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Alright, well what's up Traders Point church family? Good to see everybody today. I want to welcome you wherever you may be watching from around the world, Traders Point Online. So good to be able to see and talk to Becca in Kenya.

We have some of our team here in the room, and it just feels really good to be able to worship with other people. And while you may not be able to necessarily be in the room here, I do want to encourage you to not be alone. I want to encourage you to lean in to maybe gather together with maybe two or three other people, maybe a watch party of some kind, maybe your small group—it's so important that we not remain isolated.

I am looking forward to, I'm praying toward, being able to physically regather together again as a church family. I think that it is really important that we do so both emotionally and theologically. But until that time, we will be here for you at Traders Point Church Online. And I want to encourage you to be with other people.

Well, today we are starting a brand-new series of messages that is going to take us really through the end of this year, quite possibly even into 2021, in the gospel of Luke. So if you have a Bible, or a Bible app, I want to encourage you to go ahead and turn there, chapter 4 more specifically. It's where we are going to start off today.

In this series we're primarily going to be focused on looking at the life and the ministry of Jesus, within the gospel of Luke. And we will possibly take a break here or there during the rest of this year to address maybe some other topics or issues, but in particular we're going to be in the gospel of Luke and we're going to just put the weight of 2020 onto the back of this physician named Luke and let him carry us through.

Now, if you are somewhat new to Bible study, or maybe even just as a review, at the very beginning of the New Testament we find four biographies of the life and the ministry of Jesus: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They are written from different perspectives from different individuals.

And I don't know about you, but a question that I always had when I was growing up is: Why do we need four of them? Why can't we just have one that just kind of tells us everything we need to know about Jesus' life and ministry? Why back to back to back to back stories?

And that's a really, really good question. There are all kinds of ways that we could answer it. Maybe the most understandable or simplest way to break this down is to just say if I was thinking about taking a vacation to Barbados, which, I don't know about you, but that sounds about right right about now. I'd love to take a vacation to Barbados.

If I was researching it, instead of talking to one person who had vacationed there, if I talked to four people who had been there, I'd get a better understanding of what there is to do and to see and to eat and to stay. The analogy is not perfect, but it helps.

Like, if you really want to know who Jesus is, and what he came to do, and how he feels about you and the life that he came to offer, don't just talk to one person, talk to four.

And not only that, we actually see that each of these individuals write with a particular group in mind as they write.

So for example, Matthew is writing primarily to the Jewish people. He really wants them to know and to understand that they have a Messiah, that the Messiah has come.

Mark is primarily writing toward Gentile converts living in Rome. That was his primary audience. That is who he had in mind as he wrote.

But, John, he takes the truth of the gospel and communicates it in the most understandable way of the four. That's why, a lot of times, when somebody comes to me and is like, "I'm relatively new to the Bible, where do I even begin? Do I start in Genesis, do I read all of the way through?" I'll oftentimes say, "Why don't you start in the gospel of John."

Well, Luke is primarily writing his gospel for a Greek outsider by the name of Theophilus, who was really struggling. You actually see this in the first couple of verses of chapter 1. Here's how he starts off his book. He says:

*"Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also,"* so in addition to the other gospel writers, *"have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be,"* here it is, *"certain of the truth of everything you were taught."*

And what I want you to see is that Luke would have been very well qualified to do just that. Luke is a physician. It is what he did for a living. And most physicians, if not all of them, are very well educated. And Luke would have been well experienced in putting together information in an orderly way, researching it, going after questions, not just taking it at face value.

And he says, "I put it all into an orderly account, Theophilus, so that you could be certain of the truth," which implies that there was some uncertainty. It implies that Theophilus had some questions, that there was this sort of unsettledness in his spirit.

And so Luke comes along and said, "Hey, listen. I get it. I've had questions too." Luke would have really gotten it because Luke is a Greek outsider himself. He's the only Greek author in the New Testament. So Luke says to Theophilus, "Hey, listen, man. I know you're going through a hard time and I get that so let me meet you right where you are and lay out some things so that you can be certain that these things that you've heard, maybe from your childhood.

