

Deuteronomy 6:13-16

¹³ Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.

¹⁴ Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you;

¹⁵ for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land.

¹⁶ Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah.

Matthew 4:4-11

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."¹

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"¹

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

¹ Unless otherwise stated all Scripture is NIV from biblegateway.com

Good Morning, First Baptist Members and Friends. I greet you this morning in the name of a Risen Saviour, Jesus the Christ. If you are here, I pray it is because you have come to praise Him. If you are in this house, I pray it is because you know it is His house and you have come to worship in Spirit and Truth. If you are waiting for a Word from heaven I pray that you have prayed in order that you might hear, believe and act on the Word, as the Lord would have you to do.

Two weeks ago we celebrated Resurrection Sunday and last Sunday we studied Isaiah 53:5-8, as we considered the significance of what Jesus did for us when He went to the cross and what He accomplished when He got up. Today we begin a new unit in the International Sunday School Lesson curriculum. For the month of May we will be looking at how Jesus the Son used Scripture. The first lesson will be on handling **Temptation**; the second lesson on **Rejection**; the third lesson is on **humble spirit and the right motives** and the fourth and final lesson in the unit is **Love**. Repeat the themes with me: **Temptation, Rejection, Humble Spirit/Right Motives and Love**. I pray you will make every effort to be here this month, because I believe God has prepared something we need to hear.

Today we begin with **Temptation**. The OT readings for the week provide us with the background for the NT lesson. Matthew, Mark and Luke recorded the temptation of Jesus in the desert after His baptism. Matthew 3 presents it in this way:

***16** As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. **17** And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

and then in Matthew 4

- 1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.*
2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

I want to start at this point, because it is at this point I realized (perhaps you already knew) that in order for the three gospel writers to have access to this story Jesus told it to them. There were no eyewitnesses and Satan did not tell a story of his defeat so Jesus must have shared that point of temptation with His disciples. I say "that point of temptation" because there would be at least one more – that moment in the Garden alone –

Matthew 26:39

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Matthew 26:42

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

So if Jesus shared a moment of temptation, Jesus must have been trying to tell us something. As I researched this text and reviewed sermons prepared by others (I found over 600), two profoundly moved me, and so I wish to acknowledge the work of Larry Thompson, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale and Keith Linkous, Evangelist and Missionary.

With that as introduction I invite you to pray with me and for me as I work with this theme: **NEW LEVELS AND NEW DEVILS!**

SHALL WE PRAY!

Father God, we come asking you to allow us to enter into your presence, enable us to hear from heaven, enrich us with your Holy Word and empower us to be transformed in your likeness. I ask that you use me to bring that Word, allow your people to see You

working in and thru me. Father, remind us of the need to remain humble and connected to each other and you. In the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN

NEW LEVELS AND NEW DEVILS!

Have you noticed that whenever you move closer to God the devil shows up? It can be something simple like deciding to get up 15 minutes earlier to do Bible reading. It can be something in the mid range like promising yourself and others to attend Bible Study and Sunday School. Or it can be something in the difficult range like giving up a destructive habit or a destructive person. But it seems that each time we try to move to a new level here comes a new devil. The new devil presents us with a new temptation to keep us from moving to that new level. There are at least four truths that we need to know about temptation if we desire to survive and thrive.

I. EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL EXPERIENCE TEMPTATION

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

Jesus was lead by the Spirit – Jesus was doing what the Father told Him to do - Jesus was in the place He was supposed to be and still He was tempted by the devil. Make a note to your self; the devil tempted Him while He was doing what God the Father told Him to do. God is not a God of entrapment. God does not tempt you with sin.

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.(James 1:13-15)

Although God does not tempt us to sin, God will use the devil's temptation to test us. But here is the Good News, God, when asked, will provide us with the power to resist temptation.

EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL EXPERIENCE TEMPTATION

II. TEMPTATION NORMALLY FOLLOWS VICTORY

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Do you remember your baptism experience? Somebody cried tears of joy, it might even have been you. Someone else shared how proud they were of you. And an elder told you were on the right path. With all of that good feeling and kind words and new conviction before the week was over something or someone had tempted you to pull off the new you and put the old you back on. The temptation may have been as subtle an invitation to a party – as bold as an illegal substance – as shrew as a line designed to persuade – “One time won’t count” – “Didn’t you say your God forgives” – “We are planning to get married one day...”

EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL EXPERIENCE TEMPTATION

TEMPTATION NORMALLY FOLLOWS VICTORY

III. TEMPTATION ATTACKS YOUR WEAKNESS

2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus had been without food for 40 days and 40 nights and the fully human Jesus was hungry. We know that Jesus continued to get hungry for it was hunger that brought Him to the Fig Tree that we studied a few weeks ago. Well, someone will say that is not a problem for me I have my desires under control and that might be so. But the devil is smart and cunning and evil and the devil will find where you are open to attack. If not your appetite, then your attitude, if not your attitude, then your aspirations. If all that fails the devil will defeat someone you love so that their defeat will feel

like your failure and you will get caught up in the temptation. Can anyone say AMEN?

TEMPTATION ATTACKS YOUR WEAKNESS
TEMPTATION NORMALLY FOLLOWS VICTORY
EVERY CHRISTIAN WILL EXPERIENCE TEMPTATION

IV. THE TEMPTER AND THE TEMPTATION IS A LIE

⁸ *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.*
⁹ *"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."*

Look again at the passage. The devil offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. But the devil did not own the kingdoms of the world nor their splendor.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it; (Psalm 24:10)*

Allow me to say it another way **THE DEVIL MAKES PROMISES HE CANNOT KEEP AND OFFERS THINGS, WHICH HE CANNOT PROVIDE.**

*My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:2)*

HELP

⁷ *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

LOVE

¹⁷ *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

WISDOM

Those are just four of the truths of how temptation moves in the life of a Christian. But the sermon would be incomplete without providing some strategies for how to deal with temptation.

WHAT DID JESUS DO WHEN HE WAS TEMPTED?

REMEMBERED SCRIPTURE AND RESPONDED WITH THE WORD OF GOD

'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word
that comes from the mouth of God.'

"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

REBUKE THE DEVIL

Away from me, Satan!

REMIND YOURSELF AND THE DEVIL WHOM YOU SERVE

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'

I challenge you this week to spend some serious time in prayer. Work as hard as you can to add 30 minutes this week to whatever you normally do. In that 30 minutes do the following:

Write down the level you are trying to move to

Write down the temptation the devil has put in your way

Write down 2 scriptures that can help you

Respond to temptation with the Word of God

Rebuke the devil

Remind yourself that you intend to

Worship the God who made you and knows the number of hairs
on your head

Worship the God who is able to save you and keep

Worship the God who has promised to never leave you or
forsake you – to be with you always – until the end of the
earth

NEW LEVELS AND NEW DEVILS!