

**“Everybody Gets Tempted (Even Jesus)”**

**March 9, 2025**

**Romans 10:8b-13 & Luke 4:1-13**

**Preached at Messiah Lutheran, Joliet Illinois**

**by Pastor David Nygard**

All Bible passages are taken from the New International Version (NIV)

**Romans 10:8b-13** But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: <sup>9</sup> **If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** <sup>10</sup> **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.** <sup>11</sup> As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> **For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,** <sup>13</sup> **for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

**Luke 4:1-13** <sup>1</sup> **4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,** <sup>2</sup> **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. <sup>3</sup> **The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”** <sup>4</sup> **Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”** <sup>5</sup> The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> **And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.”** <sup>7</sup> **If you worship me, it will all be yours.”** <sup>8</sup> **Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”** <sup>9</sup> The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.** <sup>10</sup> **For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; <sup>11</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”** <sup>12</sup> **Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”** <sup>13</sup> **When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.** Please keep praying for our pastor, Pastor Kurt Hoover this week. He had open heart surgery. He came through it well. But it’s a long recovery. We love him and miss him. Pray for Molly, Myka and Eli too. Show your concern by being in church. **Our sermon is called “Everybody Gets Tempted (Even Jesus)”.**

Each Sunday in Lent we relive the events that led Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the grave. Why is that story so important? Paul tells us in Romans 10, **“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”**

If you want to go to heaven, if you want to be forgiven, if you want God's help in your everyday life, you must believe that Jesus is Lord, and that God raised him from the dead. Only then will you be saved. To say that Jesus is Lord means that he is in charge. We answer only to him. He is our pathway to finding God. I didn't say it. Paul said it. Believe it.

Our Bible verses today from Luke take place three years before the events of Good Friday. No one knew Jesus. He wasn't a preacher or miracle worker yet. Only he knew that he was the Messiah, the Savior promised in the Bible.

He started his ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist. John baptized him in the Jordan River. Immediately a voice shouted from heaven, **“This is my Son with whom I am well pleased.”** Then the Holy Spirit, the power and love of God filled his heart. The same thing happened when you and I were baptized. God claimed us and came into our hearts. I know that we have the Holy Spirit. But does the Holy Spirit have us? Do we serve and love God?

We read in Luke 4, **“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.”**

Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days, seeking God's will. What happened? The devil tempted Jesus bigtime. The devil tried everything to sabotage his life. How many times has the devil tempted you to make bad choices? How often have you done the very sins that you thought you would never do? What were you thinking?

**We learn three truths from this one verse. # 1) Everybody gets tempted... even Jesus.** When Jesus left heaven and became one of us, he allowed himself to be tempted just like we get tempted. Every day he felt

the devil pull and tug at his heart. **Everybody gets tempted... even Jesus.**

**We learn that # 2) Our temptations are the work of the devil.** It sounds old fashioned or superstitious, but the devil is alive. He was very real to Jesus. Jesus was no fool. The Bible calls the devil “a murderer”, the “father of lies”. He is known as “the deceiver”, “the accuser”, “the roaring lion ready to devour us”. **People make one of two mistakes when it comes to the devil. Either they fear him too much or they don’t fear him enough.**

Here's the good news. The Savior who lives in our hearts by faith is greater than the devil who lives in this world. It is a strong Lutheran belief that on Good Friday Jesus rescued us from “Sin, Death and the Power of the Devil.” Even so, we still give into temptation.

**We learn #3) We all go through times when the temptation to sin and doubt gets overwhelming.** Jesus experienced forty days and nights when the devil did everything to destroy his relationship with God. **This might be your time and season.**

Right now, you might be tempted to think “Good sermon. But I’m hungry for lunch. I wonder if Cracker Barrel is busy.”

You might be tempted to think, “I wish that I was still a Catholic. Their pews have better padding.”

Sometimes I’ll be driving down the street and I’ll start arguing with someone from the past. I’ll be remembering someone who hurt me or let me down. I’ll be angry at a person who isn’t in the car. I wonder who put that thought in my head. I know who did it.

Do you ever find yourself thinking lustful thoughts or a racial thought? Then you wonder where it came from. Have you ever given up on God, church or family? Here’s why. The devil is a liar.

Sometimes when I get depressed for no reason, I stop and say “Devil, you almost got me that time. Jesus loves me. He will never lead me

to a place where his grace cannot keep me.” I heard that in church. In that moment my depression or anger usually leaves me.

