

The Temptation of Jesus

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[0:00] Well, just a quick recap. Since Christmas, James was preaching on the Christmas story, and after that we went into boy Jesus and tween Jesus when Jesus was at the temple as his parents were looking for him.

And then we moved on to young adult Jesus, what that would be like. We don't know exactly in scripture what young adult Jesus would be like. But just to say, if he was 25 and we met Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, his CV probably wasn't that impressive.

He hadn't done any short movies like Cuban. He wasn't probably financially independent. And yet there was something about Jesus in the waiting, the patience that he had, trusting his father's calling, trusting his father's timing.

And that was so beautiful, that's so rare, which we all yearn for. And I know in 2025, we're going to seek a lot of things. We're going to seek to do a lot of things. But I can tell you right now, what we seek most is to become more like him.

And so we see Jesus, we fast forward from tween to young adult and then to adult Jesus, 30 years old. First public appearance. He was at the River Jordan. He was baptized by John the Baptist.

[1:03] It was epic. He was baptized. He was praying. Heavens opened up. Holy Spirit descended like a dove. And the voice from heaven came and said, this is my son whom I love with him.

I am well pleased. Now this is the entrance of entrances. This is the epic start of this whole new series, this movie that we've been waiting for as mankind. 400 years of silence and Jesus comes. Heaven opens up. This is the highest affirmation. I mean, that we all crave for families, Asian families, any type of families to hear the father's affirmation in public. This is my son whom I love with him.

I'm well pleased. This is just to bear in mind. This is before he had made one disciple. This is before he planted any churches. This is before he preached any sermon from what we know. Technically, his CV is still empty.

He had not done much. He's just working for his father faithfully. He had 90 followers. Yet here is God from heaven with a voice saying, this is my son whom I am well pleased.

[2:04] And so this is the beginning of this context of him being tempted into the wilderness. I'm going to think, when is the first time in scripture where we hear these three things come together?

Temptation, Satan, and wilderness. Where in the Bible do you hear? When do we first read about temptation? I think we all know this. It's in Genesis. Garden of Eden.

Satan tempts man. Man, Adam and Eve, falls into temptation. Succumbs into temptation. Thus, sin enters the world. And what happens? They're exiled from the garden.

They're kicked into the wilderness. Now, what's interesting here is just as Jesus is baptized in this epic scene where God says, this is my son. He's filled with the Holy Spirit. What we would expect when you think of someone filled with the Holy Spirit, if Aidan was filled with the Holy Spirit, what would we expect?

You'd think that he, naturally, would probably go out and preach an epic sermon. He'll start healing everyone. Actually, probably. I don't know if this is true. But after everyone saw the baptism, they probably ran into town saying, the Messiah is here.

[3:06] Get ready. He's going to come in and preach and speak to us all and tell us what he's here for. They were probably waiting for him in town. But no, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness. And they must have been like, where's he gone?

That moment just was amazing. It was epic. And then he just disappears for 40 days and 40 nights. Something is unique about that. And we can't miss that. And the Holy Spirit was the one who led Jesus into the wilderness. It wasn't what I used to think, Satan.

I used to always think it was Satan who led Jesus into the wilderness. But actually, it was the Holy Spirit leading us to the wilderness. And for those who've been, for those who've here who've walked in the time of wilderness, who is walking in the time of wilderness, we know that this is the place that we doubt God the most.

It's in wilderness where we doubt God, we doubt ourselves. And so from that spiritual high, he goes to the spiritual low. And thus begins the fasting and the praying and the temptations.

And something interesting about the wilderness, as I was reflecting this week, was actually it reveals that Jesus wasn't here just to save the people of Israel. He wasn't in here just to go straight to Caesar and like Moses and Pharaoh say, let my people go.

[4:14] He was here for a bigger mission. His mission wasn't just to save the people of that time. His mission was to save all of humanity. He was to go back in time to the garden, to redeem what was lost in the garden.

And as Adam and Eve were kicked into the wilderness, he went back into the wilderness because he's here to fight his way back into Eden. Why? Because he wants to fight his way back into Eden so that God and man can be restored.

And there will be a day where we can walk with God again. And so Jesus' mission was way bigger because we fell into wilderness. Jesus redeemed what Adam lost, going into the wilderness to fight back what was lost.

