

Message Series: Preparing for the Savior.
Message 12: The Temptation of the Savior. Luke 4:1-13
Pastor Roger Ridley, Gretna Baptist Church – February 25, 2007

Every day we find ourselves having to deal with a wide variety of challenges and temptations. It may be a problem at work. It may be the influence of a friend. It might be a family crisis. Every day it seems like there is something we have to deal with. But I think most would agree that there are some days that are worst than others. That there are some days in which it seems like all the forces of evil are working against us. On those days, we either stand, or we fall. Wouldn't it be nice, if there was a way, that we could face them, and remain standing?

Jesus Christ faced such a day. A day when Satan came at Him with the very worst that he could muster, with the temptations that he believed were the most fitting for the occasion.

The response of Christ involved the role of the Holy Spirit. If you and I expect to stand on similar occasions, then the role of the Holy Spirit must be evident in our lives as well. Look at Luke 4:1-13...

In the response of Christ to the temptations of Satan, three aspects of the Holy Spirit's role are emphasized:

I. Jesus Was Full Of The Spirit

Verse 1 says that Jesus was *full* of the Holy Spirit.

In studies on the temptations of Christ, this short statement is often passed over. It is such a brief statement, and we are anxious to dig into the temptations. However, Jesus could not have faced the temptations as He did without the fullness of the Spirit. And, you and I will never survive them in our lives without His fullness either.

I know the question you have in mind. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be filled with the Spirit? After-all, Jesus is God. Just previous to this, at the baptism of Christ, the heavens opened, and God the Father spoke, saying, "*Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well-pleased (3:22).*"

Certainly, as God, the fullness of the Spirit was not necessary. Colossians 2:9 says, “*in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*”

But as the promised One that would take away sin it was absolutely necessary. We know this, first of all, because it is written right here. Had it not been necessary, then that would not be the case, but before facing the temptations of Satan, we are told that Jesus was full of the Spirit.

Second, even though He was God, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient (Philippians 2:8). Jesus lived His entire earthly life in complete submission to the will of the Father. In John 6:38 He said, “*For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*” Jesus did not come to act independently of the Father, but in submission to the Father. As a result, everything that He did, He did in the power of the Spirit demonstrating the full extent of His submission.

And so, in Luke chapter 4,

Verse 1 says that He was *full* of the Spirit and *led* by the Spirit.

Verse 14 says that Jesus *returned* in the power of the Spirit.

And in verse 18, Jesus said that the Spirit of the Lord was *upon* Him.

Throughout the gospels, we find Him speaking, not in His own power, but in the power of the Spirit (John 3:34).

We find Him healing in the power of the Spirit (Acts 10:38).

We find Him doing miracles in the power of the Spirit (Matthew 12:28).

We even find Him going to the cross, not in His own power, but in the power of the Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).

And so, even though as God, Jesus did not need to be filled with the Spirit, as the Messiah He did because:

First of all, in the pre-determinate counsel of God that was the plan He agreed to.

Second, In taking the form of a servant, it was expected.

And third, if for no other reason, He demonstrated for us how we must walk if we expect to be pleasing to the Father, and how we must walk if we expect to stand in this evil day. 1John 2:6 tells us, *“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”*

Jesus did not go off into the wilderness, and face the temptations of Satan, in His own power, He did so being full of the Spirit.

You and I will never be prepared to face the challenges and the temptations of this world in our own power, we too must be full of the Spirit. Ephesians 5:16-18 say, *“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”*

To be filled with the Spirit is to be yielded to Him, and under His influence. Can you say that is true of you today?

II. Jesus Was Led By The Spirit

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus was *led* by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Mark 1:12 states it with even greater intensity, *“And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”*

The leading of the Holy Spirit was strong and sure. Sometimes we feel that if the Holy Spirit leads us, it will always be beside the still waters (Psalm 23:2). But that is not necessarily true. He led Jesus into the desert for a long and difficult time of testing.

