

## Introduction

Shifting from “unlikely” to “Enemies”. The devil, Herod, his Homies that tried to kill him, sin, death, you know... all the bad guys. Today, we are talking about the Devil.

There have been a bunch of rock and roll songs... about the Devil... humor, insight? Runnin with the devil. Devil with the blue dress on. Shout at the Devil. Sympathy for the devil – pleased to meet you, won't you guess my name. Devil went down to Georgia — he was looking for a soul to steal – he was in a bind, cuz he was way behind and he was willing to make a deal. The devil is common in our American vernacular, but is he for real?

Barna survey –56% believe in Satan Barna - 59% believe he is a symbol of evil rather than a being...

- Barna.com

So, if you are new to CCC, we believe that the devil is very real. Last year I did a five part message series called ‘even the demons’ which might be worthwhile if you are interested in more depth. Massive mistake – when you have an enemy that exists, but you don't believe he is there. The number one way for you to lose to an enemy in any fight is to live in denial that you have an enemy while he punches your lights out.

But today, we are going to read a passage that positions the devil as very real. Not symbolic, but a person who's goal it is to thwart the plans of God. And we are going to learn from Jesus the ‘how to’ of resisting the ways of our public enemy #1.

Jesus was the devil's number one target ever since the fall wrecked humans and Jesus promised to redeem us. But he knows he will never beat Jesus soo...

Satan's number two target is people because he wants to do collateral damage to those God loves. 1) Keep unsaved people out of heaven. 2) Keep Christians discouraged and distracted – so they don't live freely or make impact. But we can learn a ton about our own temptations by watching the temptations of Jesus in Luke 4... so let's go there.

**4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted<sup>a</sup> by the devil.**

Note that Jesus just finished his baptism – the Holy Spirit is on him and empowering him. With his fresh given power, he is headed to be tempted in ways that you and I will never be tempted. This is our first lesson in resisting temptation. **"The Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome temptation and live a life of purity and holiness."** - A.W. Tozer If you trust in Jesus, you have a supernatural resource of power to resist temptation. Jesus did not go into the desert until after he was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Now, Jesus was HEADED for this experience. He knew he would have to face temptation that is worse than anything we experience. He had to be tempted in every way and then some, temptation island at an exponential level.

So the devil shows up. You know the principle... Bright lights attract nasty bugs. Jesus big baptismal moment caught the eye of the evil one and he rushes to that occasion. Have you ever noticed that when you go to have a quiet time, you get distractions that rush into your life? You have thoughts that come into your mind, guilt, temptation, lies that have been at bay a long time? "No where is the Devil so active as in church." (JC WILES). Have you ever felt that way? Like temptations get worse at church? Shame voices in your head get louder? You can't concentrate? You fall asleep? You get cranky and critical? You can't stop looking at that boy or girl and thinking about them rather than God? You know the devil wants you separated from God and his people, discouraged, blaming others. He wants to instill 'church hurt' so that you will not want to be around those people. He wants you to be mad a pastors and hurt by churches and filled with pain and alienation – anything to keep you from truth and worship and joy and power. Jesus was headed for temptation, but was put in a weakened state first.

He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

After forty days, he was hungry. Maybe the biggest understatement in the Bible! Fasting – hungry, then lose your appetite, then your body starts feeding on itself and hunger returns – you are starving to death... And in this position of starving to death.

<sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

"Since you are the Son of God. Not if." – Kenneth Wuest. Satan never questioned the deity of Jesus. Every demon Jesus encountered knew that he was deity. That was never in question to them, only to humans who wanted proof.

### Bread – Doubting God's Provision – Dt. 8:3 - Gratification

He is not questioning Jesus' identity, he is questioning that the **father loves him**. In particular, that the Father will **provide for him**. Jesus had just come off of "This is my beloved son." From baptism. The Devil is saying "since your Dad hasn't provided... and has left you hungry and all alone, Take it yourself." Provide for your own needs. Just like the garden of Eden "Why would God keep that from you?" Have you ever heard that? You are a child of God and yet you don't have \_\_\_\_\_ ? The devil loves to question God's love through provision. Oh, your car is a piece of junk? Does God really love you? Oh, you are behind on bills, does God really provide? He doesn't love you, you are damaged goods, a broken little puppy, worthless – so you better start taking for yourself because God is not doing anything to provide for you!