And I love Luke's heart. So, if you are feeling like an outsider in any way, if you have some questions and some doubts, if you're going through a hard time, then you are not alone. And this is the heartbeat of our church.

See, you could say that Luke is, in many ways, a gospel for skeptics. See, when Jesus comes... Luke takes great effort to say, "Hey, listen. Jesus came to bring about a kingdom that surprised everybody." They were expecting a Messiah, they were looking for a world leader, but not this one.

See, they had all kinds of ideas as to what a world leader would do and bring, what a Messiah would come to say and to be—it's not so different than what we are looking for in our world leaders today.

When we think about a world leader, we think about somebody who will bring about justice, somebody who will end suffering, and somebody who would, just in general, make people act better, right?

That's what we look for in world leaders. It's largely what we want today. It's what government and science and education and the economy all promise, but rarely deliver.

And Jesus would come and say, "No, I've come to do all of these things but I'm taking a different path to get there. And it was a path that surprised everybody, both the religious and the political power structures of his day. And it surprised them, so much so, that they eventually got threatened by him and they put him to death on a cross.

And Luke is going to show us that Jesus' life ended as a joint execution project between the religious and the secular powers of his day, because they were disappointed with him and they were threatened by him. They both hated Jesus, just for different reasons. They said, "This can't be the Messiah that we are looking for. This guy can't be the world leader that we all need." So they became skeptical.

Skepticism often arises in one of two ways. See if any of you can relate to this:

Skepticism often arises when you've been really disappointed with life.

Any of you there right now? I mean this is a pretty disappointing year that we are navigating through. And when you go through disappointment, what happens is you have problem putting your trust in God because of the pain of your past, the uncertainty of your future, and the disappointment of your present.

Doubt doesn't always necessarily come because you read a philosophy book, doubt often comes just with real life where you struggle to see how a good God could be overseeing your life and then your life take a turn that you never expected. The product of that can be skepticism.

Skepticism also arises when you've been really hurt by people.

And this would be all of us. All of us have been hurt by somebody in our past who we trusted, somebody who we thought would always be there, somebody who said they had your back and then they didn't, somebody who maybe even shares your last name.

All of us have been disappointed and hurt by people, people who claim to know and follow God, and the result of that kind of emotional pain is oftentimes doubt and skepticism.

So, I would say that the vast majority of us, right now, watching or listening to this—we feel somewhat unsettled in our spirit. And if so, then you are not alone. And you're in good company.

So, we're going to spend the rest of this year, a year marked by pain and disappointment—oh, man—with a physician named Luke. And we're going to allow his words to settle our spirits and to heal our hurting hearts.

With that introduction, let's dive right in to chapter 4 beginning in verse 1. Just a little context. Jesus is 30 years old. He's beginning his official ministry on this earth. He's been baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist. We pick this up in verse 1. It says:

*Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,” note that, “returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.*

Now, I just want to go ahead and point out that this is not some rugged camping trip that Jesus took with some buddies to Yosemite. This was a pretty awful experience.

I know that we have a lot of outdoor people in our church. I know that many of you love camping. I actually have a relationship with camping sort of like I do with golf, I told you that a couple of weeks ago. I love the idea of golf; I'm just not a very good golfer.

Same thing—I love the idea of camping. I hear you talk about it. I hear all of the great memories that you're creating with your kids. And I want that, but not that bad, alright? I don't even like glamping.

And so, I felt really bad a couple of years ago because somebody, for Christmas, got us a tent—and it's like a really high-end tent. Something I'm not worthy of whatsoever. And I felt really guilty because it was just collecting dust in my basement.

And so I was like, “You know, we've got to use it.” And so we did. I set it up in our back yard, right off of the deck. And set up a little fire pit and got the smores ready. And we had a great time for about a half hour or so, we didn't even make it 'til midnight. We were like, “This is awful. The mosquitos, the humidity—let's go inside to the climate-controlled environment that God intended for all of us to be in.”

