

Successful Resistance

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[0 : 0 0] Well, hello and welcome. Thank you so much for joining me. My name is Tyler Lawrence. I'm the worship and the tech pastor here at First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana, and I'm so happy that you've chosen to join me today. Now, normally I'm not the guy who gets the opportunity to preach or to teach out of the Bible. That's Pastor Ray, and we're going to talk a little bit more about where we've been and what he's been teaching us so far, and maybe even where we're going to be going in this new series that we're kicking off today. But first, I just want to say thank you.

Thank you for joining me. Thank you for being a part of FCC, even if it's just from the far on the radio or watching this on YouTube or Facebook or Instagram or however you came to watch this video or listen to us. And Pastor Ray says something almost every week. He says, we want to get into this word, but more importantly, we want this word to get in to us. And I think that that's a beautiful image. Here's the other thing that I want to stress before we talk about where we've been and where we're going and what we're talking about today, and that is the Bible is a blessing. The Bible is many things. It's a love letter to us. It's a history book. It is the origins of our species.

It is prophecy telling us where we're going in the future. It is so many things, and it indirectly or directly answers every question that we have as humans. It is a blessing. And so I want to encourage you, please get into your Bible. Be the type of person, be the type of Christian who reads their Bible and puts that as a priority. So let's talk about where we've been. Up until this point, the entirety of the year 2025 has been spent talking about DNA, the DNA of our church, of First Christian Church. And that DNA, or what makes us tick, starts with our new vision statement, which is this, Jesus first. That's our vision statement. That's why we do what we do. It's because Jesus is first, and we want Him to be first in everything. Now, how do we do that? Well, that comes through our mission statement, which is the three Bs. Belong, believe, become. Belong to, believe in, and become like Jesus. That's our goal. That's what we do. That's how we accomplish this Jesus first lifestyle.

And then we've also been talking about our five core values. One of them is actually the Bible. The Bible is our authority. And last week, Pastor Ray wrapped up this idea of generosity is our standard, and that we can be generous with our time and our treasures and our talent. It's been so amazing. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have. Jesus first is such a cool concept to me and such a good way to orient our entire church and our entire ministry here at FCC. So I want to introduce you to now where we're going. We're introducing today a new series entitled Just Jesus, as you may have seen on the video before I started talking, right? Just Jesus. And that is eerily similar to Jesus first, right? And it's because we want to continue to unpack what it means to live a Jesus first lifestyle. Just Jesus, or like the orange juice, simply orange, simply Jesus. We want to dive closer and zoom in more and more into who Jesus is and how we can live that lifestyle. It's also similar to our new youth group name, which is 220. This is their new logo, and I think it's really cool. And it says, it also is a play on words and a play on numbers. So 220 also lines up with second to none, or Jesus first. But it also is the address, so to speak, or the chapter and verse in Galatians, which is the theme verse for the youth group. Here's what that says. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Did you catch that? The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God. That's absolutely a Jesus first type of mentality, or Jesus is second to none, 220.

So we're super excited about all the changes that are happening. And before we jump into what we're going to cover today, I want to also introduce to you our new logo. And perhaps you haven't seen our logo, or maybe you've missed some of the previous videos or sermons that I've been talking about.

[4 : 45] I want to encourage you to get onto YouTube, or Facebook, or Instagram, or even our website, and go back through and watch those videos. And of course, today will still hopefully be very meaningful and helpful to you, but it is nice to get a full context of what we're talking about.

And part of that is our new logo. And so as you can see here on our screen, this is our new full logo. And I want to explain it a little bit on this next screen. So if you look at the top left corner, you'll see the stained glass. Now this stained glass is a reminder of our rich history. And the symbol itself, the logo itself, kind of looks like an old church building or some stained glass. And our church was founded in 1832. So we're coming up on nearly 200 years of history, of faithfulness, of service, of worship, of preaching, and teaching. It's amazing. Now we don't have to look or act like 200 year old people, but we should celebrate our history. In the top right hand corner, you'll see what we call the heart line. This heart line is representative of Jesus' love for us as a protective wall and as a guide. And then in the bottom, what may be the main symbolism behind this logo is the three houses.

The house of worship, which is FCC or First Christian Church here. The house of residence, where you live. And then also the house of life, where your soul lives. Your own personal temple, as the Bible refers to it. And living a Jesus first lifestyle is not just showing up to church and punching in and punching out and saying, I've Jesused for the week. Instead, no, it's your whole life. Everywhere that you go, everywhere that you are, everything that you are comes into alignment. And those three houses come into alignment and give a very clear picture of what a Jesus first person is and what a Jesus first church is. So I'm super excited. I love all of the symbolism that we see in the logo. I also love our new vision, mission, and values because we feel like we've identified what God is calling us to do and to continue to do. So today, we're going to be unveiling or are starting this new series. And we're going to cover things like resisting temptation, like what we're going to talk about today, loving our enemies, the parable of the sower,

Jesus' various miracles, Christian service. And then it's also going to take us all the way through Easter, which it's amazing that Easter 2025 is already coming up. Now, before we could dive into what may be kind of a heavy topic, I thought I would cover a couple of jokes, which is customary here at FCC about one of the most common forms of temptation, which is to steal. Listen to this. Number one, the guy who stole my diary just died. My thoughts are with his family.

