

# Message Transcript

## FACING TEMPTATION LIKE JESUS | THE KINGDOM BREAKS IN AARON BROCKETT | JANUARY 17 & 18, 2026

Amen. Amen.

It's so good to be in the house of the Lord with you. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank You so much that You are a God who is holy, holy, holy. And You are for us. You are with us. God, we gather together today to unite our voices in lyric and song to sing truths that we know to be true, it's just that we don't always feel them to be true, because life circumstances can get it the way.

Father, I pray right now that Your Holy Spirit would be in this place and would encourage us and would stir us up. Your Scriptures say where two or more are gathered there You are. And as we gather together as believers, as we are in the habit of gathering, we are stirred up toward love and good works. Father I pray that that could happen today.

There is somebody here hanging on by a thread. They are in the right place. Somebody tried to talk to themselves out of coming today, but they came at the last minute. God, I'm thankful that they are here.

I pray that You would meet us in this place. You do not need an invitation, but You've got one. We invite You here. And we don't just want to sing some songs and listen to a teaching and leave. We want to have an encounter with the living God. So, we make room for You to move. Would You please speak? Because we are listening. We ask this in Jesus' name. And everybody said: Amen and Amen and Amen.

Hey, good to be with you. Feel free to grab a seat. I want to welcome everybody across all of our locations. I know we have a number of people who are joining us online. Many of you are joining us from some warmer climate and we are doing our best not to resent you right now. We are thankful that you are with us.

Last week, if you didn't make it, we kicked off our year-long study in the gospel of Mark, And we're going to be in this book for the better part of the year—85 to 90 percent of the year. We'll take a few breaks here and there. It's going to be divided up into six or seven parts and each part will have a different title, different graphic—that sort of thing.



And last week I kind of threw up a little bit of a challenge. I said why don't you, for a year, give God some consistency and some intentionality. Instead of lots of stops and starts just, as Eugene Peterson describes it, a long obedience in the same direction. Just look for some faithfulness. Not looking for a silver bullet of faith. Not looking for God to fix things all at once, "But let me just get into some consistency." Come throughout this year as much as you can in person for this study.

I also threw out a challenge to bring a real, paper Bible with you. It's not that I have anything against electronic Bibles. I love my electronic Bible. But there is something about just going back, a little bit old school navigating your way around the Scriptures. And part of the reason I thought it would be so cool is every week when I say, "Hey, turn to the passage we're going to be in and we just hear some pages rustling around every room in every location.

In fact, let's just try that now. We're going to be in Mark 1, verses 12 to 13, Go ahead and find that in your Bible. Let's just hear those pages rustling. There it is. That is just beautiful. That's just beautiful. We're going to add some microphones, I think, to the room so we can pick it up a little bit more. I see your Bibles. I see you have them.

And then I said, "Hey, if you would bring a journal (that could be paper or electronic). Some of you are really creative with your paper journals. I've seen them on social media. But you don't have to have a paper journal. And you don't need to take notes like you are studying for final.

Some of you are like, "Oh, you know note taking just isn't my thing." I'm not asking you to write down instructions like you're trying to assemble a piece of furniture from Ikea. I'm just saying, "Hey, listen man. Just come and just jot down three things:"

**One thing that I learned**

**One thing that challenged me**

**One thing God is asking me to do**

What's one thing I learned from the text today that I didn't know? What's one thing I'm being challenged by? What is one thing that God is asking me to do? And, really, this is about having an encounter with God in the midst of the teaching. I don't know about you, but there are sometimes I'm listening to a sermon and then God stirs something in me and I'm like, "Oh, man. That's good. I want to remember it." And then I forget it as soon as I'm done listening. And I just want you to jot that one thing down and revisit it.



And really what this year-long study is about is it's sort of like... Hopefully it will be like a spiritual re-boot in our lives. If you've ever had a phone or an iPad or a computer kind of freeze up on you, I'm not tech savvy at all but I do know where that re-boot button is. And if I can turn it off and turn it back on it usually fixes the problem.

What if you had a re-boot button? What if I had one? Wouldn't it be so cool, having a bad day—re-boot. A little button behind your ear. And I think that's what this series could be, a spiritual re-boot as we just study verse by verse through the gospel of Mark.

I've outlined this out where, hopefully, we can wrap it up by the first week of December. Please pray because I'm already like 15 verses behind. And, actually, I don't want to rush through it too quickly. Even if it takes us into next year. I don't want to go past it too quickly because I want us to take our time.

Instead of asking God to get in on our live to honor our agenda and asking Him to be our co-pilot in our stories, what if we became immersed in His story? What if we just said, "God, instead of just inviting You into what we're doing, we want to get invited in on what you are doing."?

We're calling this series The Urgent Kingdom because Mark's account of Jesus' life and ministry could be boiled down to that one word urgent. He just wastes no time getting right to the point. He is in this really fast-paced narrative.

The other gospel writers focus a lot on Jesus' words and His teachings and His sermons and that's fantastic. I love that. But Mark focuses a lot on Jesus' actions. He's never sitting still. He's always moving from one thing to another. In fact, Mark records more miracles than any of the other gospel writers.