The temptation we experience is the temptation of instant gratification. For me, it is literally gratification in food. I love to eat. I love taste, I love sugar, I love carbs. I love McDonalds. I love to eat bad things when I am not hungry. Am I alone in this? When I have a hard elder meeting, sometimes I just stop at Dairy Queen on the way home for revenge... Oh! I can feel the dopamine rush just looking at the Dunking Donuts sign. Maybe for you, food is just no biggie. For you, it is the thrill of video games – designed by psychologists and brain scientists for optimal addictive power. For many it is in entertainment. I am amazed when I hear Gen Z and millennials talk how they don't just ask if they have seen a movie or a show, but how many seasons of that show. Whether it is food or drugs or Netflix or Vide games, are there places that you go to get what you can really only get from God? Or places you go to get the dopamine rush so that you forget about your emptiness or pain or forget about God?

Jesus response: Man does not live by bread alone. There are important things that are not food. God sustains me without food. Don't forget there are other critical things.

We need relationship. We need love. We need security. We need a mission. We need peace. We need God. Jesus is saying "Even in my super hungry state... I don't need this for life. I just need God."

Ultimately, we need bread for the body and bread for the soul. But remember, the body will die, soul lives on. So many feed the body but starve the soul. Don't make the mistake of falling into that trap.

Temptation 2:

<sup>5</sup>The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. <sup>7</sup>If you worship me, it will all be yours."

<sup>8</sup>Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Interestingly, Jesus never actually contradicts that this kingdom has been given to him. He is called the god of this world, prince of the power of the air. It was delivered to him in the garden... and by every human who rebels. We give him this turf.

At the same time – Psalm 2 – God promises all of the nations to the Messiah. Jesus knows the nations are his to inherit – after he goes through a cruel death and powerful resurrection.

#### Bow Doubting God's Plan Dt. 6:13 Shortcuts

The devil is offering a shortcut. Rule the world without dying on the cross. Power without sacrifice. It has been promised to you the hard way. I'll get it to you the easy way. It is mine to give. And it was. He would gladly trade away the entire world IF he could get one thing – the worship of Jesus. If he could get GOD to bow the knee to him in submission... it is the cosmic game changer.

So he offers Jesus a way out of suffering in order to get the endgame without the pain.

You ever had that offer? Just shade your taxes a bit and more money will mysteriously appear in your bank account. You can be a millionaire in months, just send me \$299 for my perfect millionaire system. Just go ahead and move in with her. You don't need to be married first! Just try the meth once... your boss will never know.

Shortcuts... each one of them... can lead to destruction. You always trade SOMETHING when you take the easy path. Your integrity. Honesty. \$299 for nothing. Satisfying lifelong commitment. Addiction. The evil one loves to get you off course. But he only succeed if he makes it look really good! Ever notice that sin doesn't look yukky? It looks plausible, helpful, pleasurable. It seems like my right.

But shortcuts don't work. Not in physical health, not in education, not in relationship and not in your spiritual world. You take the shortcut and find out later that you traded something MORE valuable for something less valuable!

So Jesus just responds... with Deuteronomy again. This time 6:13. Worship the LORD your God and serve him only. Boom. Slam dunk. I hope you are seeing a pattern emerge. Jesus combats temptation by quoting scripture. Now a Bible verse is not a magic wand, but truth has power. And the Bible is true! When you know truth, you are far less susceptible to lies.

- When someone says you are junk, you can say “I am created in God’s image!”
- When someone says you out to be scared, you can say “I work for the prince of peace.”
- When someone says you are ugly, you can say “God knitted this work of art together in my mamma’s womb... and he thinks I’m awesome.” Oh, come on! Own it baby!

Jesus knows he should only worship God. He wants to do what the father wants. God’s work, God’s way. The end does not justify the means. Bottom Line: I’ll do what God says.

### **Temptation Three:**

<sup>9</sup>The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. <sup>10</sup>For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;

<sup>11</sup>they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’<sup>[a]</sup>”

<sup>12</sup>Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’<sup>[a]</sup>”

Now we don’t know if Jesus had to walk to Jerusalem or if he flew or teleported... but somehow, he would up on the highest pinnacle of the temple. 151 feet above the temple mount’s solid rock floor. C’mon. Can’t you float?

### **Jump Doubting God’s Protection Deut 6:16 Pushing the envelope**

And then he pulls the switccheroo on Jesus. He sees Jesus is using scripture and so HE will use scripture. He goes to the psalms to prove his point. He will command his angels.... So you won’t hit your wittle footie on the gground....