And in the solitude, in the wilderness, Henry Nouwen has this great quote that says, solitude is the furnace of transformation. Jesus led himself into the furnace for refinement.

Last week, we spoke about refinement. Last week, we spoke about baptism of water. And Jesus just getting baptized. He now gets baptized in the fire, in the furnace of solitude.

[5:18] 40 days he prayed and fasted. He mirrors this. Elijah and Moses, they prayed and fasted 40 days. And in that wilderness, he also mirrors Israel, who spent 40 years in the wilderness.

He goes, Jesus goes back to redeem Adam's failure. He goes back to redeem Israel's failure to show that he truly is the savior of the world. And something interesting about fasting and praying, before we head into the temptations bit, and I invite my brothers to come up.

Fasting and praying. Every time we read about fasting and praying in the scripture, it comes right before great revival, great awakening, great spiritual harvest. And in the same way, we know that as Jesus is preparing for his public ministry, there were some battles that needed to be won in private. There's a quote that I grew up that helped me a lot as I was a teenager. I think it was Rick Warren.

He said this, public power comes with private purity. Public power comes with private purity.

Something has to happen on the inside before it happens on the outside. Andy Murray, not the tennis player, but the theologian, but maybe the tennis player had said this before.

[6:23] He said, prayer and fasting comes hand in hand together. Prayer and fasting comes together. Prayer is when we grasp the unseen, the invisible, the spiritual. And as we fast, we let go of the flesh.

We let go of the material, of the physical, of the temporary. And so that's why prayer and fasting, it comes together. And Jesus did this for 40 days and 40 nights. And with that, I want to invite some guys up who also have been praying and fasting for not quite 40 days, for maybe for four days, for praying for four days, whereas maybe four minutes.

All of us have been praying and seeking God this week. And just to add on that, you know, we were all told to kind of submit what we'll be sharing by Friday.

Julian submitted by Wednesday. Incredible. And it was so concise. Many of what I had today was from Julian. The other two, which I won't name. They yeah, we got it, I think, at 1155 last night.

So that's just to say, thank you, Julian. That's why you get to kick this off. But again, yeah, we're going to go into the temptations. But two really clear things about temptations that we need to know from scripture. And we probably all know this.

[7:33] Temptations do not come from God. God cannot be tempted, nor does he tempt. And we all know this passage as well. God will not tempt us more than we can handle. And so Jesus, Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit that's in us, each of us right here, leads Jesus to the wilderness for fasting and prayer.

When we draw close to God, it's often in those times where the temptation comes. That's when Satan comes. In James 1.13, it says, we're not tempted by God, but we're tempted by our own fleshly desires.

And so I'm going to ask the three of them to come out one by one. Julian, Wes, and then Jay. And they're going to share about these temptations. And it's easy to dismiss these temptations as you heard them. I grew up hearing them thinking, I've never been tempted like that.

Satan's never met me and taken me into the top of the mountain and said, jump. But I hope that what you're going to hear today is actually going to hear that these three temptations are much more practical and applicable.

In fact, these are the temptations that you, that I face on the daily in our workplaces, in our family, in our relationships. And so, yeah, I'll just invite them to come and break it down. And so, yeah, the floor is yours.

[8:36] Round of applause for Julian. Thank you. And Julian actually ran a half marathon this morning. It's just incredible. What a beast. That's something that James has never, ever done, by the way.

So you can hold that above him. You tell him that every single time you see him. James is not. I don't even know if he can. His Achilles won't last. But Julian, over to you. The first temptation. Not today, Juju.

Not today. We'll hold back. We'll hold back. Look, hey, thanks, Joe. And so I have the privilege of sharing about the first temptation that Jesus faced in the wilderness today.

And Joe touched on it a little bit. But let me just, and Queenie read the passage for us as well. But let me just quickly just read the two verses here. When Jesus is in the wilderness, he's hungry. He's fasted for 40 days.

And the devil said to him, if you are the son of God, command this stone to become bread. And Jesus answered him. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone. So as I've meditated on this passage, again, Joe touched on it briefly.

[9:35] But I'm just so struck by that immediate sequence of events from Jesus' baptism in the Jordan where he receives the father's affirmation. The father says to him, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

And straight away, the spirit takes him into the wilderness. And what does Satan do? Satan tests that very thing that God the father has already declared over Jesus.

That's what I see here as I look at this first temptation. Because if you look at what Satan is saying, what I see here is Satan is questioning Jesus' identity.

