**SON OF GOD-LIVING THE LIFE OF JESUS IN YOU PT. 2**

**FINDING JESUS’ STRENGTH TO OVERCOME TEMPATION**

**4/2/17**

**I. Introduction**

A. We are in a series on the life of Jesus called, *“Son of God-the Life of Jesus in You.”* We are going through highlights of the story from the Book of Matthew. We are looking at how Jesus overcame in every aspect of life, and how He wants to be strong and present in us, so that we can overcome when we face the same things He faced. We said last week, Jesus didn’t come and live a perfect life so that we would try to imitate Him; He came so He could “habitate” us when we go through the same kind of things. This is especially true of what we want to talk about today: temptation.

**Look at this verse:**

*“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18 NIV)*

What we want to learn today, if I could say it this way, is when Satan knocks at our door with temptation, how we can let Jesus answer the door? (Jason story- Can we help you?)

B. We want to read the story of Jesus’ temptation in Matthew 4 and answer the following questions. Why is this story here? What does God want us to know about temptation through this story? How do we let Jesus answer the door? What does Jesus teach us about overcoming temptation?

**II. Why is this story here.**

In this story we first read that immediately after Jesus’ baptism, he is led into the wilderness where he is tempted by the Devil for 40 days and nights.

This story immediately tells us no one is immune to temptation, not one ever outgrows it.

Temptation means an allurement, a solicitation to disobey God, to sabotage His good plan for our lives. The idea of temptation is like a fishing “lure” something that appears good and right but leads to pain and destruction.

We see that though it is true, we all have selfish desires, there is an evil and malevolent being named Satan with lots of minions called demons, who actively plot and prey on our weaknesses to lure us to leave God’s destiny and plan. Satan’s goal is to rob, kill, and destroy the beautiful work and plan God has for us and our families. He lures us with lies, suggestions, and distractions.

**The reason it is so important for us to understand temptation and how it works is because:**

1. Otherwise we may not even know or notice that it is taking place. Obviously, people tend to think of temptation sometimes in very salacious terms. From watching soap operas and the like, people easily think of temptation in terms of some seductive affair, or some elaborate plot to steal lots of money, or to put a hit out or a hire for murder.

But most temptation is far subtler, and for sure it never comes dressed as an evil looking man in a red suit with a pitch fork. It can be the temptation to take up an offense, to hold a grudge, to withdraw from church or a friendship without addressing an issue, to carry a burden of worry, to let discouragement win the day and give up, to live in fear, selfishness, anger, to entertain without any action a lustful or romantic thought with someone you shouldn’t be thinking about- that you play out in your imagination and robs something of your heart energy from your marriage or walk with the Lord. (\*experience at Walmart)

B. Another reason is that if we don’t recognize it as evil, we can easily fall under condemnation. Satan is a blackmailer and an accuser. You see temptation is not sin. Jesus wanted his followers to see that he was tempted.

*“He (Jesus) has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:15, NIV)*

**Jesus is not turning from you in shame when you are tempted. He is turning in love towards you when you are tempted.**

*“Temptation is not a sign of weakness-it is a sign you are a threat to the devil.” –Warren*

A main point of this message is that we want to see that Jesus went through temptation alone, so that you will never have to face temptation alone. You can face it with Someone who totally understands.

C. I believe he put this story here to tell us that we need to expect that after a spiritual high there will be a spiritual test.

*“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” (I Pet. 4:12 NLT)*

As we prepare for spiritual blessings, we must be sure you are also preparing for a spiritual battle.

*JC Ryle says, “True Christianity is a fight. Is there a “fight” to your faith?”*

There is no use preparing for the receiving part of Christianity, if you’re not preparing for “the keeping” part of it. (\*My second grade story)

D. I believe this story is here to tell us that temptation is not just a necessary evil but a divine opportunity to get closer to God and stronger in God. It is so important to understand from this text that the wilderness is not just about a problem; it is about a preparation to do greater things for God.

1. I believe this story teaches us that though it is in your baptism you lay hold of your identity, it is in the wilderness that you discover your authority. In fact, as you learn the authority to overcome those attacks, you’ll discover the authority and anointing to release others under attack. I love observing the beginning of the story of Jesus’ temptation and the conclusion, especially from Luke’s gospel.

