



## Sermon

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When I was growing up, anytime I got in trouble, I would say one of two things: “I can't remember!” or, “It must have been that devil inside me.” It is amazing the different things in our lives that tempt us at different times. Even if we give up, say chocolate, which we can smell a mile away, it seems to call our names every second and everyone that is eating it tends to be the devil for tempting us. Mmmmm that chocolate tastes soooo good! So creamy and flavorful, so rich and delightful!

But as tempting as it may seem, we may want to associate our temptations for our Lenten devotion with Jesus' temptation in the desert in today's Gospel. No, this passage is not about us; it's about Jesus. I truly want this passage to be about how to defeat our temptations in our own life, but it's not. This passage is about defining who Jesus is.

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What's interesting is that this passage is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels, but each account is different. The ordering of the temptations is different in Matthew than in Luke. Instead of losing focus from comparing all synoptic accounts, let's focus only on Luke as this is our passage for this year. All three record the temptation shortly after Jesus' baptism, but only Luke follows it with Jesus' "not well-received hometown sermon in Nazareth."

In Luke, it's not about the personal temptations around faith; rather, it's the unique Vocation of Jesus as the Spirit-anointed, Son of God. Jesus' baptism and these temptations are related. In his baptism, we see the Holy Spirit as described as the Spirit's anointing work of Good News for the poor. Luke's temptation is about how Jesus will fulfill his Spirit-anointed vocation as the Son of God.

Luke's narrative begins with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that is the driving force in these temptations as well as elsewhere in Luke's Gospel because the Holy Spirit plays a central role for Luke. The location is the desert which is a known place of divine meeting with God and also with demonic danger.

For Luke, the first temptation is to turn the stones into bread. It's key to see that both Jesus and the devil know Jesus' true identity. So it's not to test to see if Jesus is the Son of God, but rather, how will He carry out His Spirit-anointed vocation. Satan is trying to view why should the Son of God suffer this way in the wilderness, should he not use his powers to satisfy His own desires? Jesus

responds with Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man should not live on bread alone” telling Satan that satisfying ones needs for food is not as important as trusting and obeying God. Deuteronomy was a very respected and trusted book at the time of Jesus, and all three of His responses come from Deuteronomy.

The second temptation is when Satan tries to show off his twisted view of his worldly authority. The devil shows off how entrenched he’s in this world although the world isn’t the devil’s to give as God has the ultimate authority. The devil is trying to use the Grandma version of, “If you do this, I will give you a chocolate chip cookie.” Jesus responds this time with Deuteronomy 6:4 that to do what the Devil suggest would break the first commandment as found in Exodus 20:3 that worship belongs to God alone. Jesus points out that despite the devil’s grip on this world, the world still gives glory to God.

In the third temptation, to have Jesus throw himself off the tip of the temple in Jerusalem, the devil tries to use scripture as he quotes Psalm 91:11-12 to indicate that Jesus is God's own precious concern. But Jesus fires back with Deuteronomy 6:16 not to tempt or provoke God, even for the Son of God.

Jesus defeats Satan using Holy Scriptures, which shows the certainty of God's word in defeating Satan's attacks and temptations. This passage also shows how Luke promotes a strong belief in Jesus' Deity.

So what does this passage mean for us? This passage teaches us who Jesus is and that He willingly went through suffering and death for our salvation. This passage shows the battlegrounds that Jesus will take away the delusion that this world and all of its contents belong to him, and that God's holy name will be praised here, and that though this world is corruptible, the kingdom to come will not be.

This temptation shows that Jesus is always for us and that we have to trust fully in Him. He is also there to defeat the devil for us. After all, if we get tripped up on chocolate on our own, how are we going to do anything else without Jesus? He is the One who will restore us. AMEN.

Fr. Jeff+