**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 8** Luke 4:1-13 The Temptation of Jesus!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture and how does it apply to your life?
2. Scan Wiersbe chapter 3 and read pages 50-54.
   1. Temptation is a weapon Satan uses to defeat us. What spiritual resources do we have at our disposal to not only overcome temptation but to grow spiritually?
   2. What does it mean to put God to the test?
3. Read Luke 4:1-2.

J. Vernon McGee writes, “We have before us the testing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—all record this testing. John does not record this incident because he is presenting the Lord Jesus as the Son of God with the emphasis upon His deity. The synoptic Gospels place the emphasis upon the humanity of the Lord Jesus. He was tempted as a man. In the Gospel of Luke, He is presented as the Son of Man. Luke 3:38 says, ‘Which was the son of Enosh, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.’ This is the genealogy of Mary which traces the line of Christ back to Adam. Being a son of Adam take Him right back to the beginning of the race of which we are members. It was as a human being that He was tempted in all points like we are; yet He was without sin.

There is a frightful and fearful darkness about the temptation of our Lord that is an appalling enigma. I must confess that I cannot explain it, but I will take you to the very edge, and at the fringe I hope we can learn something. There were unseen and hidden forces of evil all about Him. He was surrounded by powers of darkness and destruction. He grappled with the basic problems of mankind, that which is earthly, and He won a victory for you and me.

There are several preliminary considerations we need to have in mind as we look at the testing of our Lord. We are told that He was filled with the Holy Spirit. As man, the Son of God needed to be filled with the Spirit in order to meet the temptation. And, friend, I cannot face the temptations of this world in my own strength. In Romans 7:21 Paul tells us, ‘I find a law, that, when I do good, evil is present with me.’ Haven’t you found that to be true? In Romans 8:3-4 Paul continues, ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ So, in Galatians 5:16 Paul concludes, ‘This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.’ We need the Holy Spirit.

In Deuteronomy 8:2 God gold the Israelites, ‘And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.’ In other words, God was testing the Israelites. God never test anyone with evil.

We are told that before the Lord was tested, He was led (Mark says driven) by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. In other words, the Lord did not seek the temptation. Even at the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed, ‘Let this cup pass from me’ (see Luke 22:24).

The Lord’s temptation did not bring at the end of the forty days; rather, Luke is telling   
us that after the temptation He was hungry. He was tempted of the Devil all during those forty days. Satan did not stop tempting the Lord after the wilderness temptation either.   
At the Garden of Gethsemane was another onslaught of Satan. In verse 13 of this chapter Luke tells us, ‘And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him   
for a season.’

Something else we need to understand is that Satan is a person. I understand that from thirty percent to ninety percent of the ministers say that he is not a person. The Scripture, however, makes it quite clear that the Devil is a person. When he tempted the Lord Jesus, did he come in bodily form? Did he come as a spirit or did he come as an angel of light? The Bible tells us that the Lord met him face-to-face. We need to realize that Satan is subtle—one time he is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and the next time   
he is an angel of light deceiving even the elect if he could do so (See 1 Peter 5:8;   
2 Corinthians 11:14).

What is the meaning of the Lord’s temptation? The word tempt has a twofold meaning. To tempt means “to incite and entice to evil,” and it means “to seduce.” If a person can   
be seduced to do evil, that meant there is something in the individual that causes him to yield. It would not be temptation unless something in a person could yield to it. However, this was not true of the Lord Jesus Christ. He could say, ‘Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me’ (John 14:30). I do not know about you, friend, but every time Satan comes to me, he always finds some place to take hold of. Our Lord was holy, blameless, undefiled and separate from sinners (see Heb. 7:26). The temptation of Christ was not a temptation to do evil.