Now, we started last week with part one of the series. So, the whole series is called The Urgent Kingdom. Part 1 is: "The Kingdom breaks in." This will be the first three chapters of Mark. We'll hopefully wrap it up by the end of February.

Last week we covered the first 11 verses. And in verse 11... If you have your Bible open we're going to begin in verse 12. But don't read ahead. Alright? This is the only time you're going to hear a preacher say, "Don't read your Bible." Just not yet.

Verse 11, last week we left Jesus in the murky Jordan River, after His baptism. He'd just been baptized by his cousin, John the Baptizer, the heavens tear apart, the Spirit of God is there like a dove, hovering—same word for flutter that is mentioned in creation, the Creation account.



And then we hear God's audible voice speak from heaven to Jesus loud enough that the others could hear. And God says, "This is My Son with whom I am well pleased." And I just pointed out the fact that it is kind of interesting that God would say that because this is when Jesus hadn't really done anything yet.

He hadn't achieved anything. He hadn't walked on water. He hadn't done any miracles. He hadn't taught a sermon. God says, "I am pleased with Him because of who He is." We can learn something from that. Jesus was operating from God's blessing not for it. And the same deal, man. You are operating from God's blessing not for it.

Last week that baptism moment—you could put this in the category of this incredible mountain top, highlight reel, a spiritual high kind of a moment. It's like the kind of moment you would capture and put on Instagram set to a worship song.

Now, here's the deal. Before we go into verse 12 what do you think, if you had not read ahead, you didn't know what was coming, what do you think might happen next? Jesus climbs out of the Jordan and they hand Him a towel to dry off. I don't know. Maybe God would present Jesus a Bible with His name on it. Old Testament only. The New Testament was being written. Some of you got that.

Maybe Jesus would go directly from His baptism to preaching the Sermon on the Mount. Maybe He would go to that wedding party and turn the water into wine. Maybe He would heal somebody.

The answer is no to all of those. In fact, the very next scene coming directly from this spiritual high goes right to a spiritual low. In fact, I'm going to show you in the text we are going to read, Jesus is going to face one of His greatest spiritual and emotional challenges that He would ever face in His entire life, aside from the cross. So, pick it up in verse 12. Follow along with me. Mark writes:

"At once,"

Those are his favorite words. I pointed that out last week. Your translations may say immediately. It's either at once or immediately over and over and over again. It says:

"the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him." Mark 1:12-13 (NIV)



Now, the title of today's message is:

## **Facing Temptation Like Jesus**

And there is kind of a double meaning in that. Meaning a couple of things that I want you to know. Number one (I'm going to get to more of this in a minute) is that there is a difference between temptation and sin. They are not the same. You can be tempted, that doesn't mean that you sin. Temptation is temptation. When it crosses the line into sin is when you act on what you are tempted by.

The other thing is that there is none of us who will be exempt from temptation including the sinless, spotless Son of God. So, if Jesus was tempted, then you and I are going to be tempted as well. And so we want to face temptation the way that Jesus did. And if Jesus is not exempt from the wilderness, you and I won't be exempt from the wilderness. If He is not exempt from resistance and spiritual depression, so to speak, then you and I won't be either. If Jesus is not exempt from temptation then we are not going to be exempt from it.

In fact, the way that Mark describes Jesus is through this little term right here. Commentators tell us Mark describes Jesus as the suffering servant. Mark puts a spotlight on Jesus' humanity more than any of the other gospel writers, emphasizing Jesus' emotions, His human limitations, and other small details that highlight the human side of Jesus. So, yes He is fully God. He's also fully human. And the verses we just read are an example of that.

The prophet Isaiah, in chapter 53 prophesied the extent to which Jesus would suffer. Listen to how he describes Jesus:

"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

Translation: He wasn't much of a looker. We would not have mistaken Jesus for a male model. Alright? He just sort of blends in. And He wouldn't have been in the popular crowd. There wouldn't have been anything that you would have done a double take. Nothing special about His appearance. And then he goes on to say:

"He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain." Isaiah 53:2-3 (NIV)



Now, we don't want to read too much into the text, but it is saying that he was despised and rejected by mankind. Could be, not very popular in school and bullied. He was a man of suffering. He was familiar with pain.

Do you know that His earthly father, Joseph, was not on the scene. He would have passed away. He and Mary would have buried him. He would have been familiar with the loss of loved ones.

Listen, man. Mark wants us to know that immediately after Jesus had this mountaintop experience He is sent, some translations say drove or you could say He was compelled to go out into the wilderness.

Now, here's the question I want to see if you read it carefully, by whom? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the same Spirit that was Him and God the Father at the foundations of the world, the Creation. The same Holy Spirit that was hovering over His baptism. And you might be going, "Now, wait a second, I thought they were wearing the same jersey. I thought they were on the same team. Why would the Holy Spirit lead Him out to the wilderness to go through this awful thing?"

