

Message #3

The Devil Made Me Do It

Mark 1:12-13

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,'

and

"On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve."

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Introduction:

It seems growing up I had a serious blame problem. For starters I was the middle child. And to add to all that my two other siblings were sisters. I was in a house full of girls. How my father and I made it I still wonder at times? **But I confess I had a blaming problem.**

During one summer all three of us children were babysat by our neighbor. This mother had two had children close to our age and during the afternoons we would go over to their house to play. I was only five or six. I remember hardly anything about what went on at that house during those times but one things sticks out clear.

My two sisters would always make up stuff that I did during the afternoon to get me into trouble. At least that was my take on what happened. Every late afternoon when we walked into the door of our farm house I was very sad by the time I came home. The lies that were spread in that car as we traveled a country mile to home were astonishing. The lies about how I ran around the house yelling and screaming. The lies about how I

kicked the neighbor kids with my boots that I wore as a kid. The lies about hair pulling, spilled drinks, each day it seemed like endless accusations. By the time we got home I was sad and sometimes in tears.

For the life of me I did not remember doing all the things they said I did. All I remembered was that I had a lot of fun! The truth was I had done all those things. The reason why I was sad was because now mom knew and if mom knew it would not be long until dad knew and that usually meant something not so good was coming my way.

I remember blaming the other older boy who got me to do all that stuff. I remember that my sisters and the other girl all teased me and dared me to stuff. I blamed the babysitter and that she never watched us.

I was great at blaming everyone else. It made sense that if I didn't have my two sisters around and was not at the neighbors house I would not of done all those crazy things that little boys do sometimes. It couldn't of been my fault? Everyone else made me do it! It was not fair to this young boy. Since I was so young I blamed my sisters but give me a few years and I would start to blame the devil!

Have you ever found yourself either saying or honestly thinking....the devil made me do it! It sounds foolish to say but yet we think it. We think well I'm not capable of doing something like that. Yet it happens.

In our text today we are continuing our study through the gospel of Mark. A few weeks ago we looked at John the Baptist preparing the way, last week we examined the baptism of Jesus and this week in Mark chapter one we are looking at the temptation of Jesus Christ.

It seems as if Jesus goes straight from the baptistry to the frying pan. With each temptation Jesus is offered an 'easier' path for his Messianic ministry. They were all shortcuts yet Jesus rejects them all. The bible teaches that Jesus was 'tempted in all ways like we are' and yet was without sin. As a result we can be confident that Jesus understands our struggles. Jesus provides real life example for overcoming temptations.

An important note these are no ordinary temptations, these come offered from Satan himself. Jesus has been out in the desert for 40 days and fasting. The Holy Spirit led him out here for this exact purpose. This is a head-to-head battle. If Jesus fails here he will not complete His journey to the cross.

Before we go further we need to talk about the other central individual in this text. Satan.

Do you believe there is a real being called Satan?

In a recent survey, only 1/3 of U.S. Christians believe Satan is real. My question is this: Who was Jesus talking to? Does Jesus believe Satan is real? The truth is the Bible teaches that Satan is a powerful angel. Satan is created. Satan was kicked out of heaven

because of his great pride. Scripture teaches that he rules the dark forces of this world and seeks to destroy God's church. The Bible also affirms that Satan is still under God's control.

The truth is this is not a fair fight. Although Jesus is weak physically after not eating for 40 days. Physically he was empty but spiritually Jesus was full. Often our experience is just the opposite.

A few things to keep in mind as we go through this section of Scripture:

1. Satan is a tempter but if we sin we are accountable to God. The bible affirms that in James 1:14 “but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.
2. Some argue that sure Jesus did not sin but He was the Son of God. We need to remember that Jesus, the second Adam, was just as capable of sinning as the first Adam was of being sinless.
3. Understand that this is what some of called “Paradise Restored”. Satan first got Adam and Eve in the garden. Now it is Jesus' turn to see if he will truly restore everything.
4. We must remember that only three ways exist in which anyone of us can be tempted: 1 John 2:15-17 says this, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the

boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

Satan can only tempt us through the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life.

Let's examine the three temptations of Christ and how Satan tempted Jesus.

And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Round One

I. Satan Will Tempt You Through The Lust of the Flesh

Satan tries to ask Jesus to turn simple stones into bread. Jesus is hungry after fasting for 40 days. How is this sinful? Jesus could do it. Why doesn't he? Simple: Jesus never performs a miracle for himself. It would have been a misuse of His divine power. If

Jesus uses his power for selfish means at the start of his ministry he will not finish it. Also if Jesus does that it no longer makes him fully human. He can't claim to understand our struggles if he performs a miracle every time he thinks he needs one.