Then the word tempt is used in another way. Genesis 22:1 tells us that ‘…God did tempt Abraham…’ in that God tested Abraham. Also, He proved, or tested, Israel for forty years in the wilderness. This raises a question. Could the Lord Jesus Christ have fallen? No, Christ could not have fallen. Then was it a legitimate temptation? It was a test. All new articles are tested. For example, tires and automobiles are tested. On television commercials the manufacturers show you the new model car and drive it through purgatory to show you the amount of punishment it can take. Everything is tested, and   
for anything to break down would be pretty embarrassing for the manufacturer. The   
Lord Jesus could not have fallen; so, was this a legitimate test? It was, and let me illustrate this fact with a simple story.

When I was a little boy in west Texas, we lived on the west fork of the Brazos River. In the summertime there was not enough water in the stream to rust a shingle nail. It was dry. In the wintertime, however, you could have kept a battleship afloat in it. One year we had a flood, and it washed out a railroad bridge over the bridge. Santa Fe railroad workers came immediately to build a new bridge. When the bridge was completed, they put two engines on the bridge and tied down the whistles. In our little town we had never heard two engine whistles blow at the same time; so, everyone raced to the bridge, all twenty-seven of us. One brave fellow in the crowd asked, “What are you doing?” The engineer said, ‘We are testing the bridge.’ ‘Do you think it will break?’ the young man queried. “Of course it won’t break,” the engineer said with almost a sneer. ‘If you know it won’t break, why are you putting the engines on the bridge?’ the young man wondered. ‘Just   
to prove that it won’t break,’ said the engineer.

That is what the Lord’s temptation was. It showed us that we have a Savior who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and able to save the uttermost those who come unto God through Him (see Heb. 7:25-26).

The Lord was tested in a way that we could never have been tested. When we are tested, there is always a breaking point. When we reach the breaking point, we break and then the pressure is removed. The pressure was never removed from our Lord.

His was a threefold temptation: physical, psychological and spiritual.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Read James 1:13-15.

* Define temptation.
* Give the stages of temptation which lead ultimately to death.
* What do you think the word ‘death’ means (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:8-10; Eph. 4:18)?

1. Verse 2 says, “Where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.”

* What was Jesus’ physical status at the end of these forty days?
* When does Satan often attack followers of Jesus?
* Read Romans 8:26. Who helps us in our weakness?

1. From the following verses explain how God helps us when tempted?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Psalm 46:1

Hebrews 2:17-18

James 4:7-8

Ephesians 6:10-18

1. Will you share about a time when you were tempted and how the Lord came to   
   your rescue?
2. Read Luke 4:3-13 along with Genesis 3:1-7 and 1 John 2:15-18.
3. J. Vernon McGee states that Jesus’ “was a threefold temptation: physical, psychological and spiritual.” Explain.

**Physical** (Luke 4:3; Gen. 3:6 [‘saw that it was good for food’]; 1 John 2:16   
[‘the cravings of sinful man’]):

**Psychological** (Luke 4:5-8; Gen. 3:6 [‘and pleasing to the eye’]; 1 John 2:16   
[‘the lust of the eyes’]):

**Spiritual** (Luke 4:9-13; Gen. 3:6 [and desirable for gaining wisdom];   
1 John 2:16 [‘the pride of life’]):

1. How did Jesus respond to each temptation? From which book of the Bible was   
   Jesus quoting? Give the references.

* What do you learn about the Word of God from the following verses?

Psalm 119:11

Psalm 119:105

Ephesians 6:17

Hebrews 4:12

1. Read 1 John 2:15-17 again.

* Explain the world system that is controlled by Satan (See James 4:4;   
  1 John 5:19)?
* Where do you see evidence of Satan’s control of the world system today?
* Why does Scripture warn believer’s not to love the world (Matt. 6:19-20;   
  1 Cor. 7:31)?
* How do you see yourself tempted in the following areas?

1. The cravings of sinful man
2. The lust of the eyes
3. The boasting of what he has and does (the pride of life)

* What do you plan to implement in your daily routine to resist the pull of the world and follow more wholeheartedly after the Lord Jesus?