Satan is questioning Jesus' identity. He's saying, if you are the son of God, trying to cast doubt on that, then why don't you just turn these stones into bread? And to break that down a bit more, I see two things in particular.

Firstly, it's a temptation to prove. Somehow, Satan is inviting Jesus to believe that if he doesn't perform this miracle, that compromises his identity.

[10:37] That doesn't mean he's him. He's not the son of God. And secondly, it's a temptation to use his power to meet his own needs.

Rather than trusting on the father's provision. And don't we resonate as human beings with both of those things? I think Satan understands something about humanity's weakness.

We, too, in our lives, as we wander this spiritual wilderness in this already not yet between coming to know who God is in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And journeying on our way to heaven where we'll see him face to face. We, too, face this temptation to prove. And we, too, face this temptation to use our power to meet our own needs.

We forget what the Father has promised us. And we rely on ourselves instead. And I just, again, maybe this resonates with some of you going from spiritual highs, whether that's your baptism or a conference or whatever.

[11:43] And it's funny how off those spiritual highs, I don't know if you resonate with this, but there can be this just real danger zone where you forget quickly what you've just heard or what you've just experienced.

And God has been taking me on a journey, just to share more personally, with this theme of forgetting the Father's affirmation.

And for those of you who've journeyed with me for a while, you know that the past one or two years have brought a lot of change for me. I've taken on new responsibilities as a husband and as a newly promoted lawyer as well.

And God has been taking me on a journey of understanding how to carry those expectations, those new responsibilities. And he's revealed a lot in me that he's wanted me to work on.

And I think, you know, you find out, I mean, every married man will quickly identify. You find out on day one there's no such thing as a perfect husband. And someone will tell you very quickly.

[12:46] And look, and all that to say, I've been, don't worry, Florence is the good person in this story. You will find out quickly.

And what that did for me, see, as I navigated trying to meet standards and expectations, a lot of that from myself, making mistakes, I'd figure out pretty quickly I was getting very discouraged.

I was getting very discouraged. And actually something darker was happening. I was experiencing a lot of anxiety and a lot of shame. And I tried to understand that why do I feel this way?

You know, why do the smallest setbacks such as forgetting to put something in the soup or discourage me so much? Or, you know, I'd be, why am I working so late on these chores that are not urgent?

What am I trying to prove here? And then in the work context, you know, I'd be sitting there at my desk and I'd be thinking, you know, I'd be paralyzed. I'd be paralyzed by fear, you know, because the boss asked me to do something and I wasn't sure what the right answer was.

[13:56] But what if I say this? What if I send the email this way? And then quickly, you know, I am the master of overthinking. And so I found myself paralyzed by fear, by anxiety.

That marked a lot of, especially the first half of last year, I would say. And look, God is, I mean, we've been talking a lot about mental health here as a church, but God's been taking me on a journey through that of discovering where I actually am placing on myself a burden to prove and to provide and to meet my needs, meet others' needs by my own power.

Which, again, some of you might resonate, maybe men in particular, but I think in no way exclusively. And it got to a point where the shame and the anxiety was so bad that, you know, I'd be slapping myself out of frustration, right?

So I think when that happened, Florence throughout this whole time was incredibly patient, loving, supportive. Just to be very clear, it was very obvious that the issues were within, to be addressed within me.

And so we both made the decision together that it'd be good for me to explore seeing a counselor, which was the best decision I made last year.

[15:18] And look, we all have our own journey with mental health and it's complicated, but it's been so good.

It's been so good for me. And I think just to hone in on one thing in particular, please talk to me more later or next week if you have more questions. But what that did for me, what my counselor did for me, what the Lord has provided for is just uncovering, actually, after all this time of following Jesus for, what, 15, 20 years, there is still this false gospel that I buy into, that I'm still tempted to buy into on a daily basis of, again, coming back to the point I made earlier.

The temptation to prove myself. The temptation to provide for myself. Forgetting the Father's affirmation. This false gospel that says, I need to be good enough to earn the right to exist in this room right now.

And that was actually, you know, even if I declare by faith that I am saved by grace, that was functionally how I was operating day to day. And naming that and understanding that was the first step in removing its power, right?

And for me, God has taken me on a journey of leaning into and understanding that true gospel. And what is that, church? What do we see here in this text? How does Jesus overcome this temptation?