Don't misunderstand. The Spirit sent Him. He did not tempt Him. According to the text, who did that? Yeah, Satan. More on that here in just a minute. I want you to write this truth down:

**The wilderness experience is preparation, not punishment.**

We've got to remember that because we're all going to go through a wilderness experience. And when you go through the wilderness, the questions begin to come. Don't they? What is the wilderness?

Well, the wilderness could be that you just graduated from college and you've just spent the last, I don't know, 15 years or so of your life doing what all of the adults in your life told you to do: study hard, get the grades, get a 4.0 GPA so that you can get into the honors classes, so that you can get into the right colleges, and get the scholarships, and declare the right degree. You go and you graduate and now you are trying to be a grown up and you are applying for jobs, and you got a job but it's not your calling and now you are feeling a little disillusioned going, "Now wait a second. Did I have the right degree?"

Wilderness. Anybody ever been there? Yeah.



The wilderness could be that breakup or divorce, the person who you prayed for. You thought God brought them into your life. I mean, you met them on Christian Mingle, what could go wrong? And you are like, "I thought this was my soul mate and now we ended things and I didn't see that coming. And now I'm back in square one and I'm 31 years old. God, now what?"

Wilderness.

The wilderness could be a no when you are praying fervently for a yes and you don't understand the no. Why can't it be yes?

The wilderness could be January in Indiana and you are wondering if you will ever feel the warmth of the sun again. Can I get a good amen? "God, why do we live in Indiana?" Come on, man.

Sometimes we think when we go through the wilderness that it is punishment or abandonment by God. But it might be preparation for His calling and purpose in your life.

Let's think about this for a minute. If it was punishment, He just said to Jesus in the previous verse, "I am well pleased with you." And then He finds himself in the wilderness. Not punishment. He hasn't done anything wrong. God is pleased with Him. It's not abandonment. The Spirit of God, and as we read, angels were attending to Jesus in the wilderness.

In fact, you might be the closest to dead center in the will of God when you are going through a wilderness type of experience.

Jesus is in the wilderness for 40 days fasting. Now, that could be open to all kinds of interpretations. But, Jesus is not fasting from social media. Matthew and Luke tell us that He's going without food for the whole 40 days.

Guys, that's just impressive. The longest that I've ever gone is about three days. After 24 hours I'd be complaining of migraines and temporary blindness. I'm just a wimp, man. I can't do this. I've got to have some food.

And Jesus goes without food for 40 days. Why 40 days? What is the significance of that number? Well, it could point back to the 40 years of the Israelites wandering in their wilderness. It could be connected to that. The inauguration of Jesus' ministry, what He is doing is, He is going into the wilderness to redeem what they failed to do. Just like Jesus is the new Adam. He came to do what Adam failed to do. Both Moses and Elijah fasted for 40 days. There is just something about that number.



Now, understand that it is not a lush rain forest type of wilderness. I don't know what comes to your mind when you think about wilderness, but this was dry and desolate. It was a desert.

Several years ago when I visited Israel we visited the place where they believe this to be. I was with, I don't know, a dozen other people. We were in an air conditioned van. We had our bottles of water. We were well hydrated. I had a full stomach from the humas and pita that I'd just eaten. We stepped out of the van. That's a picture of me and our guide. And I'm with other people, fully nourished, and I could feel the desolation in that place.

See, the point is that Jesus has no time to bask in God's glory of His favor or the Spirit's anointing. There was no honeymoon period, so to speak. He was baptized and He was immediately thrown into war.

Tim Keller would put it this way, "The wilderness isn't just a random detour to trouble—it's a battleground."

And some of you can relate to that. We had over 2100 people baptized last year alone—110 of you last weekend. And a very common story that I hear from people who are beginning their walk with Jesus as a new believer is the immediate challenges that they face right after.

And so, you give your life to Jesus. You go through Rooted. You give your life to Jesus. You are all excited. It's a spiritual high. You get a Bible with your name on it. And then the depression comes raging back with a vengeance. You give your life to Jesus. You are all excited. You get an email the next day that your job has been eliminated. Your fiancée broke it off. The cancer has returned. You relapse into an addiction that you thought you had a handle on a decade ago, an old temptation from the past resurfaces. Your basement floods, for crying out loud.

And you are like, "God, what in the world? Things were going pretty well up until this point. Where are You? Am I doing this wrong? Am I missing something?" And I just need to say this to you. Unfortunately, this spiritual resistance that you are experiencing is the norm rather than the exception. And included in that...

Now, by the way, can I just say this? The wilderness has a timeline. It's not like the rest of your life will be in a wilderness. It's just that you can't live on the mountaintop. Hey, mountaintops are great. Don't you think? But very little fruit gets yielded up there. Fruit gets yielded in the valley. And so, you're going to go through a wilderness type of experience just like Jesus did. And part of that wilderness experience may be temptation, which often comes right after a spiritual high.



I can speculate as to some of the reasons why that may be, but I don't fully know why that is. Guys, can I just tell you this? In my life, 25 years of full-time ministry, that the moments in which I am the most susceptible to personal temptation are the moments right after a spiritual high.