Again, we want to ask, “Why?” Obviously, as God, He did not need to endure that, but as the promised One that would take away the sin of the world, these temptations were absolutely necessary.

Hebrews 2:17-18, *“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”*

Hebrews 4:15, *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

To fully meet our need, it was necessary for Jesus to face these temptations.

However, something to keep in mind, is that even though these temptations were necessary, Jesus, as wholly God, could not be tempted by them. James 1:13 says, *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.”*

The temptations of Satan had no enticement for Christ, and so He was not drawn away by them.

Now, someone might say, *“Well, if He could not be tempted, then He cannot sympathize with my situation.”*

But that is simply not correct. Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus was tempted in **all** points as we are, yet without sin. The person that gives into temptation never fully understands just how strong temptation can be. It is the person that withstands temptation that knows the full force of it. And Jesus was tempted in **all** points, yet without sin.

1 John 2:16 identifies for us the whole realm of temptation, which you and I face:

The lust of the flesh.
The lust of the eyes.
And, the pride of life.

It was in these same areas that Jesus faced temptation from Satan:

To turn stones into bread and meet His hunger, that was the lust of the flesh.

To view the kingdoms of the world, that was the lust of the eyes.

To jump from the pinnacle of the Temple, that was the pride of life.

Jesus faced these temptations without sin, as a result He fully understands what you and I face, and He can help us when we do.

But before moving on from this, let's not miss the point that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. He was not out there grappling with Satan on his own, Jesus was being led by the Spirit.

Too often, you and I get up in the morning, and we head out to face the challenges, and the temptations of this world, without the leading of the Spirit in our lives. No wonder we fall as often as we do.

Whether it's beside the still waters, or into the wilderness, we need the Holy Spirit to lead. With His leading we can face the challenges and the temptations that lie ahead. Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us, "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*"

III. Jesus Used The Sword Of The Spirit

Look at verses 4, 8, and 12:

Verse 4, "*It is written.*"

Verse 8, "*For it is written.*"

Verse 12, "*It is said.*"

Each time Satan confronted Him with a temptation, Jesus responded with the Word of God. Ephesians 6:17, calls it "*the sword of the Spirit.*" Hebrews 4:12 says that "*the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*"

The reason God's Word, the Bible, is called the sword of the Spirit, is because it was fully inspired by the Spirit. 2Peter 1:21 says, "*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"

The words of this book, are not the words of men, they are the words of the Holy Spirit, and when used properly, they wield the force of the Spirit.

I say properly, because in his third temptation, Satan misapplied Scripture in seeking to tempt Christ. That should be a warning to us that just because a sermon or a book is full of scripture, does not mean that it's true. It's true only when it's used properly. Jesus quickly used scripture to both defeat the

temptation, and to demonstrate that Satan's use of Scripture was misapplied. I especially like what Jesus said in verse 4, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*"

If you and I are going to remain standing, if we are going to meet the onslaught of Satan, if we are going to face the challenges and the temptations of this world, then we need to depend on the Word of God, and know how to use it properly.

Do you read *The Book*? Do you study it so that you can rightly divide it? Do you use it regularly so that you have no reason to be ashamed?

The victory that Christ experienced in the wilderness, as He was confronted by Satan, was not simply in His use of the Scriptures, but in combination with the filling, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians chapter 6, Paul doesn't tell us to just use the Scriptures in standing against Satan. He tells us to put on the whole armor of God, which is the filling, and the leading of the Spirit.

It's that three-fold role of the Spirit in our lives that enables us to stand.

Our ability to overcome temptation cannot be separated from the role of the Spirit. Like Jesus, if we want to overcome temptation, we must be full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and in use of the sword of the Spirit.

One final warning: As a result of these three aspects of the Spirit, the temptations of Satan came to an end, but only for a season. Do not think that because you overcome temptation, even the strongest temptation of your life that you can let down your guard?

1 Peter 5:8 warns us, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."