[16:44] He relies on God's word. He says, man shall not live by bread alone. You will look at other versions of this text and it says, but by the word of God.

And I've just been struck. Jesus persevered through that temptation. He overcame Satan's temptation to take the easy way out.

And he did that again a few years later. He didn't take the easy way out in the garden of Gethsemane. He endured all the way to the cross. He purchased our redemption so that for all of us who trust in Christ, we can say, oh, so I know the father who says, this is my beloved son.

This is my beloved daughter with whom I am well pleased. And that is the good news, church, that I want us to hear again today. And how do we overcome?

We overcome not by our own power, but by relying on God's word and doing that in community just to end. And I think that's the encouragement I want to leave us with is you don't have to go through this alone, whether that is a counselor or whether that's a close friend who can hold the mirror up to you and say, hey, this doesn't quite match up.

[17:55] How are you actually operating day to day? And so can we do that? That's my encouragement. Just to end. If you don't take, if you take nothing else away from just this short period of sharing, it's can we as a church who have come to know the Lord remember the father's affirmation?

And rely on his living word. Amen. Thank you, Julian. Such a good reminder.

Wes is going to share about the temptation number two. Yeah, go for it, Wes. Thanks. Thank you, Julian. For anyone who doesn't know me, I'm Wesley.

Nice to meet you all. I also have a brother, Nathan. Just FY for your reference, we are not the same people because someone thought we were the same person for a while.

Just some key differences about us. He's dating. I'm not. I'm just joking. Just joking. Just joking. Anyways, let's get into the word here.

[19:03] Let's get into the word here. So I'm going through the second temptation, which is verse six to seven. So let's just quickly read through it.

And said to him, to you, I will give all this authority and their glory for has been delivered to me and I give it to you to whom I will.

If you then will worship me, it will all be yours. And Jesus answered him. It is written. You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. So I think definitely the first thing that comes to mind is when Satan is tempting Jesus, it's how is Jesus tempted by this?

And in terms of why does the son of God feel temptation towards having authority over just having the kingdoms and being to rule it all, right?

He's already the son of God. And I think it definitely kind of takes us back a little bit to how Satan says he does have the authority to give the kingdoms to Jesus.

[20:11] And this is kind of that imagery between Jesus and Adam when temptation, where Adam kind of fell to temptation. And through that, Adam was kind of, well, in the first place, man was created to rule over the creatures of the sea and he had authority over the earth, right?

He had the ability to rule. And in falling to temptation to Satan, he kind of gave up that authority and gave power to Satan, right? But that imagery here for Jesus, he kind of declines that authority that is being offered to him.

And he shows, yeah, he shows that he does have the authority and that there's no, he just doesn't have any desire for this.

Let's see. So, yeah, so just going back to Adam, well, in Matthew it says that no one can serve two masters, right?

So when Adam kind of falls to temptation, he kind of gives up whatever it is, like his authority to Satan there.

[21:32] So God does ultimately have the authority for earth and he controls everything really. It kind of brings me back to reading Job a little bit when Satan has to actually go up to God and he asks for permission to tempt Job and to bring him and just to challenge him in these different things.

Kind of reminds me of what Joe was saying about how God doesn't let you go through anything that you cannot handle, right? Like Jesus, I mean, God really knew that Job had this strength and had the ability in him to kind of resist any of these temptations and that he wouldn't curse God above all of them.

So what does this kind of temptation really mean for us and how does it apply, right? Why is this actually a temptation for Jesus going back to kind of that point there?

The temptation here for God is really, I think at the end of the day, Jesus is, he did come down as a human. So as humans and with normal temptations, we do desire power.

We do desire control and authority on earth. So it is something that Jesus does struggle with and that as a human that we would kind of be tempted towards.

[22:51] Also, the mission of Jesus was to come and die on the cross, right? His job is, as in Luke 19, it says that he came to seek and save the lost, right?

So his role and his calling on earth was to die on the cross for us to save our sins. So the idea of this temptation is that for Jesus to, for him to come, he had to die on the cross.

And yeah, and the temptation really here is that he'd be able to achieve all this authority, achieve kingship and achieve everything without actually having to do his ministry or any of the dirty work, really.

And he really would even not have to suffer, right? So even in the Mount of Olives, he prayed that he wouldn't, that this cup be taken away from him. But regardless, if it's God's will, he will kind of, he'll continue and carry it on, right?