I look at this and Jesus was not in some nice tent. He's not glamping, alright? He is out in the wilderness. Not only that, but he is in a desert called Jeshimon, which literally means—are you ready for this? The Devastation. That sounds awful. Jesus is in a desert called The Devastation, by himself, for more than a month, no tent, out in the elements, no food, and he's being badgered by Satan for 40 days.

And then in verse 3 it says:

*Then the devil said to him, “If,” I want you to notice that, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.”*

Now for those of you familiar with this passage of Scripture, oftentimes we have a tendency to jump right to the loaf of bread, we focus on the stone to bread thing and we'll get to that in a minute, but I want to focus on *If*. Because that's actually the very first thing that Satan does to tempt Jesus. It's the jab before the upper cut. Satan is basically saying, “If. If you are the Son of God...”

Now you know that just prior to this Jesus has been baptized by his cousin John in the Jordan River and you might even remember that whole narrative—that the voice of God, descended like a dove on Jesus, and he said, “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God has already declared who Jesus is.

So, I just want you to understand and to write this down:

Satan often puts question marks in your life where God has put periods.

Satan puts question marks in your life where God has put periods. It's his first tactic to make you doubt God's declaration of who you are, which is part of the reason why we are all so desperately trying to find our identity in something, like in anything.

We oftentimes think that Satan's main work, like the primary thing that he does—we've seen way too many scary movies. We think that Satan's main work is to make people foam at the mouth and levitate above their beds and have their head spin all the way around. Satan will get you distracted on all of that stuff. But, subtly, what he is doing is he's over here and he's just whispering untruths into your identity. It's the jab before the upper cut.

So, Satan will get you distracted with all of these other things, but his primary objective is to get you to doubt your identity in Christ, who you are as a child of God, the love that God has for you and has already declared to you in and through his Son, Jesus.

He is not out in the wilderness trying to get Jesus drunk or to get him to look at explicit websites. No, Satan is trying to get him to base his identity on something else and he's doing the same thing with you and with me.

He'll get you to base your identity on your accomplishments or your lack thereof. How well things are going in life or how well they aren't. And Jesus tells you what he has done for you and that has the power to transform you.

So, notice Jesus' response. He does not mess around:

*But Jesus told him, "No!"* No. Understand this. Jesus doesn't go, "Well, let's talk about it," or, "Hey, what do you mean by that?" No, he doesn't even give a door into that. He just says, "*No, The Scriptures say,*" this is the way he rebuts it, he goes, "*People do not live by bread alone.*"

Now, one of the obvious things that we see in all of this is you've kind of got to go, "Well, probably easy for Jesus to kind of resist that temptation, because, after all, it's just bread. Like, what's the big deal? Like, why couldn't he turn a stone into bread?"

And I would say, "It's not a big deal, because actually the very first miracle that Jesus would do at a wedding party, not too long after this, is turn water into wine." So what's the big deal about turning a stone into bread, after all he's hungry. He's been out in the desert called Devastation for 40 days, I mean a yeast roll would sound pretty amazing right about now.

Our family grew up in southwest Missouri and there is a restaurant in southern Missouri, some of you may have heard of it, maybe you've had a chance to eat there. It's called Lamberts. And Lamberts is nicknamed The Home of Throed Rolls. And you go and it's all of this home cooking: fried chicken, and corn, and all of this amazing stuff.

But their most notable thing is, that as you are sitting there at the booth, somebody is wheeling around a tray of these amazing rolls, right out of the oven. They're hot. They're as big as your head. And you just kind of motion and they will take one and throw it all the way across the room. And they've got honey and butter at the table and it tastes so amazing.

And that's what I think of when I think of this. Like, when we've been on the road all day traveling back to see family, it tastes pretty good to stop into Lamberts and get a roll.

We see here that Satan tempts him with this. But the temptation is not a stone into bread. Here's the thing underneath it:

The temptation was to turn something good into something ultimate.