You may be like, "Pastor, what are you talking about?" Like the afternoon on Easter Sunday. Christmas Eve services. Men's Night. Women's Night. Spontaneous baptism weekends. Conference. Mission trip. Camp. It's when you've been extending and pouring out efforts. You are physically exhausted, emotionally spent, spiritually on a high. You are like, "Man, this is amazing."

And that's when, in your exhaustion, you can let your guard down a little bit and Satan pounces. And I think he often pounces in the immediate aftermath of some of those things to discredit the experience you had. I mean, society says only hypocrites go to church. Satan says, "Yes, let's prove it right." And they saw you in church with your hands raised and your Bible open and you had this spiritual experience, now let's ruin your reputation for the cause of Christ by your indiscretion.

You know that 70 percent of mountaineering accidents do not happen on the way up? Where do they happen? On the way down. What that means is that lots of people have summited Everest, but just because they've taken in the views of Everest doesn't mean they live to tell about it.

Because on the way down that's where you get exhausted. That's where you run out of oxygen. That's when you let your guard down. Same thing spiritually. Guys, we have an enemy and he does not fight fair or with honor.

It's fascinating to me that statistically speaking, this has been true throughout history. More people believe in God than believe in Satan. And if you believe in God it would not be unreasonable to believe in Satan. But more people believe in God than in Satan. And I think Satan is like, "That's exactly how I want it. I would rather you think I'm just a myth. I would rather you think I'm a little cartoon character with a pitchfork and always running around playing pranks on people."

Guys, we have an enemy and if you are new to faith it is more likely that you will face attack because you are more vulnerable in the infancy of your faith. So, the Bible says, don't stay on spiritual milk, grow up and consume spiritual meat. And Satan is like, "I would much rather you stay on milk so I can pick you off. And I'm going to try to pick you off before you get to the meat."



I know that this is a twisted illustration but I'm going to use it anyway. If you had to get into a fight with somebody, who would you rather get into a fight with? What are your chances with a 25-year-old, muscular athlete or an infant? I know that is super twisted. But I'm going with the infant. I'm going with the toddler because I don't want to get beat up.

Same deal. Satan is like, "Why would I wait for you to grow up in the faith? Let me try to take you out in the infancy of your faith." Which is why I say that the birthmark of a new believer is a bullseye. Prior to your conversion you were not a threat, now you are. You popped up on his radar. And in many ways that resistance could be confirmation of your salvation.

In Genesis, right after Creation, Satan shows up and declares war. That's what that was. He declared war against God's creation by tempting Adam and Eve. Now, here in Mark 1, Satan shows up again after the baptism of Jesus to continue the war by tempting Jesus out in the wilderness. He has been trying to sabotage God's work of redemption all along and he continues to this day.

And we often have a tendency to just notice this in maybe your own thinking and maybe your speech, and maybe the things that you have heard, that whenever something bad happens in the world, have you ever noticed how often it is that we are quick to blame God for the pain and suffering that we experience in this world instead of recognizing where the source of it truly comes from. When was the last time you were like, "Man, Satan... All this pain and suffering, Satan is really just having a hay day." Instead we say, "Where is God in the midst of this?"

And Satan hates God, but he cannot get to Him because God has already won the victory through the cross. He knows his destiny and he knows he is doomed, but for a temporary period of time, he has limited domain in this earthly realm. It's kind of like a dog with rabies who has been chained up by a chain and he can run around in a certain circumference, and if you get within his reach, he tries to bite and infect anyone that he can.

So, he can't get to God, so he says, "Well, I'll just go after those who bear His image." It's like if you had an enemy in your life and they hated you but they couldn't get to you, then they are like, "Well, let me just go after the people who look like them—their kids. Let me just take them out."

Guys, I need you to know... Here's what sin is. Sin is not a list of things that God would rather you not do:



## **Sin destroys the image of God within you.**

So, played out—you play out all of the sins to their nth degree, it destroys the image of God within you. Here's what I mean. You are saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus on a cross. And after your salvation the Spirit of God... Now from your place of salvation (remember from blessing not for it) the Spirit is seeking to form you more and more into the image and likeness of Jesus and unholy spirits are trying to deform the image and likeness of Jesus within you through continual, premeditated, and unrepentant sin.

So here's the dilemma. True or false? You will continue to sin after you give your life to Jesus. That's true. But the difference is that when you sin the Holy Spirit is there to whisper and to convict and to bring it to mind. And what you do next determines and makes all of the difference because in that moment you can have a moment of repentance where you can say, "Yeah, you know what? You are right." And you have to change your mind, come to your senses and turn direction. You are not sorry you got caught, you're sorry you did it and you say, "I'm heading away in a different direction." Toward what? Toward the formation of Jesus Christ.

But if you continue to pre-meditate sin, if you continue to indulge in sin, if you don't confess and repent of it, you play it... Oh, there is grace for you. As long as there is breath in your lungs there is grace for you, friend. But if you continue to embrace it, to the nth degree it will eventually result in the deformation of the Spirit of God in you. Do you want to know when you need to be really concerned? It's when you are tempted to sin and you no longer feel bad about it, "Yeah, yeah. It's fine."