How about this? To the person who stole my selfie stick, you need to take a long look at yourself. I'm sorry. That was really funny. Okay. How about this one? Number three, a thief broke into my house last night looking for money. So I got out of bed and look with him. Some of you may identify a little bit more with that one than maybe you hoped. And then how about this one? A warning to the person who stole my glasses. I have contacts. Okay. Number five, I promise this is the last one that you'll have to endure for now. To the thief who stole my pillow. Know this, I will not rest until I find you.

[8 : 30] Okay. Hopefully I haven't totally scared you off at this point. I wanted to start off with this because I think this may be a heavy topic. This may be a heavy section of scripture. And today as we break down the scripture, instead of reading it all and then going back and commenting on it, I want us to take bite-sized chunks. I want us to take it kind of one rung at a time and work our way through this scripture together. We're going to be in chapter three of the book of Matthew, which is the first book of the New Testament. So if you want to go ahead and turn there, you can. It'll also pop up on the screen and I'll read through it as well. But if you want to follow along, we'll be in Matthew chapter three at the very end of three is where we're going to start. Now what's happened up to this point? Well, Jesus was born of a virgin of Mary, his mom, and the three of them have evaded trouble. They've evaded death. We know that Herod was out searching for them. We know that they were able to be guided by God and that they were able to escape from that. And then after that, outside of Jesus teaching in the temple one time that was recorded here in the Bible, outside of, and of course, outside of Jesus being perfect, as many of our children are too, right?

No, our children are not perfect. But outside of perfection, outside of this moment where he got away and started teaching at the temple, Jesus has lived what many people might have considered a pretty normal life. He was born of an actual mom, an actual person. He went through his infancy, his toddler years, his early childhood, his adolescence, his teenage years, and his young adulthood. And now he's sort of coming onto the scene as an adult in Jewish culture. And he's starting out his ministry by not going out and immediately healing somebody. No, the first thing he does is listed here in Matthew chapter 3, verse 16. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

And a voice from heaven said, This is my Son, whom I love, and with him I am well pleased. So what's the first thing that Jesus does? Well, he goes and he gets baptized. He's showing us how it's done, so to speak. We all probably know someone who can show us how it's done, right? Maybe somebody can, you know, can get up off the porch and go out onto the basketball court in the driveway or whatever and just show you how it's done, you know? Maybe you're like me and you have had a grandpa who was amazingly good at Rummy, the card game. And every time you would play him, he would just show you how it's done. He was just so good at it.

That's, in essence, what Jesus is doing here. First thing he does is he gets baptized. And then the Spirit is manifested, or the Spirit takes on a visual or a physical form. You know, many of us can sense when the Holy Spirit is moving within us or moving in a room, perhaps. Maybe you can even recognize the spirit of a person or the vibe of a person and who they really are. But you can't see their spirit. Most of the time, we don't see the Spirit of God either, the Holy Spirit. And yet, in this moment, the Holy Spirit took on the form of a dove in a beautiful scene. This dove represented hope.

It also represented purity. And then this audible, don't gloss over that, God audibly and out loud says that Jesus is his own and that he's pleased with him. He's saying, this is my son. I love this guy, right? He's claimed him as his own. And that's the first point that I want us to talk about today.

[12 : 35] Point number one is that Jesus is fully God. Jesus is fully God. Now, things take a little bit of a turn here from the end of chapter 3 or chapter 4. Look at verse 1 with me. Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry.

R.C. Sproul, a famous theologian, talks about the juxtaposition or the difference of imagery between these two scenes. The first scene is the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and light casts upon him, right? You know, the, ah! It's this beautiful moment. It's this beautiful moment. And then an audible voice where God says, this is my kid. I love him. He is my son. I am well pleased with him.

And then the next thing that this dove or the Holy Spirit does is he propels Jesus out into, out into the desert. R.C. Sproul calls it the imagery of a dove and then a leader of testing.

A leader into testing, perhaps, too. And this 40-day fast is, is interesting. You see, the 40-day fast is not the first time we see this with Jesus. In fact, the 40-day fast is modeled throughout the Old Testament. Moses is recording of having two different 40-day fasts leading into a pivotal moment for him or for the nation. Elijah also had a 40-day fast in 1 Kings chapter 19 when he was also getting ready to go into a big situation, this 40-day fast. But then also the Israelites, they were in the desert for how many years?

For 40 years. There's some really cool parallels that are happening here. Did you notice, too, there's three little words at the end of, um, of verse 2. It says, he was hungry. Now, some of you might be thinking, no, duh. Of course he was hungry. Of course he was hungry. It's 40 days. I don't even think I could make it 40 days without keeling over, right? He's gone 40 days and he is hungry. Why would the Holy Spirit inspire Matthew to include that in this gospel? Well, I think it is point number two.