It was a short-cut, which is what all temptation is at its base level. That's what Satan will do with you and with me. He'll tempt us with something good, that in and of itself is not bad. In

fact, chances are, God created that thing for your enjoyment. God wants you to experience it. God wants it for you.

But what we have a tendency to do is that we take that good thing, whether it's a career, whether it's a relationship, whether it's finances and we make it an ultimate thing, something that we think we have to have in order for our soul to be complete and alive.

And oftentimes, when a good thing becomes a god-thing, it's just a matter of time before it turns into a bad thing. And so you're treating God, I know that I've been guilty of this, treating God like a pinata and faith is the whacking stick to try to get something out of God that I really want at the time.

And Jesus just refutes it with Scripture. But Satan is persistent. He comes back again, verse 5, it says:

*"Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 'I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,' the devil said, 'because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me.'"*

Wow! He's just gotten a whole lot bolder. We've gone from being tempted with bread to now Satan worship. He's just taken a massive step forward. And he's basically said to Jesus, "Hey, listen. Jesus, if you want people to remember you 2,000 years from now, if you want your life to count for something, if you want fame and glory and recognition, we can do that.

"We can take the shortcut to that. You can do it without a cross, Jesus. You don't need to go through all of that pain, separation, and misery. I can give you a crown without a cross. I can give you a kingdom without a tomb."

Understand that the temptation here was to go around God to get something from God. I can be so consumed with pursuing something that I think is good, that I cut God out. And that thing has more weight to it than what God has already said and done for me. But, it causes me to compromise some things.

We all want love. We all want acceptance. We all want our life to count for something, but, "I'm just not quite sure I can trust God's best for me," so I chase it in a different way.

And notice Jesus' response, once again. Verse 8:

*Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'"*

Well, one last attempt in verse 9:

*"Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, 'If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, "He will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"*

And I just want to point something out here that, honestly, I've never really seen even though I've read and studied this passage so much over the years. It's that the first two temptations, Satan just kind of tempts him with something, Jesus refutes it with Scripture, but on the final temptation, Satan goes, "Ah, but the word of God says..."

That's just downright scary. You want to know why you should be in God's word on a regular basis, why you should be familiar with it? It's because Satan is very familiar with it. He's

actually so familiar with it that he can actually use it against you. He can misuse it, misapply it, mis-read it, and twist it all up.

Right now we are living in an era of time where you and I have more access to content coming at us through our phones, our screens, every time we turn on the television, the newspaper—all just coming at us on the internet—and we were not designed to process that much content at once. And it's an overload.

Have you noticed, like right now, that you can read something on the internet about whatever, and turn right around and read the exact opposite thing? And you're like, "I don't even know what to believe anymore." Like, people are saying diametrically opposed things.

It doesn't surprise me at all. See, Satan is the author of division. So one of the things that he will do, he wants to get in and wreak havoc, he'll just separate everybody. And we are in a season right now where we have to be separated for a time. And then what he'll do is he will just barrage you with so much content that it creates all of this angst and division. And all of us are just like on this razor's edge of frustration.

And he is the author of deception and confusion and isolation and separation. And can I just say that my pastor's heart is bleeding right now? Because whenever we have those seasons before, we'd just come together. We'd come together in prayer. We'd come together in worship night. We'd draw together, we'd talk face to face instead of over a keyboard. But instead, he's separated us, and he's created division in all of this...

Listen. Right now it is so important that you get in God's word. Why? Well, because Satan is and he's using it against you. I want to encourage you to read the Bible with us. You can just simply go to this link:

[tpcc.org/dbr](http://tpcc.org/dbr)

which means daily bible reading. We're continuing to make improvements to that so that you can get into God's word and study; it's a tool to help you as you navigate through this confusing time.

See, understand this:

The temptation here was to interpret God through circumstances, rather than by God's promises.

And right now, all we can see is circumstances. And it's circumstances that are painful, and circumstances that are uncertain and we need to remember and rehearse God's promises.