See, listen. Mark treats Satan as a reality, not a myth. And temptation, when you are tempted, you need to take it very personally. I mean, you need to be offended. Because it is an act upon your redemption and your righteousness. And Satan never stops testing and he never stops tempting you.

And he is like, "You know what? As long as there is breath in their lungs, I'm trying to ruin the finished work of Jesus in their life. I'm trying to deform the image of God within them. So, I'm going to keep testing and keep tempting them."

And, listen. He's been doing this for millennia. So, he's really, really good. And he's been watching game film on you. He knows your weaknesses. He knows when you are the most susceptible. He knows when you'll be home alone. He knows what triggers you. He knows it all. And he knows what bait you'll bite and what bait you won't.



Have you ever seen a person's story on social media, maybe somebody like a prominent figure, or whatever—they messed up. They do something dumb. And they blow their life up. Have you ever looked at that and you were like, "Man, that's such a shame. Man, I would never do something like that. No way."

And you know what Satan does? Satan is like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know that you wouldn't bite on that grubby little worm because that's gross. But the spinner bait will work on you." And you are like, "Oooh, yeah." Listen, man. He's been watching game film on you and there is no expiration date for sin and tempting. What I mean by that is there is no safety belt where you are like old enough or get far enough along in the Christian life and then, poof, you are in the safety zone.

Several years ago I was at a men's retreat and afterward we all kind of broke up into groups. And there were a bunch of us young men and there was this 85 year old stud of a man. He was sage. He'd been a follower of Jesus longer than electricity, you know? And he was just like filled with wisdom. And, you know, he was a Harrison Ford kind of a guy—oozing wisdom. We were like, "Man, we want to be like you."

And we all kind of like huddled around him. And some young guy asked him a question. He said, "Hey, at what point in time do you stop wrestling with lust?" I'll never forget that 85-year-old dude. He goes, "I'll tell you one day if I ever get there." And we were like, "Oh, God. You mean the fight never ends?" The fight never ends.

Now, Mark doesn't tell us what Jesus' temptations were but Matthew does. Mark tells us that Jesus was tempted, and Matthew tells us how. Mark wants us to see the urgency of the moment. Matthew helps us understand the nature of the battle.

So, really quickly let's run through what the temptations were and what they mean and how they relate to us. Like, honestly, at times I just never understood this. Why were these temptations?

### **Three temptations:**

#### **Temptation #1**

##### **Turn stones into bread — desire**



## **Temptation #2**

**Throw yourself off the Temple — pride**

## **Temptation #3**

**Bow down and I'll give you the kingdoms — entitlement**

Temptation number one was turn stones into bread. Really what's underneath this is desire. Jesus has not had a bite to eat in 40 days so He would have been at the peak of hunger and weakness. And if you notice, he wasn't tempted with a salad. He was tempted with bread, "What's the big deal, man? Why not turn that stone into a loaf of warm, flakey sourdough bread to the glory of God the Father?"

Well, here's what is wrong with that. Nothing wrong with bread. But here was what was underneath it. Meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way, which is really the definition of all sin. In Jesus' case it was to use His power prematurely and put an end to the suffering that He was experiencing. And if Jesus would have done that, He would not have been ready for the cross. If He couldn't fast for 40 days, there was no way that He was going to withstand the pain of the cross.

Listen, guys. If you cannot master your desires, they will end up mastering you. That's what is behind the practice of fasting. It's to remind our spoiled, brat of a body that you and I have that it is not in control. And our desire is not bad in and of itself, but they will not control.

Temptation number two: Throw yourself off of the Temple. What's underneath this is pride. It's like Satan is going, "Hey, man. Be spectacular so everybody can see." Remember what Isaiah's description of Jesus was? Not much to look at. He was kind of like despised by mankind. Jesus had been living in relative obscurity for 30 years. He's God. He created the world. And nobody is making a big deal out of it.

And here Satan goes, "After 30 years, You can finally make an entrance. You can validate Yourself. You can show all of these people You went to high school with, that You are a big deal. Throw Yourself off of the Temple and show them who You are."

Pride.



And I think most of us, we have no problem being humble as long as other people notice. So, we shortcut the process. That is what that is all about.

Temptation number three is bow down and I will give you the kingdoms. Satan has limited domain in this earthly realm. And he's basically saying, "Just shortcut the process. You don't need the cross just get the crown and bypass all of this sacrifice and pain. Jump right to the recognition and the glory."

Entitlement.

It's what trips so many of us up. We feel like we are owed this.

I think all of us can relate to these temptations in some way. And the Bible says that our High Priest (that's how Hebrews describe Him, that's Jesus) was tempted in every way that we are.

Think about that for a minute. Right now think about the current temptations in your life that you struggle with that maybe you're too ashamed to say out loud and tell other people. And there is a reason why you are too ashamed to tell other people. Think about those things, the things that you have always been tempted with and the Bible tells us that Jesus has been tempted in every way you are because He is flesh and blood. And yet He never sinned, never crossed the line, which means that there is hope for us as well.