Pause here. Do you know that Satan knows the Bible really well? He has been studying it for centuries. He is a really good theologian because he knows who God is. And he will use anything... anything... to drag you away. That is why there are persuasive cults and aberrant movements that claim Christ. Because Satan will twist and destroy even scripture to get you off track.

This is why it is critical to study the Bible in community – so when you think something goofy – a friend across the room can say “that’s goofy!” That is why we have scholars who study in original languages and write good books. That is why we use the inductive method to understand context and linguistics to connect the dots well. Let’s study God’s word with passion and WISDOM to guide us to truth.

So here is the temptation. Do something spectacular. Something for show. Something that will prove this scripture you think is right is right. Jump... the angels will catch you... right?

Do you know that sometimes we play this game with God too. We test him. I’ll have sex... and if God really loves me I won’t get pregnant. I’ll just have a few drinks... God will keep me from doing anything stupid while drunk. I’ll drive 100 mph to get to the event on time. God’s angels will keep me. Friends, bad idea. There are natural laws with natural consequences and moral laws with moral consequences and sometimes God lets us learn the hard way.

Jesus jumps back to the wilderness section of Deuteronomy again. “Don’t test YHWH your God.” Do not presume on God to break the laws of nature while you do something stupid. Even if you can misquote scripture to justify it. <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an

**opportune time.** Jesus triple slam dunks the Devil and gool dol Mephistopholes slinks off, but not forever.

- Just round one – Like Arnold Scwhartz “Ill be back”. He will enter Judas. He will show up at the garden of gethsemane. He will be there for the climax. And he will keep on working until he succeeds or Jesus raises from the dead.
- That is what he is like. He just loves to cause destruction, wreak havoc, tell us lies and confuse our brains. And he will keep going on us because he hates Jesus until is final day. He will be defeated. Jesus promised it. But until then, we are in the battle. You will face temptation in its craftiest forms.
- **"Temptation is like a fork in the road. We can either choose the path of righteousness or the path of destruction. The choice is ours, but the consequences are eternal." - Priscilla Shirer**

### **Musician comes up**

One more song. Does anyone know... In the Jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight! On piano?

Lion seeking someone to devour vs. Lion of the tribe of Judah.... Scar vs. Mufasa

Here are: **Three things to walk away with.**

- 1) **Stand your ground** – You don't have to give an inch to the enemy of your soul. Our culture is crazy and it will get crazier. And the devil will shame you, tempt you and lie to you. Did you know this promise in the book of James holds true for every person who follows Jesus. Resist the Devil and he WILL flee. Compromise with the devil and he just keeps hanging around. Make a deal and he will try to take more. But resist him... and off he goes! If you have had persistent problems with real demons – shaming voices in your head, passionate drive to do violent things, to blaspheme God, or other demonic activity, you should know we have a deliverance and freedom ministry here. If you go to our prayer room, or just call the church, we will get you connected for healing prayer or deliverance from the demonic.
- 2) **Study your Bible** – I live my life under the submission of God's revelation. I know it, quote it memorize it access it. When you DON'T know it, you can't reference it. So just make it your habit to study every day.
  - a. No excuses – internet has the coolest apps. Free Bibles – just take the one under your seat. It's yours. Radio stations, Christian Colleges, YouTube channels. Unlimited resources make it possible for you to learn, memorize, study and meditate on scripture.
- 3) **Stay near to God** – Jesus was Led by the Spirit. Sometimes into temptation – but always with the strength to stand. Hang with Jesus everywhere. Make him your best friend. Abide in him. The closer you are to God, the less scary or tempting the things of the enemy are.

### **Provision, plan, protection slide**

Gospel close – God's provision is Jesus. God's plan is your salvation. God's protection is every day in every way – not from anything bad, but from the evil one. That he would have no power in your life.

And I was thinking this week. Some of you have not trusted God's provision. You need to still say yes to following Jesus. You need to decide for eternal life. You need to welcome the power of Jesus over the

power of the enemy. Can I tell you something? Without the power of Jesus, you are a sitting duck. He came to defeat the enemy out there and the enemy in here. The evil one out there and the sin in here.

Chapter 4 – the Devil in the wilderness. Chapter 24 he beats sin and death and the devil once and for all by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. He is the ONLY one who can save you from sin and death and the devil. Do you want that today? Show of hands

Pray...