



"Tempted by the Devil"

Mary Craig Ministries

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Text: Luke 4:1-13

Dear friend of Mary Craig Ministries,

We are in the season when we contemplate Christ and what He has accomplished on behalf of those for whom He died.

So let's look at Jesus in Luke 4:1-13. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit when He returned from being baptized by John the Baptizer in order to fulfill all righteousness. Let's make it clear. Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, i.e., in humankind, sent by the Father, to be the Surety of a New Covenant in His Blood. He is a divine person with a divine nature who took on a human nature in a human body. He had no personal sin, but came to be sin-bearer and curse-bearer on behalf of those given to Him by the Father.

In the office of Surety, Mediator and Messenger of the New Covenant, and Messiah, Jesus was doing what we cannot do. He fulfilled the Law of God in an obedience that was voluntary and with a willing heart, an obedience that was perfect, personal, and perpetual.

So what can we learn as we look at Jesus facing the devil in the wilderness?

1. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Fasting should be a thing of the Spirit, not of the flesh. Fasting needs to be Spirit-led, something we do because the Holy Spirit is leading us to do it.

2. Jesus' mission had a purpose. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast for 40 days, eating nothing. After the end of those 40 days, Jesus was hungry. It was at this point that the devil comes to him to tempt him.

Fasting is not a hunger strike. Fasting is not something we do to manipulate God to agree with us for something we seek. It is not something we do to impress God and other believers with how spiritual we are. It is not something we do in our own strength in order to gain spiritual power over others. God knows the heart.

Fasting should be a work whose source is God, a work which teaches and reveals to us spiritual truth. The revelation of truth often follows the specific obedience of the fast. The truth revealed renews the mind, results in repentance, and increases righteousness in our daily lives. Revealed

truth affects our decisions and direction, and develops our understanding of God's will and purposes as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

3. Jesus faced the devil himself. Let's look.

*"And the devil said unto Him, if you are the Son of God,
command this stone that it be made bread." Luke 4:3*

The devil knew who Jesus is. The Father had already declared, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." Satan was not asking Jesus to prove He is the Son of God; he was tempting Jesus to sin. He was challenging Jesus to misuse His power and position. It is, rather, "Since you are..." Israel had failed in the wilderness. Jesus succeeds.

This test/tempting occurs between persons in the supersensual, in the supernatural realm, between Jesus and Satan. Satan is basically saying here that since Jesus is the Son of God, He should not have to endure deprivation. How humiliating! "Exercise Your powers, Jesus, and command these stones to become bread. Why should You suffer?"

Satan acknowledged that Jesus has divine powers and is entitled to divine care, privileges, and prerogatives. This formerly anointed cherub affirmed Jesus as Son of God.

*"And Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written,
That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Luke 4:4*

Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.

Fasting demonstrates to us the truth of this verse that Jesus quoted. It is God who holds the power of life and death. Jesus' Name is Word of God. Jesus will voluntarily lay down His life and take it up again according to the commandment given to Him by the Father. Food will not save us. Fasting teaches us that we will live and not die; that only the Holy Spirit gives life. Life is in Christ, by the Spirit of Christ.

Fasting goes to the core of our basic appetite: hunger. It is part of crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts. In the New Testament fasting is for the glory of God alone since it is to be private and secret and not a ritual. It is a time of heart searching and sorrow, a time of intimacy with the Holy Spirit, a time to fast not unto men, but unto the Father.

Isaiah 58 tells us that the fast God desires **of us** is abstaining from sinful ways and instead, doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. Instead of being greedy for bread, for example, give your bread to someone else who is hungry.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?

Isaiah 58:6, 7

In October of 1997, the Holy Spirit prepared me for a forty day fast with this passage. What was at stake was Source...**the Source of Life, the Source of satisfaction, the Source of destiny.**

Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. By the word of God we live or die (cf John 12.46), not food to the flesh. We cannot separate the

physical from the spiritual. God must be first in everything. What sustains? **God is Source and Sustainer of Life. Therefore, subjection to the Word is required. We misuse position and power for personal preservation. We are not to question God's goodness and love.**

“And the devil, taking Him up into a high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give You, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If You therefore will worship me, all shall be Yours.” Luke 4:5-7

Wow. You do know that the devil is a liar. The temptation is that Jesus should not have to walk the Servant's role in order to win the right to govern the kingdoms of the world. Skip the crucifixion and get right to it, right now. Why suffer as Messiah on behalf of a people? Why bear their sin and curse when You Yourself are the Son of God? But it was necessary that the Christ should suffer; and we know that Jesus died, but also rose again. (Luke 24)

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get behind Me, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” Luke 4:8

Again, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy, this time from Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20.