First John 2:15-16 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world." Yet John 3:16 begins, "For God so loved the world. . . ." So, God loves the world, but we are   
not supposed to? Why the apparent contradiction?

In the Bible, the term *world* can refer to the earth and physical universe (Hebrews 1:2; John 13:1), but it most often refers to the humanistic system that is at odds with God (Matthew 18:7; John 15:19; 1 John 4:5). When the Bible says that God loves the world, it is referring to   
the human beings who live here (1 John 4:9). And as His children, we are to love other people (Romans 13:8; 1 John 4:7; 1 Peter 1:22). The parable of the Good Samaritan makes it clear we cannot pick and choose whom to love (Luke 10:30-37).  
When we are told *not* to love the world, the Bible is referring to the world’s corrupt value system. Satan is the god of this world, and he has his own value system contrary to God’s   
(2 Corinthians 4:4). First John 2:16 details exactly what Satan’s system promotes: the lust of   
the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Every sin imaginable can be summed up in those three evils.

The world is what we leave when we come to Christ. Isaiah 55:7 says that coming to God involves a forsaking of our own ways and thoughts. John Bunyan, in his book *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, pictures the believer’s position as having “his eyes lift up to heaven,” holding “the   
best of books” in his hand, and standing with “the world as cast behind him” (p. 34).  
The world often applauds sin. Hollywood encourages us to envy sinners and to foolishly compare ourselves with the "beautiful people" (see Proverbs 23:17). Often the popularity of "stars" is due to their ability to stir in us dissatisfaction with our own lives. Advertisers prey on our natural tendency to love this world, and most marketing campaigns appeal in some way to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life.

Loving the world means being devoted to the world’s treasures, philosophies, and priorities.   
God tells His children to set their priorities according to His eternal value system. We are to “seek first” God’s kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33). No one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and we cannot be devoted to both God and the world at the same time.  
When we enter God’s family through faith in Christ, God gives us the ability to exit the world’s rat race (2 Corinthians 5:17). We become citizens of another kingdom (Philippians 1:27, 3:20). Our desires turn heavenward, and we begin to store up eternal treasure (Luke 12:33; Matthew 19:21; 1 Timothy 6:18-19). We realize that what is truly important is eternal, not temporal, and we stop loving the world.

To continue to love the world the way unbelievers do will cripple our spiritual growth and render us fruitless for God’s kingdom (Matthew 3:8; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-8). In John 12:25, Jesus took this thought a step further when He said, "Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Not loving the world extends to our own lives as well. Jesus said if we love anything more than Him, we are not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37-38).

In general, the term *world* in the Bible refers to the evil system controlled by Satan that leads us away from worship of God. John Calvin said, "The human heart is an idol factory." We can make idols out of anything. Any passionate desire of our hearts that is not put there by God for His glory can become an idol (1 Corinthians 10:31). Loving the world is idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:7, 14). So, while we are commanded to love the *people* of the world, we are to be wary   
of anything that competes with God for our highest affections.[[2]](#endnote-2)

5. Read Micah 7:18-19, Hebrews 4:14-16 and 1 John 1:9.

* When you fall prey to temptation and sin, what should you do?
* How will Jesus deal with us when we approach the throne of grace?

Why was Jesus Christ tempted? To demonstrate that you and I have a sinless Savior. He is sinless, impeccable, and able to save. He proved that all power had been given to Him. There is a Man in glory today, friend, who understands and is able to sympathize with us. It is wonderful to have a Savior like that! John writes, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”   
(1 John 2:1-2). The Lord Jesus can be depended upon in every circumstance of life.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. What is the most important truth you have learned from this lesson and how will   
   impact your life?

1. J. Vernon McGee, THRU THE BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES: LUKE, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 60-63. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.gotquestions.org/do-not-love-the-world.html [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. McGee, 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)