So yeah, this is, for me, this temptation kind of comes down to two things. Number one is, what do you worship? Yeah, what do you focus on and what kind of, what do you desire in your heart, right? [24 : 11] Romans 8, 5 does say, for those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the spirit, set their minds on things of the spirit.

I think something that's really applicable for everyone here is that it's still beginning of the year. Joe kind of mentioned Chinese New Year is coming up soon, too.

So it's a nice way to kind of go back and have a look at your New Year's resolutions. Some things I would like to challenge you guys in terms of New Year's resolutions is what percentage of your New Year's resolutions are spirit-focused?

Or what percentage of them are actually flesh-focused, right? Are you desiring to get rich? Are you desiring to find a good job or to get into a good university or to find a really cool, significant other or just anything like that?

Like, what is the desire of your heart and what are you really worshipping here? What are you focused on here? The second point really is what are you compromising in order to get what you desire, right?

[25 : 23] So when I first moved back to Hong Kong from the UK, I had an impression that I was going to make a lot of money and that I was just able to indulge in the nice things that Hong Kong had to offer, like good food, being able to travel to Japan all the time, you know?

Yeah, it's just like the idea that I wanted really nice things for myself all the time. While in the UK, all I had for a treat was maybe going to Nando's or like Wagamama's for a meal, right?

But yeah, so at this time when I moved back to Hong Kong, I didn't really care too much about faith. I didn't really want anything to do with it. And all I wanted was money, money, money, and just to kind of live happy and luxurious, right?

But when I started working, there was a lot of different pressures. And this is when I kind of also started to seek in terms of faith. So yeah, there was a lot of pressure just to kind of actually really just make more money.

But honestly, I don't think it was really in a very integral way. So I was kind of asked a lot to kind of hard sell all of my clients and just really kind of do things that I didn't feel like was needed.

[26 : 36] For all that you don't know, I work in like private health care. So there was kind of an idea where I had to get people coming back a little bit more than I felt like they needed to just for money's sake.

And that kind of really, at that time, really hit home for me a little bit. I just couldn't find it in myself to do that. And it kind of reminded me of something my mom told me while I was prepping for this. And she came up with the Bible verse in Matthew 6. And it just says, but seek first the kingdom of God and all his righteousness. And his righteousness and all of these things will be added to you. And we've been meditating on it. I mean, like in small group. And I know Aiden has as well. We have Emily. And basically, that kind of really changed my mindset for the last couple of months, especially now that I've kind of changed jobs and we're starting to build a company with a few of my other colleagues that we're really trying to, or at least I am trying to really focus on God in this particular aspect.

And hopefully, all these things that God knows he will provide, right? So this is where I kind of learned that actually, whatever I do, God always provides.

[27 : 55] And there's always enough for me. Yeah. So ultimately, my challenge to you is what do you really worship? What do you desire in your heart, right?

As you kind of look back or look towards this coming year, what I'd like to encourage you with is just a Bible verse from Deuteronomy 8. It basically is a preach or a sermon from Moses.

And he's kind of trying to remind everyone of what God's done for them, right? And just a quick little bit is in verse 2, it says, The Lord your God has led you in the wilderness that he might humble you, testing to know what is in your heart.

It later goes on in verse 19 to 20, and it says, If you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish, like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you.

So shall you perish because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God. So just a big challenge for you guys just to remember God and kind of what you're doing, how you can add this, and how you can focus that in your life.

[29:08] Thank you so much. Wes, honor him and his group comes in on Monday mornings to pray at 7 a.m. as well.

We appreciate that. The three temptations often we summarize as the temptation to be relevant, to be powerful, and to be spectacular. And so, Jay, you're going to come up and share the last one, the final one, the temptation to be spectacular, to be popular.

And it's a bit of an interesting one. And so I would love to have you unpack that a little, and then I'll wrap up. Thank you. Thanks, Joe. How much time do I have? Ten minutes?

Yeah. Okay. All right. So third and final temptation. I'm the last one, guys. Thanks for bearing with us. When we were deciding which temptations between Wes, Juju, and I, this is the one that I wanted to do at least because it was the one that was quite challenging to me.

