is written” refers to the text of Scripture.
  3. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3:
    - a. In the original context of that passage, Moses reminds Israel of God's provision in the wilderness.
    - b. While God allowed Israel to go hungry, he also satisfied their hunger with manna.
    - c. God allowed Israel to suffer hunger to teach them not to be overly dependent on food or any earthly kind of sustenance.
      - The chief goal of God's people is not to have their bellies filled, but to obey God.
  4. By citing Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus is being...
    - a. a faithful heir of Israel's traditions.
    - b. a true Israelite.
    - c. God's kind of human being.
  5. Since it is God's will for Jesus to suffer hunger for now, it would be sin for Jesus to ease his hunger with food at this time.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the devil's main goal in his temptations? (2) Why does the devil ask Jesus to turn stones into bread? (3) Why does the devil begin his temptation with, “If you are the Son of God”? (4) How does Jesus repel the devil? What Bible passage does he use?

#### **IV. The Second Temptation: All the Kingdoms of the World (Luke 4:5-8)**

- A. The devil is not about to give up easily.
  1. He takes Jesus up into the sky.
  2. He presents all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus.
- B. The devil offers Jesus “all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.”
- C. Does the devil have the right to give the kingdoms to whomever he wishes?
  1. God's Word gives us two facts.
    - a. The Lord God is the supreme King of all the nations.
      - Psalm 22:28: “For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.”
    - b. But the devil is also “the ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4).
  2. How do we reconcile these two facts?
    - a. Although God is the highest authority, he generously shares his rule with his creatures.

- b. At first, Adam and Eve were God’s appointed rulers of the earth.
  - c. When they listened to the devil and rejected God’s rule, they came under the devil’s power.
  - d. At that point, the worldly authority that belonged to humankind was handed over to the devil.
  - e. The devil is not God, but he is now worshiped as a god by mankind.
  - f. Through the power that humans grant to him, the devil now holds the nations under his rule (Eph 2:2).
3. In one sense, the devil has told Jesus the truth—authority has been handed over to him, and he can share that power with whomever he wishes.
4. But the devil does not give Jesus all the truth.  
—He does not mention that his authority will come to an end.
- D. This is the catch: “If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours” (v 7).
- E. But the devil’s lie cannot work on someone who has spent his whole life in the practice of righteousness.
- 1. Jesus is a true Israelite of God.
    - a. He had been dedicated to the Lord from infancy.
    - b. He had been a disciple of Scripture from young.
    - c. He had always been devoted to YHWH, the true King of the universe.
  - 2. Jesus’ most basic identity is the Servant of the Lord (Is 42:1).  
—His royal authority will always be in the service of God, not to himself.
- F. Jesus, Servant of YHWH, responds: “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve’” (v 8).
- 1. Jesus battles the devil as a true-blooded, God-centered, Torah-observing Israelite.
  - 2. Jesus cites a version of Deuteronomy 6:13.
- G. We may not be wrong to detect a certain offensiveness on the part of Jesus as well.
- 1. If all creatures must worship the Lord alone, then wouldn’t the devil be included in that statement?
  - 2. Jesus the Torah-observing Jew puts the devil back in his place.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What offer does the devil make to Jesus? What condition did the devil give? (2) Was the devil lying when he said he could give the kingdoms to Jesus? (3) How do we reconcile the two facts—God is supreme Lord and the devil is also “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4)? (3) How does Jesus respond to the devil? (4) Why did Jesus not fall for the devil’s lie? (5) “Jesus battles the devil as a Torah-observing Jew, a true-blooded, God-centered Israelite.” Discuss.