*“Luke 4:1- “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”*

*Luke 4:14 “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news spread throughout the whole country side.”*

**Jesus had a major upgrade, after this.**

*“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12 NIV)*

You were faithful more and now you can be trusted more. (\*the liquor store)

2. The text mentions the wilderness right away and most commentators agree that Jesus’ victory in the wilderness was aimed at reminding people of Israel’s time in the wilderness, where they wondered for 40 years. In fact, all of the Scriptures Jesus’ quotes from Deuteronomy were from that battle. They point to God’s purpose for the wilderness times we all go through. By the way, many of you are “in the wilderness” spiritually speaking right now. You are dealing with difficulties that seem to be Satan’s ideal opportunity to hammer your mind. It might be a financial wilderness, emotional wilderness, a relational wilderness… you know that you are there because you feel far more aware of Satan’s lies than God’s truth.

**The Bible is clear that God has a purpose for this time.**

The wilderness is where you take possession of what was promised. It is where information about God becomes transformation in your heart for God. The wilderness is to baptism what a wedding is to a marriage. It is in marriage you make the promise and feel the goose bump but it is in the nitty gritty of a marriage relationship that you realize the promise of your marriage.

It’s not until you are tested and the stuff you have felt about God and said about God has become more than the truth you believe, it becomes deliberate choices that you make and change.

At our baptism we have forgiveness but it is in the battles of temptation we discover freedom. It’s where the word becomes flesh, ideas become actions, what is in our mind and emotions becomes cemented in our will-that is transformation.

What kind of Christian are you really? It’s not what you say about God when you are at church; it’s what you choose about God when you are in the fire, that is the real test.

3. I wanted to point out some things the Bible clearly says is available to you during your time in the wilderness:

a. Christ-like character including: becoming brave and fearless, unoffendable, resilient, full of integrity, persevering, joyful, purified, sober, unshakeable, committed, a person of great and daring faith.

b. A strong anointing, an empathy with people who suffer, a testimony of God’s faithfulness through the years, greater wisdom and discernment, a crown that cannot be taken away, a promotion in God’s kingdom.

**III. So how do you let Jesus answer the door in temptation? What does Jesus show us here?**

A. The core issue in every temptation and spiritual attack is an attack on what we believe, before it is an attack on how we will behave. As Satan attacks Jesus, the focal point of the attack is on His trust and faith. Satan says… “If you are the Son of God” … It was an assault on what Jesus had just heard, “You are my beloved Son”. The heart of all attacks and spiritual downfalls is determined by whether through doubt, discouragement, deception, he can get you to give up your trust and faith in what God says and who God is.

You can sense the subtlety… “If you were really God’s beloved Son would he be letting you go through this? Are you sure you can trust God’s plan of surrender to get you to the top? Don’t you think you could figure out a plan that makes more sense than God’s?”

1. The heart of a spiritual warrior who walks in victory is a relentless commitment to exposing Satan’s lies and defining and declaring God’s truth.

2. One of the key lies Jesus exposes is the lie that sin and compromise, in even its smallest forms can be permitted, that it’s not really a big deal. With his first temptation, it would be so easy to see how a person could rationalize such a small act of disobedience, such as using His power to turn a stone into bread, even though God hadn’t given him permission. Surely God would understand disobeying him in such a little and insignificant way.

So often we fall in temptation because we believe we can justify or rationalize some small act of disobedience. We really don’t believe that the wages of sin are death and devastation. We don’t really believe that sin is so cancerous and evil that it would be better if our eye offends to cut it out than to casually give our attention and eye to sin. So we give ourselves permission to have a little lie, a little resentment, to rationalize a little impurity, refuse to go to church and forsake the fellowship of the saints, a little dishonesty, a little sexual thing on the side.

I feel compelled to remind people that when you choose to walk in any unrepented sin, you are choosing to give Satan a foothold and mastery over an area of your life. When you choose to have unrepentant sin, it is going to affect your family and all of the people you love. You are drilling a hole in the boat; you are putting a poison in the family’s water, sawdust in the spiritual gas tank. What is wrong with premarital sex? You are letting snakes on the plane that will bring poison to a later relationship with your spouse. If you choose to nurse a grudge, you are attaching a spiritual grenade to your body. Sin never just visits; it always demands the keys.

Jesus refused the lie of rationalization, minimization, and excuses. Jesus utterly renounced that.