I didn't really understand what was going on in this final temptation. So I'm going to break it down for you guys today, and I'm going to go through quite a bit of scripture. So please feel free to follow along in the scripture. But I'm just going to quickly go through the actual scripture from Luke 4, the temptation itself.

[30:14] So Luke 4, chapter 4, Luke 4, verse 9. Now, I don't know about you guys, but that's really confusing to me.

So what is the devil actually trying to tempt Jesus with here? What does the devil stand to gain if Jesus really does jump from the temple, right? And in order to understand this, we have to understand the context behind what Satan says to Jesus and how Jesus responds back to Satan.

So this is the only temptation where Satan uses the actual living word of God to challenge Jesus, right? And he's actually quoting Psalm 91. You can feel free to flip to Psalm 91 yourselves.

But just to quickly summarize Psalm 91, the context of Psalm 91 is a writer at the time. He's writing to people who are struggling a lot. It's a time of war, disease, and adversity.

And he's telling to the people, hey, have confidence in God. He will protect us. Have confidence in God. He will protect us. And what Satan does is he quotes this and he says, hey, Jesus, if you jump from here, it's going to be okay.

[31:32] God protects you. And he totally takes this Psalm out of context. So that is a temptation. So we know from this that Satan really does stand to gain something if Jesus jumps. Now, how does Jesus respond to this, right?

And he says, and Jesus answered him, it is said, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. That's so confusing. Okay, what does that even mean, right?

So Jesus is actually quoting Deuteronomy 6, 16. And Deuteronomy 6, 16 is in reference to Exodus 17. I'm going to take you back to Exodus 17, just to explain what the definition of testing is here and what Jesus is really trying to say to the enemy.

So in Exodus 17, you can feel free to flip there, but essentially to quickly summarize Exodus 17, this is right after God saves the Israelites from the Egyptians. And they're wandering in the wilderness. And the people, the Israelites, they start to get thirsty. They're like, Moses, like, I'm so thirsty. I need some water. Like, why did you bring us out here? And they slowly start to accuse him. They start resenting him.

[32:35] And from this scene, Moses, so God tells Moses, hey, bring that staff that you split the Red Sea with and go to this rock and strike the rock with your staff and water will flow from it.

Okay, so what does that mean? So if I take you back to Exodus 17, it says, and Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel and because they tested the Lord by saying, is the Lord among us or not? So I think the word testing here is very clear.

He's basically, I think it can be interpreted as when Jesus says, it is written, you shall not put your God to the test. He's basically saying, don't doubt God. Don't doubt if God is really among us or not.

Don't doubt if you're really God's chosen people. And this is how Jesus is responding, right? Okay, now I've explained both contexts to how Satan quoted Psalm 91 and how Jesus quoted Exodus 17. [33 : 32] So how do these two passages actually connect? What is the actual temptation here? Right, so Satan says, okay, jump off, right? And he'll protect you. And Jesus says, no, I'm not going to.

I'm not going to doubt God's faithfulness to me. So is Satan actually tempting Jesus to doubt that God will save him from this big jump? I think actually runs a little bit deeper than that, right? So if we look at the context to the pinnacle of the temple, if Jesus really did jump from the pinnacle of the temple, there would have been a crowd, right? There would have been a crowd. And if he jumped, it would have been this dazzling feat, right?

He jumps, the heavens open up, angels come down and they literally save him. What will this win? This will win the admiration of the people. Basically what Satan is saying to Jesus is, hey, God's love for you, is that really enough?

Are you really God's chosen one? I don't know. Prove yourself. Just jump from here. And the people, you can see it immediately. They will love you. They will admire you. Don't you want that? Is God's love really real?

[34 : 34] Is he really among you? Are you God's chosen one? That's what he's challenging here, I think. Now, I think this temptation, it can feel a little bit far off from all of us. Like, how does this even apply to us, right? Like, how, like, are we at the pinnacle of the temple every day?

I think that's the question that I was challenged with this week as I was going through this passage. And I think all of us on a daily basis, especially in the city of Hong Kong, we are faced with this challenge. And Satan brings us up to the pinnacle of the temple every day.

And he tells us, prove yourself. Are you really enough? God says he loved you, but is he really faithful to you? I don't think so. Just take matters into your own hands. Jump. Just jump.

And you can prove yourself. Do well at work. Do everything. Break your back at work and just do everything and prove yourself. And you will win the admiration of people. Work really hard at school.