Understand right now all the personification that is going on. Paradise restored, tested for 40 days, and now the idea of miraculous manna.

Satan quotes scripture but just enough. He never quotes the entire verse just enough to prove his point. Jesus does not fall for this temptation of the Lust of the flesh. His flesh is hungry. But Jesus knows that true food that lasts comes from every word that comes from the mouth of God. Interesting Jesus says that phrase after Satan only quotes a part of what came from the mouth of God.

This is round one and Jesus wins.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,'

and

"On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Round Two

II. Satan Will Tempt You Through The Boastful Pride of Life

The second temptation they leave the dessert and go to Jerusalem, the highest point in Solommon's temple. Jewish tradition taught that the Messiah would 'appear' on the top of the temple. Jesus would have been hailed quickly as the popular Messiah. Jesus could of saved himself a lot of time and suffering if he had simply done this. Everyone was expecting it. The problem though this was not God's plan.

Satan again quotes scripture, this time from Psalm 91:11 but he leaves out a phrase once again. He leaves out the phrase all your ways. Again what Satan says is only half true. Satan is right that God does send help and protection through 'guardian angels'. But if Jesus jumps from the temple on purpose it was Jesus' choice. All of God's ways do not include selfish pride. This was the sin of Pride. Jesus, if you are the son of God, God has to protect you, doesn't He? Jesus, you are invincible! Jump!

But Jesus knows 'all of God's ways' and that includes not putting God to the test. Oh how the Health and Wealth churches need to hear that verse.

Jesus Wins Round Two

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve."

Round Three

III. Satan Will Tempt You Through The Lust of the Eyes

Satan now takes Jesus up for round three to the top of a high hill. It says that in an instant all the kingdoms of the world were visible to Jesus. It seems that Satan gives Jesus a powerful vision.

Satan claims to have dominion over the earth. Again one more half truth from Satan. This is only partially true. We must remember that Satan's control is limited. He is on a leash. Anything beyond that leash is out of his domain.

We must remember that although Satan had acquired a temporary possession of this world that Jesus had right to it as the sole heir of God. Jesus is stronger than Satan and had come to regain his kingdom but it would be done so through spiritual means and not a carnal/flesh kingdom.

On a side it seems absurd that Satan would ask Jesus for worship. It must be noted that this is really a subtle request. This verb form of 'worship' is known as an aorist subjunctive which suggest only a single action.

Satan is not asking Jesus for worship and allegiance continually and forever, Satan is asking Jesus for worship and allegiance just this once. Just this moment, only once. That is exactly what the nature of temptation is truly all about. Satan asking us for allegiance, not forever, but just once right now.

Finally after three powerful temptations, Satan is knocked out. Jesus wins round three and no doubt he's tired and hungry. Jesus tells Satan to leave and the Satan must obey the master.

IV. How Did Jesus Defeat Temptation?

He quoted Scripture and was led by the Spirit!

Quoting scripture will always send Satan running! This is how you go from saying the 'devil made me do it and avoiding temptation to obedience to God through His Word'.

Romans 15:4

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that

through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Conclusion:

Whether it was a long time ago or just yesterday often I always look to blame someone or something when I sin against God and fall to temptation. Satan knows scripture and will twist it so well. I need the Word of God in my life daily. I need to hide it in my heart. I need it on my lips. I need to be able to quote it. Jesus did not pull out a concordance when Satan was quoting scripture. I either know it or I don't. As I result I will fall if I do not.

One quick note about being tempted before we close:

James 1 says this: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Let's be clear: God does not tempt you. The truth is often we will not encounter Satan one-on-one like Jesus. Often a lot of temptations begin with our own evil desire. We get caught in the snare and are dragged away and enticed. Temptation leads to sin. Being tempted is not a sin but that does not mean we purposefully put ourselves in situations to be tempted.

Here's the result of our sin: Death. Yes it means physical death but it also implies the death of whatever that sin destroyed. It might be our family, a marriage, a friendship, it could cost us our job, our home, it will cost us everything. Sounds like an allegiance to something doesn't it?

Illustration of a friend

Let's be reminded of God's warning but also His glorious promise before we close:

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

The way out might be a few different things from time to time but primarily and the solution Jesus used was knowing and quoting Scripture.

Praise God that we have one who was tempted in every way and without sin. Praise God that Jesus when tested proved himself faithful every time. Praise God that Christ was faithful in all ways and did not settle for any shortcuts because now He serves as my High Priest so that now I may approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that I may receive mercy and find grace to help me in my time of need and that is true for all who hold firmly to the faith they profess in Christ Jesus.

Amen.