B. Jesus overcame temptation by Scriptures he had memorized in his heart and quoted with his heart, mind, and mouth. It is so significant that his only response was not an argument or a shouting mouth; it was just the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. It is written…

**Some significant points to this:**

**1. Jesus could speak the word because he knew the word.** He was saturated in it.

*“I have hidden your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you.” (Ps. 119:11 NIV)*

You can’t say it is written if you don’t know what is written.

Jesus was saturated with the Word of God and the Bible commands us to be the same. One scholar observed that 10% of everything Jesus spoke in the gospels was either a quote from the Old Testament or a reference to a truth or story of the OT. I love this quote by Tim Keller,

*“If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did not presume to face the forces of evil in the world without a profound knowledge of the Bible in mind and heart, how could we try to face life any other way?”*

Someone said, *“The word will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the word.”*

**2. His declaration of Scripture was specific and decisive.** They represented premade convictions forged in his personal time of prayer and meditation in the Word. He put down deep roots by not only reading and memorizing the Bible but in defining and identifying who He was. The Bible calls this building your house on the rock.

What I’m trying to say is that you don’t find God’s strength in temptation by trying to pull something from the hat in the moment. You find it by forging a heart of commitment. In these Scriptures you hear Jesus saying, “I trust my Father, I will see His goodness. I have settled it. I will not take any step independent of him. Regardless of how it looks, I know and believe I am His Beloved Son in whom He is well pleased”.

I believe the indication is that Jesus had a plan for this temptation way before it happened. Like what we’ve told teenagers in dating... “Either your plan will lead you or your glands will lead you”. When the battle comes, it is too late to put on your armor.

C. **Jesus taught us to overcome by prayer and look to God to rescue us.** Though we know Satan was attacking Jesus, we know in those 40 days Jesus was continuously turning his focus on to God. In the end it was the angels who ministered to him.

There’s a quote I love that I heard somewhere -*Victory is not the absence of struggle, pain, or temptation; victory is a greater sense of the presence of God.* In other words, a person who overcomes evil, who goes from forgiveness to freedom, information to transformation, isn’t less inclined, in themselves, to sin or fail. They are not stronger, smarter, or better; they are just more filled with the reality of God’s presence. I like to use the illustration of how you get air out of a glass, not by sucking it out but by filling it with water.

**How do you apply this?**

1. In temptation don’t focus on the temptation, refocus on God.

2. In temptation don’t try to be tough, learn to be tucked in the arms of Jesus.

Throughout the scripture, we find those who’ve overcome in life’s toughest battles had one key strategy; they somehow learned to put themselves in their Savior’s arms.

They discovered that Jesus came and deliberately choose to be in the exact battle that they faced. Jesus choose to be in the exact battle that you are facing, feeling all of the pressure, struggle, fear, confusion that you are going through. He went through it alone, so you would never have to go through it alone. They found, as Peter did when he was sinking in the lake, Jesus’ hand was there. Or as the three Hebrews thrown in a fiery furnace that there was a fourth person present.

They heard God speaking the promise of Isaiah 43:2-4,

*“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned.”*

Or the verse that is our memory verse this week for our life groups:

*“The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And (but) God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.” (I Cor. 10:13 NLT)*

I heard the story of a couple who took their children to the zoo. Their 2-year-old boy, Billy, was quite a rambunctious little fellow. As they were walking somehow he managed to escape. They looked frantically for him. To their horror, the child had made his way under the guard rails to the lion pit. He was literally putting his foot over the wall to climb down. The Dad froze, what should he do? He didn’t want to startle his son. Quietly, he stepped forward and held out his arms and in the most compassionate voice he could find, said, “Come to Papa, Billy. Come to Papa”.

He didn’t say, “You, ignorant child; I’m so disgusted with you. What’s wrong with you?” I want you to know your Papa Father is saying to you now “Come to Papa”, even if you have already gone over that edge a hundred times. He went to the pit for you. He took your sin and he stands now, promising to make a way out.

Each one of you is or will be facing an attack this week, temptation, a lure of discouragement, deception, distraction. That lure may be to step into a pit of fear, unbelief, skepticism- wanting to give up on faith altogether, maybe self-destruction, the pressing urge to just give up. It may be hate, resentment, lust, or anger. It doesn’t matter. There is no temptation but such as is common to man.

Jesus can and he is waiting to rescue you from that attack, the lure, the pit.

Prepare now, recognize Satan’s lies, define your life based on God’s word and be ready to speak to that temptation. When you are struggling and hear Satan knocking on the door, remember and realize you can let Jesus answer.