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world and authority and glory in exchange for worship. “Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” But the Father had already promised to give the Son all the kingdoms of the world (Psalm 2.7, 8), only first the Son had to suffer and die (Luke 24.25-27). A onetime worship of Satan would eliminate the necessity of the cross (cf Matthew 16.21-23). Why? Well, Jesus would no longer qualify, for one reason. We must remember that Satan seeks worshipers. He wants to take God's place and receive what is rightfully God's. (Isaiah 14) Even if Satan's offer was valid, the terms were unacceptable. Jesus answered and said to him “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

What brings satisfaction? In serving the Source, all that is His is mine (Matthew 28.18). God gave humanity dominion over creation, the kingdoms and their glory, as an honor. It is an honor to serve the Creator with our worship and our caring for the creation. **God is the Source of satisfaction, power, throne, authority, dominion** (cf Revelation 13), not Satan, that dragon. **Therefore, subjection to the worship of God is required.** Being living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God is our reasonable service, our spiritual worship. (Romans 12.1) Whatever we worship, we will serve. **We misuse position and power for personal promotion and profit.** Satan would have us start with glory and end with suffering, desiring that we sacrifice the eternal for the temporary and take the path of least resistance, especially resistance against him! **We are not to question God's promise, His hope, or His ways.**

“And he brought Him to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple and said unto Him, If [since] You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You; and in their hands they shall bear You up, lest at any time You dash Your foot against a stone.” Luke 4:9-11

The devil fires back with some scripture himself. He quotes Psalm 91:11. He tempts Jesus to tempt God. But Jesus is God in flesh. Jesus answers with a rebuke.

*“And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said,
You shall not tempt the Lord your God.” Luke 4:12*

Jesus again quoted from Deuteronomy, this time Deuteronomy 6:16. This stopped the devil.

*“And when the devil had ended all the temptation,
he departed from Him for a season.” Luke 4:13*

God is the Source of destiny. Subjection to the will of God is required. Therefore, we are to live a life of self-denial (humility). We misuse power and position for personal protection and self-assertion. Neither Satan nor “self” determines our destiny. God does. **To do otherwise, is to tempt God, to put Him to the test. We must not question the Father’s faithfulness by forcing the proving of a promise. Putting God to the test occurs when He is tempted to go against His nature and ways, to go outside of who He is in Himself. It is, therefore, tempting God to do evil. For example, we do this when we want God to approve our ways and nature rather than to submit to His ways and nature.**

It comes down to this. Whose Word do we hear and obey? To whose will do we submit? To submit to, to serve, to assert any spiritual authority other than the One true and living God is idolatry, witchcraft, anti-Christ, counterfeit spiritual authority. Had Jesus “fallen” for Satan’s temptations, He would have lost authority not gained it. **In the temptations of Word, Worship, and Will, spiritual authority...true spiritual authority...was at stake.**

In the wilderness, Israel failed the test. They looked to other sources for life, for satisfaction, for destiny. Adam failed the test, too. His unbelief, his turning to hear and obey, to give obeisance to another word, another will, cut the umbilical cord to life in God. In serving the words of the serpent, he took the name of the Lord as empty of power, as untrue. In unbelief, in believing the lie, he worshipped the Liar.

We can also contrast the first and Last Adam in the temptations, demonstrating that Adam yielded, bringing his posterity into an estate of sin and death while Jesus resisted, bringing those born of Him into an estate of justification and life. In this comparison, we have:

The lust of the flesh—the tree was good for food—command this stone to become bread.

The lust of the eyes—it was pleasant to the eyes—the devil...showed Him all the kingdoms of the world

The pride of life—a tree desirable to make one wise—throw Yourself down from here.

(1 John 2:16; Genesis 3:6 First Adam; Luke 4:1-13 Last Adam, Second Man)

Had Jesus fallen to the test/temptation, He would have failed to qualify as our Savior. Jesus’ Name is Word of God. Had Jesus fallen to the temptation, His inward integrity would have been shattered. The devil failed to shake Christ at His core, to lead Him outside of who He is and what He came to do on behalf of His own.

4. Jesus came out in the power of the Spirit. Fasting brings us to a place of greater spiritual power, but it is power controlled by the Holy Spirit for the purposes of the Godhead. We are not to usurp authority; it must be given to us legally. During a fast, we are humbled before God, maybe humiliated and scorned by others, and tempted to quit. As God reveals truth to us, knowing that truth, faith then moves to fact and increases our certainty and connection in God and His Word.

When we say that we believe in the One true God, when we offer Him praise and worship, declaring His Name and His mighty works, we are to demonstrate that belief in our obedience.

We do what He says. We yield to His will. We acknowledge Him as Creator by not worshipping and serving the creation. We will serve what we truly worship. We will obey what we truly believe. We will heed what we hear and receive as true. **We will face the same tests, and we will fail them. That's why Jesus came...the Beloved Son of God...to be our Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One.**



As we approach the height of Christ's humiliation, namely, the Crucifixion, let's remember that He was sent by the Father to save.

Because Jesus the Christ offered Himself as Sacrifice to bear the penalty of our sin, those in Christ are no longer alienated from the Father. There is peace through the blood of the Cross. Those in Christ find that what Jesus has done propitiates the wrath of God against the personal offense against God that sin is. Those in Christ find that their sin is not just covered, but cleansed and that the blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works to serve the Living God; that they are accepted in the Beloved. Those in Christ find that they are now redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, their sin and guilt paid for and divine justice satisfied. Satan has been defeated. Jesus did not bypass the Cross to get to the glory. Neither should we.

To listen to this message as it was given at Unity Day, St. John AME Church, go to:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/25862077/03.09.2014TemptedbytheDevilLuke4.1-13Dr.MaryCraig.MP3?dl=1>

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Living by His grace, for His glory,

Mary Craig

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And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman,

and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head

and you shall bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15

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