It's like what Paul wrote in Romans 10. What we believe in our hearts about Jesus and say with our lips brings us salvation or rescue. What I believed in my heart about God's patient love and said with my lips caused dark thoughts to leave me. It wasn't me who did it. It won't be you. It will always be God at work.

**During the forty days the devil tempted Jesus in three different ways.** The temptations were strong, powerful and deceptive. The devil tempts us in the same way. We read “...(Jesus) **ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.**” Hunger is something that we have all felt. Too many people have felt starvation.

**Here's temptation #1) The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”** First, the devil raised the doubt that Jesus is the Son of God. “If... you are the Son of God” then God will do whatever you ask of him. So, ask God to turn the stone into bread.” If Jesus is the Son of God, then God will do whatever he asks, even turning a stone into bread. If God doesn't give him what he hungers for, then God is cheating him. He deserves bread. That's the lie.

The devil tempts us by saying, “If... you are Christian, a child of God. He will give you everything that you want and hunger for, otherwise you're being cheated.”

Bread is a metaphor. Bread is a picture of anything that we hunger for in life like popularity or sex, money or a big car, marriage, children or good health. The devil tells us that if God doesn't satisfy our hunger, then God is cheating us. That's the lie.

Here's how Jesus sent the devil running for cover. Jesus resisted the devil by speaking the truth, a Bible verse. **Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”**

The verse means that there is more to life than having bread, cars or popularity. God wants us to hunger for things that fill the emptiness in our



hearts like having a purpose and faith, and compassion. If you want a personal relationship with Jesus, call to him in prayer. If you want satisfaction, volunteer at the homeless shelter. If you want to make a difference support children at St. Jude's or Shriner's Hospital. Loving God and loving others is better than bread. And it's gluten free.

We read that **"The devil led him up to a high place and showed in an instant all the kingdoms of the world."**

**Here's temptation #2) And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to."** The devil took Jesus to a high place where Jesus could see all the powerful countries and places of wealth and influence.

The devil claimed that all these kingdoms belonged to him. He could give them to Jesus to control and enjoy. That's the lie. Here's the only thing required of Jesus. The devil said, **"If you worship me, it will all be yours."** That's a lie.

Jesus resisted this temptation by quoting another Bible verse. **Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"**

Whatever we worship is what we love, praise and long for. Whatever we worship is where we focus our best efforts and expectations. Yet what happens to people who gain the whole world but lose their souls? They get to the end of life and their children don't know them. Their money can't buy happiness. When they stand before God one day, he will say, **"Depart from me. I do not know you."**

If we worship God, that's who we love first. If we worship God, that's where we put our focus and best efforts. No one who loves and serves God, gets to the end of life and says "I'm sorry I did that. What a rip-off." For every Christian believer the best is yet to be.

**We read, "The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple."**

**Here's temptation #3) "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: "He will command his angels ... to guard you carefully..."**

The devil tempted Jesus to jump off a tall building. Why? Because if Jesus was the Son of God, God promised in the Bible that angels would protect him. The devil misquotes the Bible. He often misquotes it in the words of politicians, cynics and false teachers.

Yes, God promised to protect Jesus but that didn't mean that Jesus should test God by being foolish. **Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"**

We are often tempted to put God's love to the test and do something stupid. That's why people drink and drive. That's why teenagers sleep around and risk pregnancy. That's why people cheat on their spouses. If God loves them, nothing bad will happen. But the Bible tells us that we reap what we sow. Our sins catch up with us.

We test God when we make God promises that we don't keep. When I was in high school, I worked in a grocery store. The store manager was a heavy drinker. His little daughter got very ill. The doctors weren't hopeful. Because I went to church, he asked me and others to pray for her. He said, "I promised God that I would stop drinking if he healed my daughter". Sometime later she went home well. Then I heard the manager say how drunk he got afterwards. I said, "I thought you promised God that you would stop drinking if he healed your daughter." He said "No, I promised God that I would stop drinking *until* he healed her." But that was a lie. When we make promises and break them, we put God to the test. God isn't fooled.

If you struggle with temptation, do what Jesus did. Find out what the Bible says about that temptation or sin. Then speak the truth out loud and believe that Jesus is Lord. Ask God to show you a better way. God will never lead you to a place where his grace cannot keep you. I heard that in church. Amen.