## V. The Third Temptation: “Throw Yourself Down” (Luke 4:9-12)

- A. The devil has one more test. And he wants to go as far as he can with this one.
- B. If Jesus wants to stick to God’s Word, then the devil will get to Jesus *through* God’s Word.
- C. He transports Jesus into the very heart of Israel’s urban and religious life—the temple in Jerusalem.
- D. This time, the devil also quotes Scripture, Psalm 91:11-12.
  - 1. In this Psalm, God promises that those who trust in him will be rescued.
    - a. God will watch over them with his angels (91:11).
    - b. God will even prevent them from falling and hurting themselves against stones (91:12).
  - 2. But the devil uses this Psalm in an evil way.
    - a. The devil takes the Psalm out of context.—Psalm 91 was meant to comfort those who have trusted in God, not encourage those who doubt God.
    - b. The devil sins in two ways:
      - i. He mishandles God’s Word, violating the Third Commandment (Ex 20:7)
      - ii. He tries to get Jesus to commit suicide, violating the Sixth Commandment (Ex 20:13).
- E. But Jesus knows that God’s Word cannot be used to encourage sin.
  - 1. He responds with Deuteronomy 6:16: “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (v 12).
  - 2. In this passage, Moses is reminding Israel not to test the Lord as their ancestors did at Massah (Ex 17:3).
  - 3. Jesus responds as a faithful descendant of Israel, and a faithful hearer of Deuteronomy 6.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does the devil seek to test Jesus this third time? Why is it interesting that he uses Scripture? (2) How does the devil mishandle Psalm 91? (3) How does Jesus respond to the devil?

## VI. The Devil Departs from Jesus (Luke 4:13)

- A. The devil is unable to get Jesus to sin.
- B. Jesus was able to withstand the devil because he is filled with the Spirit and loves the Word of God.
- C. However, “until an opportune time” tells us that the devil will try again.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What happened when the devil realized that he is not able to succeed tempting Jesus now? (2) According to Luke 4:13, will the devil try again to attack Jesus?

## VII. Jesus Really Is the Son of God!

- A. Let us return a point that we made earlier.  
—The fact that the Messiah must suffer in obedience to God partly explains why Jesus responded to the devil the way he did.
- B. On two occasions, the devil tempts Jesus by getting him to prove that he was truly the Son of God.
  - 1. Verse 3: “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”
  - 2. Verse 9: “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.”
- C. By resisting temptation, Jesus has indirectly shown himself to be the Son of God!
  - 1. God’s ideal son is marked by *obedience*.
    - a. Exodus 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother...”
    - b. Malachi 1:6: “A son honors his father, and a servant his master....”
  - 2. Jesus demonstrates his divine sonship not by acts of power and foolhardiness, but by his simple obedience to the Father.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How the fact that the Messiah must suffer in obedience to God explain his responses to the devil? (2) How does Jesus end up “proving” his sonship?

## VIII. The Glory of...Obedience?!

- A. This is exactly the kind of hero and Savior that God has given to his people.
  - 1. The Jews wanted their King to liberate them from foreign occupiers and to bring in the Kingdom of God.  
—But they forget that failure to obey God was the cause of their oppression in the first place.
  - 2. The rest of the world wants a philosopher/technocrat/warrior king.  
—But they forget that the main problems of the world are due to failure to obey God.
- B. The hero-leader the world needs the most is *a true servant of God who gives perfect obedience to God*.  
—Only such a leader can begin to undo the sin of the world, and free the world from its real oppressors, the cosmic powers of evil themselves.
- C. Once we recognize this, our values are immediately transformed.
  - 1. Success, prosperity, and self-esteem are knocked down to second or even third place.
  - 2. The glory of God is the highest goal.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Why is the Law-abiding Jew the hero God gives to his people? Why not the philosopher/technocrat/warrior king? (2) How are our own values rearranged after we recognize the high value God places on obedience?

## IX. The (Servant) Hero of the Story

- A. But Jesus is not merely our example. He is our hero and Savior.
- B. When Jesus resisted the devil, he did so as the *Messiah*, the representative of all of God's children.  
—This means that the victory Jesus won was also for you and me.
- C. Romans 5:18-19 gives us the appropriate lens to interpret this entire event: "...as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."
  - 1. Just as Adam made the whole human race sinful, Jesus now makes the human race righteous.
  - 2. By his perfect obedience throughout his life, Jesus fulfills the Law of God for you and me.
  - 3. In doing so, he also becomes our source of righteousness.
  - 4. Now, we depend on Jesus Christ to make us righteous in the sight of God.  
—Romans 10:4: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

**It is Jesus Christ who has kept the Law of God. It is he who has successfully and consistently overcome the devil by his obedience. It is he who has fulfilled all righteousness. Now, he offers us his righteousness to make us acceptable to God. Let us receive and rest on Christ Jesus alone for righteousness, holiness, and eternal life. Let us say to our Lord Jesus, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust" (Ps 91:2).**

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) "When Jesus resisted the devil, he did so as the *Messiah*, the representative of all of God's children." What implication does this have for us? How does Romans 5:18-19 explain the implications of our Lord's obedience? (2) Have you put your faith in Jesus Christ?