When Jesus responded in verse 12, he says:

*"The Scriptures also say,"* I love that, *"You must not test the LORD your God."*

In other words, he goes, "Oh, I know Scripture too. And you know what? Why would I need God to prove something to me? Why would I need God to prove that he cares about me, when he's already said that I'm his beloved, when he's already given me the eternal promises from his word. So, I'm going to base my trust in God, not on my present circumstances, which are always changing, but on his promises that never do."

And then in verse 13:

*“When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.”*  
There will always be a next time. And it says: *“Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit’s power.”*

That was the result of this showdown as he resisted the temptation he was filled with the Holy Spirit’s power. And you can be too.

Now, as we come to the conclusion of that section of Luke, I can’t help but get this image in my mind where Satan has just been defeated three times and he kind of shrinks away.

And I always get the image in my mind of the villain at the end of these movies where they are trying to set it up for a sequel. You know what I’m talking about? And all of a sudden there’s movement, and you think the villain is dead, then he opens his eyes. Or he actually just kind of says, “I’ll get you next time.” And there always will be a next time.

And he will come back bigger and badder than ever and he’s learned how you respond so he’ll kind of adjust the way in which he is going to go about it. And what I know for certain right now as we read this passage, I know that Satan is not going to tempt you and me with turning stones into bread. I mean, I’ve never been tempted with that. He’s not going to be tempting, “Hey, take yourself up to the top of your house and this will all be yours... No. He’s not going to do any of that.

But, don’t focus on these specific examples that were for Jesus. Look at the temptation underneath it, because what Satan just did here is, he laid out his playbook. And it has not changed for 2,000 years.

See, what we understand here is that”

Temptation will almost always involve turning a good thing into an ultimate thing, going around God to get something good; or to evaluate God’s goodness by your circumstances.

Bank on it. Every temptation you face, you boil it down, you see this underneath.

Now, I know what some of you might be thinking at this point. Like, I’m just imagining that if I’m you, listening to this teaching, this is what I would think. I would go, “Hey, this is great stuff. Good content. Good content. I know we started this series in the gospel of Luke, and this is what Luke, chapter 4 talks about.

“But I’ve got to be honest with you, Pastor Aaron, things are crazy in the world right now. And there is all kind of stuff happening. And I’m anxious. And I’m scared. And I’m uncertain. And I’m fearful. And I’m on edge. I could think of a whole bunch of things you could preach on right now.

“Like, I could really use a message on hope. I could really use a message on perseverance. A message about love. That would be great. That would be timely. That would be applicable. But like, temptation? Really? Is that what we need right now, a message on temptation?”

And I just want you to know that I get that. I get that that has gone through your mind. Some of you are like, “Well, it didn’t cross my mind until you said it. But, now that you’ve said it, yeah.”

And, honestly, I actually wrestled with that last week as I wrote this. As I was studying this I was like, “Is this what really what we want to do? Talk about temptation?”



As a pastor, I oftentimes I will have people reach out to me and say, “Hey, can we talk? Can you pray for me? I’m really going through a hard time.” And we’ll sit down together, and they’ll just begin to share with me what they are going through. And I can tell you this. On the very short list of things that I want to talk about to them, if they are struggling, temptation is usually not on the list. It just seems a little untimely, maybe a little bit insensitive.

And yet, I want to point something out to all of us. Actually, James, the half brother of Jesus, does this very well in his letter in the New Testament. You can check this out later for yourself. But James is actually writing to a group of people going through very similar circumstances to what we are going through now.

People who were under a lot of pressure, people who were very unsettled in their spirit, they were anxious about their future, they were separated from family, jobs, and homes. And so James spends a significant part of chapter 1 encouraging them and urging them to persevere and to have courage and to not give up, saying, “Hey, listen. We’re going to get to the other side of this.”

And yet, at the same time, in the same chapter, James also talks with them about resisting temptation, which seems just a little bit unexpected. You see, James knew what he was doing, because, as it turns out, when life gets really hard, when the temperature gets turned up and the pressure gets applied, that’s when we are most often vulnerable.

