



Temptation to Disobey

Gen 3:1-20 1 Peter 5:8-11 Matt 3:13-17; 4:1-11

January 30, 2022

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Adam and Eve had **one job**; *just one thing* they had to do: that *one thing* was to **OBEY GOD'S WORD**. That's it. That's all they had to do. But they failed; they listened to Satan and his lies; they disobeyed God and turned everything upside down. God's good creation quickly *descended into the darkness of disobedience and depravity*.

God has given you **one job**; *just one thing* you have to do: that *one thing* is to **OBEY GOD'S WORD**. That's it. That's all you have to do. But you fail; **WE ALL FAIL**. We listen to Satan and his lies; we disobey God and turn everything upside down. Our lives are marked by *the darkness of disobedience and depravity*.

When it comes to battling Satan and fighting off temptations, we have no hope of victory in ourselves. We need a champion; someone to fight for us. That champion is the Son of God; Jesus will fight and battle Satan on our behalf. Jesus will overcome Satan and gain the victory!

We get a glimpse of the dynamics of this battle in the Temptation of Christ. We heard the story today from the Gospel of Matthew: immediately after His Baptism, Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where an intense battle will occur: Jesus is up against our greatest enemy: Satan himself. The Son of God is waging war against the Evil One *for us and our salvation*. The only weapon He has is the Word of God; and He holds onto it with both hands of faith.

The key to understanding the Temptation of Christ in the wilderness is that He is there for you; He is your substitute as He battles Satan and his lies. Jesus will be tempted, but He will never sin!

Jesus fights for us,
otherwise we don't have a chance against Satan.

We easily give in to **temptations**; we are enthralled with the **world**; we are distracted by **desires and lust**. Like Eve who quickly believed Satan's lie, we too believe his lies and fall into sin. Like Adam, we deliberately disobey God's commands and we fall into sin. Satan loves to **lead us** into temptation and sin and then **leave us condemned and guilty** before God. We don't stand a chance against Satan --

So Jesus takes our place.

Unlike Adam, Christ will obey the Word of God!

Unlike Eve, Christ will resist Satan's temptations!

Unlike all of us, Christ will conquer Satan and his demons!

This battle with Satan was on-going throughout Jesus' life. Jesus conquered Satan every time He cast out demons and set people free. He overcame Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane; and finally, on the cross, Jesus crushed Satan's head and left him powerless. Christ's descent into Hell proclaimed it; and His Resurrection from the dead publicly announced it! Christ's Ascension into Heaven is the victory parade! Satan is now in his death throes. His last gasp is soon coming, when on the Last Day, Jesus will cast Satan and all of his wicked demons into the lake of fire!

SATAN IS DEFEATED,

you are set free from his power, his lies, and his deceptions.

**Jesus has conquered Satan;
and He gives you the victory!**

You learn from Christ how to deal with temptations. You have the same weapon that Jesus had: the Word of God, the Bible! Like Jesus, by holding fast to the Word of God you overcome Satan and his temptations. **You trust the Scriptures! You hear and obey God's Word!**

The power to resist the devil does not lie *within* you; the power is in the Word of God! That is why it is important to be Biblically literate and doctrinally sound. You need to know the Scriptures, learn the Word, even memorize God's promises! **The power is in the Word of God to resist the devil, his lies and his temptations!**

Satan will tempt you in many and various ways, but underneath it all is the lie and deception that **God is not trustworthy**. With Jesus, twice Satan said “**IF** you are the Son of God . . .” even though God the Father had just announcement it publicly at His Baptism. Satan does the same thing with you. He will lie and deceive you so that you think that **God is not trustworthy**.

The way that Martin Luther taught this was that Satan’s most powerful temptation is to make you think that **God is angry with you**; that God is working against you; that He has abandoned you. Satan whispers to you all kinds of lies . . . something like this . . .

- ✓ God is not listening to your prayer
- ✓ God won’t forgive your sin
- ✓ God is the cause of suffering in your life
- ✓ God is not watching out for you
- ✓ God has abandoned you

Satan whispers to you “**God is angry with you**” or “**His Word is not trustworthy**.” If Satan can convince you that God is the “bad guy” who can’t be trusted, then you will not turn to Him in times of trouble nor look to Him for all good things.

Remember, the victory is already been won by Christ and given to you through faith! Satan’s lies and deceptions are exposed!

Combat Satan like Jesus did . . . **hold fast to the Word of God!** Learn and remember the promises God makes to you – that God is loving, kind, gracious and merciful; that **God the Father** watches over every detail of your life and is at work for your good; that **God the Son** has paid for every sin you commit

and considers you forgiven righteous and holy in His sight; that **God the Holy Spirit** lives within you and actively works to strengthen your faith through Word and Sacrament. **Hold fast to the Word of God when you are tempted by Satan** . . . even if He tempts you to believe that God is angry with you and can't be trusted!

*The victory is already
been won by Christ
and given to you through faith!*

SATAN'S LIES AND DECEPTIONS ARE EXPOSED!

One other thing about Satan and his temptations.

Martin Luther called Satan the “Comforter of the faithful”. That’s right, the **COMFORTER** of the **FAITHFUL**! What it means is that temptation is proof that you belong to Christ and are forgiven. Temptation, and your resisting it, is confirmation that you have faith and are trying to live a holy life. If you had no faith, you would rush head-long into sin and not care about it. Satan and his temptations are the “Comforter of the faithful”!!

*The worst
temptation
would be
NO temptations!*

It would mean
that Satan does
not have to spend
time with you
because
you have lost
your faith.

Because of your faith, you are a target, and Satan and his demons work hard to deceive you and lead you to doubt God's love and disobey God's Word. **Temptations are a *comfort*; they show that you believe in Christ, hold to His Word, and are striving to live a holy and Godly life!!**

Today, the *Epiphany spotlight* shines on Jesus, the Son of God, in the wilderness battling Satan for us. Jesus is our champion who defeats Satan on the cross and gives you the victory! Be bold in your faith; and live a holy life; Christ has given you the victory over the devil and his temptations!

Amen!