Study, study, study, study, study. Get the best grades. Go to the best schools. Prove yourself. God's love is not enough for you. And that is the temptation here today. I think that is what Satan is tempting Jesus with.

[35 : 34] So I think my challenge to everyone is, what area in your life do you currently try to prove yourself? A bit too much. And I think what's really telling is, in that area of your life, do you feel anxious all the time?

Are you just trying to prove yourself constantly and you just never feel satisfied? What is that area in your life where you feel like you're striving? And I think the response is, we have to look at how Jesus responds to this, right?

He says to Satan, I'm not going to test the Lord. I know that he is faithful to me. And Jesus knows. And I feel that Jesus was able to resist this temptation because he knew exactly who he was and he knew that he was infinitely loved by God.

And he did not need to prove himself to anyone. And I think that's the reminder here. It's not, for us, I think how it applies is it's not, I'm just going to work a little, like I'm not going to work as hard at my job.

Like, you know, God tells us to excel at our jobs. I'm just not going to study as hard. No, I don't think it means that. I think Jesus isn't sitting there like beating himself, thinking, oh, I should stop trying to prove myself. No, he looks to God. And he says, God loves me.

[36 : 37] So the attitude here, the approach here is completely different. It's not trying to avoid doing something, but he looks to God and he remembers, I'm God's chosen one. I'm infinitely loved and I don't need to prove myself to anyone.

So that is the third and final temptation. And I want to, okay, I did it a little bit quickly, but I was just a little bit conscious of time. Thank you so much. Thank you to all three of you.

The temptation, Billy Graham sums it up, is the pride of life, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh. And we're all tempted. And in another sense, the temptation is going to actually trial and test us to prove ourselves.

Because the enemy's voice is to tell us that we're nobody, that we're worthless, that we're unworthy. But Jesus, he knew the word, he lived the word. And so when the pressure came up, it's the word

that came out.

And for us, as we're going to face our temptations and they're going to happen. Martin Luther has a great quote of, temptations do happen to us. And there's nothing we can really do about it most of the time. He gives the analogy of the birds flying above our heads.

[37 : 44] That's a temptation. But we all do have the power to not allow the birds to make nests on our heads. That's when we allow sin to enter our lives. That's when we allow temptations to succumb.

Great head joke there, but we're going to move past that. We're better than that. It's 2025. It's 2025. And one of the quotes that I grew up in, and I think, I don't know who said this, but it said, a faith cannot be trusted unless it's been tested.

A faith cannot be trusted unless it's been tested. We all have sat-through tests here. We're from Hong Kong, waste of us. Lawyers have sat through many, many tests. Doctors have sat through many tests. I wouldn't trust a doctor to operate on me if they've studied medical school, but not sat the tests.

There's something about tests that prove character, that prove and reveals what's on the inside. Here, Jesus, this test was something way beyond the bar or the medical exams. Jesus passed the test against Satan himself.

He proved to all of us that he's the savior of the world. And so with that, we can trust in him. With that, we have hope. And we pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[38 : 55] Temptations will come. And so Jay actually hinted on that. This year, I mean, Wes as well, this year, let it be a year where we know the word so well that when the fire is here, when we're being refined, what comes out is in our own flesh.

When things, when injustice happens to us, when I come out and complain and say, this is not fair. Woe is me. That's the devil trying to tell you that we're worthless and useless. I pray that when we go through the pressures of life, that when what comes out is actually just the deep trust, deep trust, deep belief, knowing who we are, that God loves us infinitely.

Pascal in the 1400s, and I know this quote is, says all of humanity's problems stand from man's inability to sit quietly in a room. All of humanity's problems stand from man's inability to sit quietly in a room.

It might be a bit of an overstatement, but there's a lot of truth to that. Jesus was able to sit quietly on his own in the wilderness. And because of that, he was able to overcome all of humanity's problems.

Are we able to sit quietly? I was challenging you in this year. How can I learn two things? To walk in solitude and scripture.

[40 : 18] When Jesus went and retreated and had all these devotions and quiet time, he didn't bring his Bible. There was no Bible. He didn't bring his journal. How many times have we had a quiet time when we're still doing and not listening?

And so my challenge to you, can we have quiet time without the scripture? That sounds a bit like a heresy if you take it out of context. But are we able to sit quiet enough until the silence comes and all the noise drowns out, all the lies, the enemy's lies to say that we're worthless, we're nobody, we're not enough.