And we see that Jesus experienced temptation in his life when? When he was alone, when he was hungry, when he wasn’t sleeping very well, when he was in a desert called Devastation, and Satan was badgering him day after day after day trying to wear down his defenses, and that’s when he got the onslaught of temptation in his life. See:

Temptation often gets triggered when we get stressed out and overwhelmed.

This is actually the perfect time to talk about this because we often don’t make the connection to it. But trials and temptations always go together. And I don’t know about you, and what it is that you are dealing with right now, maybe for the past four or five months as you’ve been navigating through the anxiety and the uncertainty—you’ve been tempted in your life maybe more than ever.

And maybe it’s old temptations. Temptations that you actually went to counseling for. Temptations that you’ve worked through. Temptations that you thought you had put in the review mirror, and now, all of a sudden, they have re-emerged, and it’s been demoralizing.

You thought that you had overcome your addiction to alcohol. And now you’ve been drinking again. You thought you had a good handle on the porn addiction, but now, spending so much time alone and always on the internet searching the headlines—it’s like right there. And it offers a brief amount of comfort.

Maybe you and your spouse had overcome a season of real challenge in your marriage, but now the economic difficulties and the instability at work and the kids doing e-learning at home, you’re just at each other all of the time.

All of these old temptations. And it’s so defeating.

Or maybe it’s brand new temptations, temptations that you’ve never dealt with before. You never thought that you would.

And going back to James, he seems to understand that trials and temptations always go together. After immediately encouraging them to persevere, he says this in verse 13 of chapter 1. He says, "When tempted..." He doesn't say if. He doesn't say that there is a strong possibility of. He says, "No, when." You can just count on it. You are going to be tempted.

And when there are unanticipated struggles like what we are dealing with in 2020, none of us saw this coming, we become more susceptible to it and we are just more vulnerable to these temptations in life. And we start to say things like, "What happened? What's happening to me right now? This isn't fair. So I deserve to do what I want and to feel how I want."

We're dealing with so much stress right now that a brief moment of indiscretion sounds pretty good. "I'm feeling so isolated that a little indulgence..." "I'm feeling so on edge, I'm just going to haul off. I'm going to get that person a piece of my mind."

We could say it this way:

Difficult circumstances often lead to destructive decisions.

Difficult circumstances are the perfect set up for destructive decisions. Maybe you've heard it said this way before, that sin will always take you further than you wanted to go. It will keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and it will cost you way more than you ever wanted to pay.

And maybe you're just feeling stuck and disconnected and you've got little motivation. We're incredibly vulnerable right now in making destructive decisions.

Listen. Satan is a master fisherman.

You know. One of the things I do love to do is I love to fish. And part of that is because my grandpa, when I was a little kid, took me fishing all of the time. And so anytime I throw a line in the water it takes me back and reminds me of being with him. There's the thrill of having the fish get on the end of the line and reeling it in and seeing what it is.

Now, I love to fish, but I'm not a very good fisherman. And the reason why is because I don't like to change the bait, alright? And it's not like a gross out thing. I don't mind worms and all of that kind of stuff. It's just that it's annoying because you have to change the bait all of the time.

It's like, I don't know how to tie the knots very well. I have to always go on YouTube and figure out how to tie a fishing knot. And it's just like, once I get the bait on the end of the line... I really like to bass fish, so I'll put like a little spinner bait that goes on top of the water—I'll just leave in on there. Like I'll be fishing with that same bait for three years.

It's like, "Hey, Brockett. You should change the bait."

"Why?"

"Well, the hook is rusted."

It's just like, "Well, I don't want to go through the hassle of it." So, thus, my ability as a fisherman is greatly hampered.

Satan is a really good fisherman, because he knows how to change the bait. And he knows that if that didn't get you, well this other bait will get you. And he knows that what works on me may not work on you. And always, underneath all of the enticing things is a hook, and he is relentless. He will keep going. He will keep wearing you down. He will get you in a season where you're worn down and anxious and tired and uncertain and that's when he'll strike.

