

“Jesus Defeats Our Enemy”
(Luke 4:1-13)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Last week, we saw

Jesus baptized by John –

That John might identify Him;

And that He might identify with us –

That He might stand in our place

And show His perfect hatred of sin

And His perfect love of everything right –

To save us –

We saw Him anointed by the Spirit –

The Spirit conceived Him in Mary’s womb –

He created the union between

Jesus’ divine and human natures –

He was Jesus’ companion throughout His life –

Teaching and guiding Him in the truth –

But now He was poured out on Jesus –

As the prophets, priests and kings of Israel

Were all anointed with oil

As a symbol of the Spirit’s being poured out on them

To equip them for ministry,

So the Father poured His Spirit out on Jesus

To give Him power to complete His mission.

Finally, we saw the Father's delight in His Son

And His public approval of everything Jesus had done to this point:

"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased" (3:22).

B. Preview.

This morning,

We see the first battle of His public ministry,

As the Spirit leads Him into the wilderness

To fight against the devil.

Here we see three things:

1. That the devil tries to tempt Jesus as he did Adam.
2. How he goes about tempting Him.
3. And how Jesus defeats him.

II. Sermon.

A. First, the devil tries to tempt Jesus,

As he did Adam,

And cause Him to fall.

Jesus is the Second Adam

And He must now do

What the first Adam failed to do:

Face the tempter and overcome him.

This isn't the first time

The devil tried to destroy Jesus:

He had already moved Herod

To send his soldiers

To kill all the boys two years and younger

In and around Bethlehem

That he might kill Him.

We should also assume

That the devil was active

During Jesus' childhood years

Trying to get Him to fall into some sin

That he might destroy Him –

He will continue to attack Jesus

Throughout His ministry

Through the unbelieving scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.

But this is his first attempt

To stop Jesus at the beginning of His mission:

Notice three things:

First,

That the devil was attempting to destroy

The Head of a new humanity –

He knew when he attacked Adam –

The head of the whole human race –

If he could just get him to fall,

He could destroy us all at one time –

And he succeeded:

Paul, "Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men' (Rom. 5:18).

If he could get Jesus to fall,
The result would be the same –
Hypothetically, if Jesus has given in
To any of the devil's temptations,
We all would have been condemned –
There would be no salvation.

Second,
He attacked Adam in a garden,
But the Second Adam in the wilderness –
Adam's fall turned the creation into a wilderness;
But Jesus' success will turn it into a paradise
When He comes again.

Third,
Adam was a perfect man
With a perfect heart towards the Lord;
But it was possible for him to change –
And he did change under the devil's temptation –
But Jesus can't change –
He's the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8);
He's a divine Person,
And because He is,
He will always choose what's right –
The devil had no chance of success,

But he tried anyway –

Which is why Edwards called the devil

The greatest blockhead that ever lived.

B. Second, we see how the devil

Went about his attack:

He tempted Jesus in three particular areas:

The same three John warns us against in 1 John 2:15-16,

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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.”

The same three he used against Eve that succeeded:

We read in Genesis 3:6, “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was a delight to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise [boastful pride of life], she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

First, he appealed to Jesus’ bodily appetites –

Jesus had been fasting for forty days –

During which, Luke tells us,

The devil was already tempting Him (Luke 4:2) –

Afterward, He was hungry –

We’ve learned from experience

That when hunger returns

After this many days of fasting,

We need to eat or we’ll starve.

And so the devil challenged Jesus:

“If You are the Son of God,
Tell this stone to become bread” (v. 3).

“You need to eat:
Why don’t You feed Yourself
And at the same time prove
You’re the Son of God,
By doing this miracle.”

Second, he appealed to Jesus’ eyes:

“And he led Him up and *showed Him* all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, ‘I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours’” (vv. 5-7).

“Isn’t this why You came into the world:
To rule the nations?
I can give them to You.”

Finally, he appealed to His self-worth:

“And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, “HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,” and, “ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE”’” (vv. 9-11).

“Haven’t You come to show Israel
That You are the Messiah?

Go to Jerusalem –

The largest and most important city in Palestine –

Throw Yourself off of the highest point

Of the most public building in Jerusalem –

The Temple –

And when they see the angels rescue You,
They'll know that's who You are.”

Notice the shrewdness of his attack:

He knows who Jesus is,

And why He came into the world,

And offers Him things

That are in line with His mission –

Didn't he do the same with Adam and Eve?

God created them in His image:

And the devil says to them, “You shall be like God” (Gen. 3:5) –

He's presenting Jesus

With an alternate way of achieving His goals.

C. Finally, how does Jesus

See through his deception and defeat him?

He does it by knowing His enemy,

Comparing what he says to Scripture,

And making choices that are in line with truth.

First, He knows who the devil is

And the nature of what says –

“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44) –

He knows whatever the devil says

Will be contrary to the truth.

Second, He knows the truth

And how to apply it.

When the devil tempted Jesus

To take care of His need

By turning the stone into bread,

Jesus knew there was something even more important:

“It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE’” (Luke 4:4).

Matthew tells us how Jesus completed this statement:

“It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD’” (4:4).

If He put His Father first,

He would take care of His needs.

He had food that neither the devil nor His disciples knew:

To do His Father’s will and accomplish His purposes (John 4).

When the devil offered

To give Jesus the kingdoms of the world,

If He would worship him,

Jesus replied, “It is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY’” (Luke 4:8).

God alone is to be worshiped and served –

He would gain His kingdom

But again, in a way that honors His Father –

And when the devil tempted Jesus

To throw Himself from the temple

To prove to the Jews He was their Messiah –

This time, even arguing from Scripture that He should –

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘It is said, “YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST”’” (v. 12).

He would not put Himself in harm’s way

And force the Father’s hand

To prove He was the Messiah –

The Father would show He was

In His time and in His way.

When the devil saw

He couldn’t deceive Jesus –

And so destroy Him –

He left Him until an opportune time –

At the end of His ministry

When Jesus was handed over for our sins (Luke 22:53).

D. We need to realize the devil,

Or one of his allies –

The world,

Our flesh,

And his demons –

Want to destroy us as well.

Peter, “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Jesus says he will be successful in destroying

Most of the people who will ever live:

Jesus, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

So how can we overcome him?

First, we need

To turn from our sins and trust in Jesus:

If we are genuinely repenting,

And actively trusting Jesus –

Which we can only know we are

If we love Him

And are following Him –

Then we are safe –

The devil can still do us a great deal of harm,

But he can’t destroy us.

If you’re not trusting Him,

This is where you need to start.

Second, we need to understand

How he attacks:

By appealing:

To our flesh –

Presenting things

That will satisfy our bodily desires –

To our eyes –

Showing us things

He knows we'll want,

To captivate our hearts –

Things both good and bad –

And to our pride –

He'll expose us to things

We think will make us look better

In our eyes and the eyes of others.

And he'll do it in such a way

That we'll think they're good

Rather than bad:

Thomas Brooks reminds us,

That the devil is a master fisherman:

He knows how to bait his hooks.

Finally, knowing how he attacks,

We need – as Peter reminded us –

To be on the alert:

We need to look out for him,

To know when and where he will attack.

Jesus came into the world

To equip us for this battle:

He's given us His Word and Spirit.

If we read and study His Word,

We'll see through the devil's lies.

And if we are filled with His Spirit,

Then we'll do

What the Lord says we must do

To remain safe.

If we don't know the truth

And submit to it,

We'll be nothing more than sitting ducks.

May the Lord give us wisdom

To be wise in the truth,

And to use the means of grace

That we might resist the devil,

That he might run from us (James 4:7). Amen.

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