Understand that there was so much at stake, hanging in the balance in these moments. And what was at stake with Jesus' temptation was our redemption. You are like, "Well, it wouldn't have been a big deal for Him to have a little bit of bread: Yeah, but in that moment He would have sinned. And He would no longer be the spotless Lamb of God who could make a sacrifice for our sins. Guys, our eternity was hanging in the balance. These were not games, this was war. And it's the same war that you and I are in today. Do you feel the resistance? You should. You should feel that you are in a battle because you are."

There have been times in my life... I am no different in the sense that I am a human being. You are like, "Oh, you know, pastors never doubt." That's not true, man. You have doubts. You wonder. You have questions, "Is God real and can I trust the Bible?" And that's where faith comes in.

But there have been moments in my life where maybe I'm struggling with belief and it's been a moment of temptation that has brought me back to belief because the temptation was so dark and so sinister and so cold that it was as if I could feel the cold breath of a demon over my shoulder. And it reinforces my belief that there is a good God and I am involved in a spiritual battle and it brought me to my knees.



Here's what I want to do in the remainder of our time. I want to get super practical. I want this to be really practical by looking at this question together:

What can we know about the nature of temptation and how to fight it?

What can we know about the nature of temptation and how we can fight it? Because you can fight it. You can fight it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to fight it and so you and I can fight it. So, what do we learn from how He dealt with it?

Number one:

**Temptation only comes from Satan.**

The name Satan comes from a Hebrew word meaning adversary or enemy and the Holy Spirit compels you to go to the wilderness but Satan is the one who does the tempting. Now, it's important to point out because sometimes we might think that God is the one who tempts. But God never tempts.

Now, God may permit the tempting like He did with Jesus and like He did in the Old Testament with a guy named Job. By the way, both of those guys had God's blessings and God's favor.

If you recall the story of Job, God gets into sort of like an argument with Satan. And Satan is like, "Nobody is faithful. Nobody follows You." And God is like, "What about My boy Job? I'm well pleased with him." You can almost even take it like the greater the intensity of temptation, it could be that God is like, "You're My Boy." "You're My girl."

So, Satan continues to do the tempting. God never tempts. Some of you may be like, "Well, Pastor, where are you getting that from?" I'm glad you asked that question. It's in James 1:13.

"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." (NIV)

So, number one—only Satan does the tempting. Number two:

**Keep in step with the Spirit.**

The way that we deal with it is we keep in step with the Spirit. That comes right out of Galatians 5:25:



"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." (NIV)

And some of you are like, "What does that mean?" If any of you have little kids or grandkids or maybe you are a guardian or a babysitter of young kids and you take them out into a crowded, public space like an amusement park, an airport, a mall what do you say to them? "Stay right with me."

Or you get one of those leashes and they are running around. Why do you do that? Because they can wander off. When you are in a crowded space you have no idea if there are predators. And you are like, "You need to keep in step with me. Do not wander away."

Same deal. Galatians 5 says, "Keep in step with the Spirit." Why? Because Satan isn't taking any naps. He's alert. He's like a prowling lion looking for somebody to devour. The question is: are you napping? The question is: are you beginning to wander?

So, what does it mean to keep in step? Well, it means this. The Holy Spirit... Jesus would say, "Greater to have the Holy Spirit in you than for Me to be with you." So, the Holy Spirit seals your salvation and now He is literally... What the word Holy Spirit means is Helper. He is your Helper, not your personal assistant, your Helper. Helping in what? Helping when you are in a moment of temptation. And you're going to need it. I'm going to need it. Mark tells us that Jesus, Himself, had angels attending to Him the entire 40 days.

You know what comes to my mind when I think about that? A boxer in between rounds in the corner. The crowd is kind of getting around him and they are pouring water on his head and Vaseline on his forehead trying to get him back in the fight. That's what comes to my mind. Jesus needed angels attending to Him. And the Holy Spirit is there to help you.

Now, Jesus' primary defense against Satan was not to reason with him but to simply recite Scripture. That jumped out at me because if the perfect, sinless Son of God was going to rely upon the Scriptures to defend Himself against temptation, then I need that all the more.

Jesus just quoted Scripture back to him. He quotes primarily out of Deuteronomy, which is interesting because that's Israel's wilderness book and Jesus quoted it, which means He had it memorized. He didn't have His YouVersion Bible app opened. He had horrible cell phone coverage in the wilderness anyway. All right? He quotes it back to... That joke didn't land in any service and it bums me out.



And if you notice—I think it's in Matthew's account that Jesus quotes Scripture to him. I think it's the second temptation and He quotes Scripture to Satan and Satan quotes Scripture back to Him. That should scare the pants off of you. You know what that means? That means that Satan does his Daily Bible Reading. He knows the Word of God. Kind of similar to the whole thing like even the demons believe in God, "Oh, I believe in God." Great. That doesn't mean that you are saved. Even the demons believe in that.

Satan is reading his Bible. Why would Satan read the Bible? So that he can trip you up with it and twist it. It's pretty common now a days. You hear a lot of people using Scripture to justify the way that they want to live.