My prayer right now for you, whoever you are, wherever you are joining us from around the world, my prayer for our church right here in our city, in Indianapolis, is that as we go into this fall season this would be a year where we wouldn't lose ground, but we would gain it.

And I know that sounds so unusual, because doesn't it feel like a year where we're just losing ground? But maybe because of our individual decisions as we merge out of this year, we could look back and go, "No, actually I made some ground. I didn't fall back. I actually leaped forward." Imagine if you could dig your spiritual well deeper during this challenging season, how much better off you'll be when the season changes.

See, we may be distanced for a time, but don't be isolated. You cannot win this battle alone. And so what if this is the season, a year, when you look back on it years from now and you go, "Man, that was painful. It was horrible. And I'm so sad that we went through it, but you know what? It actually was one of the best things that happened to me, because it made me less self-dependent and more God-dependent.

"It made me more loving and understanding of other people. It dug our spiritual wells deeper. I was able to handle temptation better, because of what I learned in that season. I learned that I'm not going to be better by trying harder. I'm not going to overcome the struggles by exerting more effort. I'm not going to earn approval by accomplishing more. I'm not going to get fulfillment by taking short cuts.

"I cannot not be loved and accepted by God by being good, learning more, or being more religious. It's only when it's just complete surrender. And I just lean completely into Jesus, and I see that because of him, he took it all on for me."

In Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 15 says that Jesus has been tempted in every way that you are. Think about all of the ways that you've been tempted. Jesus has been tempted in the same way. So you can't say, "Well, Jesus. You just don't understand. You just don't understand how I feel." He's like, "No, I do."

"You don't understand what I'm going through."

"No, I do. I bench pressed that already. I've been under the weight of that, and I've taken it all on for you and I have provided a way out."

He was tempted in every way, but he never sinned. He walked faithfully in a desert called The Devastation, when Adam could not walk faithfully in a garden called Eden. He went toe to toe with Satan and showed us the way out to get victory so that we might have victory. It's what made him the perfect, spotless, Lamb of God, who would go to a cross and his blood would cover all of our sins and receiving this is an entirely different way to live.

So, I want to leave you with this passage, this encouragement out of 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 13. It says this:

*"And God is" say it with me, both in the room and online, "faithful." God is faithful, and "He will not allow the temptation to be **more than you can stand**. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out **so that you can endure**."*

That is not a suggestion, that is a promise. And he says, "Listen. I'll give you a way out, by his Spirit." Do it differently this time around. Don't do it in your own strength. Don't do it by your own logic. Don't do it by your own will power, but do it by his Spirit.

And Jesus does not focus on behavior modification; he always focuses on heart change. He doesn't say, "Hey, get your act together and then come to me and we're good." No, he goes, "Come to me, give everything to me, let me make you good. Let me make you whole. Let me pay the price for that sin. Let me help you where you fall short. Stop trying to battle temptation on your own power. Let me battle with you." It's his primary work.

And right now, if you are ready to give your life to Jesus, you want to cross that line of faith, you are tired of trying to do this on your own, then, Oh, man, we would love to talk with you, to walk with you through that. You can go to this link right here:

[tpcc.org/Jesus](http://tpcc.org/Jesus)

And right there we will just meet you wherever you are and help you to take your next steps in that journey with Christ.

So, what I want to do right now is I want to pray for all of us. So, I'm just going to ask you to stand wherever you are, whether you're in the room, whether you're online in the living room, in the back yard—if you're driving in your car, don't stand. But wherever you may be, just stand to your feet in a posture of worship and humility. Let's just go to God right now. We're going to sing together but,

Father, we come to you right now and I thank you so much that you have modeled for us a way to do battle against temptation. God, I pray that this would be a year not that we lose from, but that we would gain by the power of your Holy Spirit.

God, I pray that you would fill us and give us strength, God. We are divided. We are isolated. We are anxious. Right now, in this moment we need you more than ever. So meet us in this place right where we are and give us the strength that only you can. We ask this in Jesus' name. And everyone says: Amen.