The temptation can be summed into three final things. Help us understand and see is that we're valued and worth only by what we have, what we do, and whatever the sink of us.

What we have, what we do, and whatever the sink of us. Temptations that Jesus faced were the same as those three. And all these three, the enemy offers us quick, really quick solutions to all. He allows us to be quickly rich. If we can just jump, get in the lottery and get rich quick. Jesus tests the temptation. Can we jump off the temple and everybody will know us and we'll have all the followers in the world.

[41 : 30] But no, let us remind ourselves that we are loved and infinitely loved. And the reason Jesus was able to withstand the temptation is because the Holy Spirit was in him. He knew scripture.

And we too today have the same Holy Spirit, the same scripture. So I encourage this year, let us memorize the scripture so that when we're alone, all we hear are these words from God the Father. Father, you are my son, you are my daughter, whom I love. With you, I am well pleased. Let us respond in worship.

And let us even now just have a moment of silence and allow the noises to drown out. Do we believe those words from the Father? Father, from the Father? Lord, you are our one defense. You are the righteousness we seek. You are our strength. You are our shield. You are our very present help in time of need. We thank you.

[42:44] And where sin runs deep, your grace is more. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

And in your name we pray. Amen. Please take a seat. I just wanted to finish just to honor and thank the four gentlemen that ministered to us through the word.

I was deeply, deeply blessed. And I just want to, they won't say this, but I wanted to say this. Last week when I was looking at the passage, I was like, it would be so good if we got different people sharing about the different temptations. I was praying these were the gentlemen that came to mind and I just wanted to honor them because as we heard, Julian said, oh, actually, I've got a marathon to run in the morning.

Half marathon. Oh, thank you. Thank you for the honesty there as well. No proving anything. I mean, but with those little legs, I guess it felt like a marathon. Oh, gosh.

But he was like, oh, yeah, I've got a hard marathon, but I'll do it. I was like, oh, man, you wake up at four or five and then still do it. And I thought of Wes and Wes actually, to his credit, was like, yeah, I'd love to try.

[44:09] I've not done it before, but I'd love to try. And then two days ago, he had food poisoning and he's basically been sick these last two days and yesterday evening, he was like, I don't know if I'm going to make it, like just in life in general. This might be it.

And I said, hey, don't worry. There's nothing that we will be afraid of and it's okay. And yet he shows up and he just does it. And then Jay, of course, we shared last week, he's done a lot on his plate. He's been figuring out when to get married, where to get married and all these things after you have that kind of question answered. And I was like, Jay, I want to ask you this. I know you're busy, but hey, it's okay if you don't do it.

He's like, hey, there's never a good time and I'm going to be in the word anyway, so I'll do it. So I just wanted to honor them. And of course, my brother, who as you can see, has been a little bit under the weather. He was really sick these last few days.

And again, he was also like, I don't know if I'm going to be able to do it. I said, let's just go with whatever. And so just honor them and also just a shout out to all of you guys. When I come and ask you, unless you have a marathon, unless you are deeply sick, then actually, I just want to say, wow, to see these men just be faithful is inspiring to me.

[45:16] And that message, I hope, is what the Holy Spirit keeps saying over and over again, that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, are children of God. And that's the one message over and over again.

If you are facing temptation, you know you walk out of this room, you are going to be facing temptation. Whether it's going to be on a computer screen or whether it's going to be in the form of a person or whether it's going to be in the form of work or any kind of challenge, I encourage you to say, but I am a child of God.

He can be trusted and he loves me deeply. If we're honest to ourselves, when we succumb to those temptations, it's because we forget that one truth that the Holy Spirit is just hammering home time and time again.

You are loved. You are mine. And if you have that, watch your own spirit be lifted and watch your own ability to face these temptations rise.

And that's my prayer. That's our prayer. And so it's been great just to be able to fellowship and worship here. And next week, we're going to, Jesus announces, kickstarts his own ministry off himself by going to the temple and reading from the Old Testament and saying, ladies and gentlemen, I am him.

[46:25] Let's go. And that's what he's going to be doing. So welcome you to be back to unpack the word there with me next week as well. But as always, after a moment of quiet meditation, we'll head off to lunch slowly and gracefully as we exit from not the presence of God, but the fellowship of the saints.

See you next week. Thank you.