**If we want to pick out the lies of the enemy, we have to know the Truth.**

So, if you want to pick out the lies of the enemy, you've got to be really familiar with the truth. You've got to know how the enemy uses the sword against you. Last week I said this, Daily Bible Reading is sort of like training in the sense that you would never go into a gym and see a dumb bell or a treadmill and go, "Yeah, I picked that up once. Yeah, I got on that once. Good to go." No, you keep coming back to it continuously. You train with it. Same thing with Bible reading.

I'm going to give you one more analogy with this. We read the Bible every day not to become a super Christian, not to get a whole bunch of knowledge, not because God is like, "Well that's a good boy," or "a good girl." "You're reading your Bible." No, I want you to think about Daily Bible Reading like pouring into a container because you're going to need that in the future.

You know how Psalm 119 puts it? It doesn't say I will read Your Word. It says I will hide Your Word in my heart. Does anybody know what it says next? That I might not sin. How does that work? Well, here's what happens. You hide God's Word in your heart and then you are going to be tempted, as we all are. You're going to find yourself in a moment of vulnerability and the Holy Spirit, as your Helper, in that moment, when you cry out to Him, will remind you of the things that you read.

But listen. You cannot be reminded of the things that you have never read. So, that's why you are preparing for war. You are equipping for battle as you do Daily Bible Reading and you never know what you are going to need. The Holy Spirit will bring it to mind.



Can I just say this? This is true for all spiritual disciplines. This is true in serving and in your group life and attendance and Bible reading. Guys, we are not saved by any of those things. You are not like a super Christian because you do more of those things like it's extra credit. You do those things to prepare for the temptations that may come.

I've been doing jujitsu for about a year and you would never know it if you saw me do it because I'm horrible. It's humbling. It's frustrating. Honestly, there are weeks I want to give up. I don't know if I'm ever going to get it. And the upper belts who are in the class, do you know what they say to me all of the time? They say this, "Keep showing up. Just keep showing up."

Guys, can I say this to you? Those of you who are like, "I'm trying to do this Christian thing. I'm trying to live right. Man, I just keep getting junk out. I keep falling into sin. I keep messing up. God feels so distant." Can I just say to you man, keep showing up. Keep reading. Keep serving. Keep attending.

"I don't feel like it." That's when you should be. That's when you should lean in. Listen. It's amazing to me how many times I bump into people. Guys, you are everywhere. I go to some store on the other side of town, bump into somebody, and it's amazing to me within a few minutes I can typically tell if you are still attending or not.

A very common conversation I'll have—we'll start talking and you get this look in your eye and then you'll end up saying something like, "Well, you know, honestly I haven't been in a few months." I go, "Oh, no. What's going on?" And then they will tell me about some wilderness experience."

Guys, there is zero judgment, zero shame. I hope you hear that. Because actually my heart of compassion goes out to you. But I would simply say this. Why is it that our impulse is to retreat? Why is our impulse to say, "You know what? I think I'll be better off alone." It's the sheep who wander off from the flock that get picked off first. Keep showing up. Keep coming.

Number three—I'm going to run out of time.

### **You're not the first or the only to fight temptation.**

You are not the first... Actually, this is the last hour. I can preach as long as I want. No, just kidding. Just kidding.

Number three: you are not the first or the or the only to fact temptation, 1 Corinthians 10:



"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

In other words, if you think you've got this, you don't.

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind." (NIV)

Meaning that there are other people throughout the centuries who have dealt with the same temptations as you and they have withstood them. Jesus, Himself has gone through it. And so you can stand up underneath that.

Hebrews 4:15, completes the version of that verse:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:15-16 (NIV)

I love that verse. It's basically saying: Listen. Because of the grace of God, you can boldly come into the throne of His grace. Jesus was tempted in every way as you are but He never sinned. So, now you can boldly come into your Father's house because you are a son or daughter of the King.

Several years ago my youngest daughter, Cadence, was here. She was back in the offices and there was somebody on our staff who didn't know who she was. And he came around the corner and said, "Oh, hey. Who are you?" And she immediately looked at him and she goes, "I'm Aaron Brockett's daughter." You know what she was doing? She was like, "I have a right to be here."

Same deal. You can boldly come into the throne room of God because you are a son or a daughter of the King. Stop having the enemy deceive you into who you are not. Your identity is as a follower of Jesus Christ.

So, number four, number four—I know I am so out of time I'm going to move quickly, the team is going to come out here. Be ready. Number four:

### **Look for the exit.**

Look for the exits. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:

"And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear." Memorize that verse. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. God knows your limitations.



"But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NIV)

Two different things there. It's like, "Hey, man. I am not going to let you be tempted beyond what you can actually physically and emotionally withstand, but if you stay there long enough you'll fall. So, I've provided a way out. Look for the exits."

It's kind of like the light of the Holy Spirit just came on. The exit is right back there. It's like those escape rooms. Man, I'm horrible at those things. If my daughter wasn't with me I'd still be in the escape room. He's like, "Man, look for the exits." And some of us might be like, "Well, I never saw an exit." No, He presented one, you just didn't want to take it.

So, God will provide the off ramp for you. You've got to be looking for it. You ever been on an interstate in maybe a location you don't know your way around so you following a little map and the exit is coming up and there is a semi between you and the exit. You've got to make a quick decision, "If I don't get off at this exit I'm going to be on this interstate another 10 miles. And there might be some sort of an accident up ahead."

It's the same kind of deal. An exit, if you don't get off, you might find yourself in a moment of indiscretion that will blow up your life. 1 John 4 says this. You don't need to be afraid of things because greater is He that is in you, the Holy Spirit, than he who is in the world. Meaning that you can actually go toe to toe against Satan. Not because you are so great, but the Holy Spirit is great because the Holy Spirit is stronger than any temptation or any adversary.

However, there are other times when the best way to fight is to run, primarily with something that you know to be an addiction. Mostly for all of us it would be sexual immorality. 1 Corinthians 6: 18 says:

"Flee from sexual immorality. (NIV)

James 4:7 says:

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (NIV)  
And what comes to my mind is the Old Testament story of Joseph In Potipher's house. And Potipher's wife is really attracted to him. She keeps coming on to him. I think that she would have been an attractive woman too. And the reason why I believe that to be true is because Joseph ran. He's like, "If I stay here 60 more seconds I'm going to do something stupid. I can not stand toe to toe against this temptation," and so he ran.



So, look for the exits. Last one—number five:

**Resist by redirecting your focus.**

Matthew 26:41 says:

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (NIV)

Hebrews 2:18:

"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (NIV)

Guys, Jesus would say to us at the very end of this passage, to repent and to believe the Good News. The Spirit is our helper. He wants to help. But you've got to tap Him in. And oftentimes maybe we've heard some verses that talk about grieving the Holy Spirit. What is that? Well, that's whenever you find yourself in a moment of temptation and He brings this to mind, "Hey, man. You don't want to stay here. You don't want to do that. You need to turn around. Here's the exit. You need to go."

And when you keep moving forward, or worse yet, when you say, "Would you please be quiet?" He grieves. Why does He grieve? Because He knows you are a redeemed son or daughter of the King and you are choosing to participate in things that Jesus died for to set you free. And it is deforming the image of Jesus within you.

So, I want to be really, really clear. You are not saved by the things that you do, you are saved by the finished work of Jesus on a cross. Full stop. And you operate from that place and not for it. However, from that day forward you are being formed into the image and likeness of Jesus. So, you are saved by grace through faith when you confess your sin to God and you confess that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of your life.

However, for some of you, you've not done that. Your salvation is secure, not because of your faithfulness but because of His. But you are still not healed. Saved but not healed. What I mean by that is James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another." Not for salvation but for healing.



Confess your sins. Get them out into the open. Drag them kicking and screaming out of the dark shadows of your life. When you drag them out into the open, they lose their power. And for some of you, you need to confess them and you need to actually make it known what you are struggling with to someone else so that they can come alongside you and help equip you for that battle that you are in.

So, here's what we are going to do as we end our time together. Society will say, "Just be a better version of you, man." A better version of you is still pretty lame. You need to be a lesser version of Jesus. John 3:30, "More of Jesus less of me until it is Christ alone."

Here's what I want to do. Number one: I want to invite you to confess that Jesus is Lord, to confess your sins, and invite Him into your life if you've never done so. The second thing, for those of you who have done that, and you are still feeling held back, I want you to confess to someone else so that you will be healed.

So, as we sing and worship together as we wrap this service together, I'm going to invite you to go the sides or down front. You'll see some men and women with some prayer lanyards on. Here's what I want to ask you to do. Walk right up to them, a 30 second conversation for you to say, "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I need to confess \_\_\_\_\_ and I've got a struggle with \_\_\_\_\_. And they will pray over you. And they will pray that the Holy Spirit will forgive and equip you for the battle.

Now, I understand some of you are like, "Well, first I need to see who these prayer counselors are and if I know any of them." I understand it might be like kind of embarrassing to confess and stuff, to say what you are tempted by. Listen. I've prayed over numerous people over this weekend and they've confessed everything. And it is a beautiful thing.

I promise you this. No one is going to look at you and get a gag reflex. Nobody is going to go, "Oh, you are dealing with that?" No. That's not happening here. Not here. Because we've all been there. You need to be healed and the way you do that is by confessing and calling upon your Helper.

Would you stand to your feet at all of our locations as we pray together?

Father, we come to You right now and we thank You that You are a good God who does not subject Yourself to things that we are not subjected to. So, You can relate to us in every way. And so, Father, some of us are going through a wilderness right now. Some of us are facing temptation right now.



Some of us need to confess some things that have been killing us for a long time and we need healing. So, Father, I pray for the courage to do so. I pray that Your Spirit would prompt us to do that. And today we would find healing in the power of Your name. We ask this is Jesus' name. And everybody said: Amen and Amen and Amen.

As you sing would you simply come forward.