[14 : 57] It's because Jesus was fully human. He was fully God in that moment, but he was also fully human in that moment. Check this verse out, Hebrews 4.15. 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. Jesus was not just some dude roaming about in the desert, and he also wasn't just simply God touring one of the driest parts of creation. No, he was both. And spoiler alert, he does get tempted. And spoiler alert, again, he does not give in to that temptation. He puts up what the title of the sermon is, is a successful resistance. It said, he has been tempted in every way in Hebrews, just as we are, yet he did not sin. He was fully God. He was also fully human.

John Calvin, famous pastor and theologian, writes this, those who imagine that the Son of God was exempt from human passions do not truly and sincerely acknowledge him to be a man. That's beautiful. Jesus was not someone who we can't empathize with, or who can't empathize with us, rather. He was fully God and fully man. Let's look at verse 3.

Verse 3 of chapter 4 says this, Did you notice that he said, if? If you are the Son of God, then turn this rock or stone into a loaf of bread?

How does Jesus respond? Well, he responds by quoting Moses in Deuteronomy, kind of back to that, hearkening back to the desert and the Israelites' journey with Moses. And he said this, Moses said in Deuteronomy 8.3, He humbled you, God that is, humbled you, the Israelites, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. In other words, food is secondary. The temptation of hunger is secondary. Alistair Begg, I remember him saying that if he was tempted after four days of not eating to turn, and he had the ability to turn stones into bread, that he would have turned the whole desert into a bakery, right? But the temptation of hunger is not the main temptation that the devil is posing at this point. No, he's posing to him a temptation of timing.

A temptation of timing. And I think what we should really get out of that is, is that Jesus was following God's timing, not his own. And he was following it to a T. But more than this, listen, 1 Corinthians 15.45 said this, So it's written, The first man, Adam, became a living God, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that, the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man, is of heaven. As was the earthly man, Adam, so are those who are of the earth, you and I. And as is the heavenly man, Jesus, or the second Adam, so also are those who are of heaven.

[18 : 49] And just as we have been born the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear this image of the heavenly man? The second Adam. Jesus is coming and showing us how it's done. And you may recognize this phrase, the second Adam. We sing this in a song called A Thousand Names here at FCC, where we say, you're the second Adam, come to lead us home, talking to Jesus. He's the second Adam. First came Adam, now is the second Adam, Jesus. Let's look at verse 5. Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If, notice that if again, you are the Son of God, he said, throw yourself down, for it's written, he will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus answered him, it's also written, do not put the Lord your God to the test. Did you notice that if again? If? And also this time the devil comes to Jesus with some scripture. He quotes Psalm 91, where David had poetically talked about how God is going to protect him, protect them who put their trust in the Lord. And he's saying, if you're the Son of God, and if you really trust God, then just kind of throw yourself off of the top of the temple, which was 400 feet in the air. And Jesus says, no, no, no, you're not going to twist scripture with me. Look at Deuteronomy again. He quotes Moses in Deuteronomy again and says, don't put the Lord your God to the test. Why? Because God's not telling me to jump off of this building. You're telling me to jump off of this building. Why would I test God on this?

I don't need to test God. I trust that he would catch me if he wanted to, or if I did throw myself off, he probably would catch me. But that's not who's asking me to do this right now. You're asking me to do this right now. Don't put the Lord your God to the test. Let's look at verse 8. Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. Another gospel talks about this moment, and it says that the devil showed him all of the world, all of the inhabitable world and the kingdoms and all their splendor, and the twinkling of an eye, or in an instant, in other words. He showed him all that. And then he says this in verse 9, all this I'll give you, he said, if you'll bow down, if you'll bow down and worship me. Here's point number three. The devil offered him, that's Jesus, a shortcut. Church, don't take the shortcut. The devil offered him a shortcut. He said, Jesus, you know where this is going. You know where your life is leading. You know that it's going to lead to Golgotha, the place where you're going to get crucified. You know it's going to lead to pain and suffering. And instead, you can gain the whole world. And all you have to do is bow the knee to me. Here's some cool similarity and some cool differences between the first time a perfect human was tempted and the second time a perfect human was tempted. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were perfect. They were without sin. They didn't even know what death was. They were perfect. And Satan came to them and he asked them to doubt what God had said and then offered them something that he really couldn't even offer. So they were in the most beautiful place on earth. They were well fed and they were together. They weren't even alone. Adam had a custom-made helpmate. Eve had the first man, someone who had walked with God in person. And yet they both succumbed to this. Now the second Adam, the second perfect man who is being tempted by Satan, he's coming at him again and he's saying, if you are the Son of God, he's making, he's trying to make Jesus doubt what God has said, which God said pretty clearly, right? This is my Son and who am I am well pleased.

But he tries to make him doubt it. And then he offers him something he can't really even give him. The devil can't give him the whole world. The devil can't give him this whole world. God is essentially leasing or loaning different parts of this world to Satan, but Satan still has to come to him for everything. Look at Job as an example of that. He offers him a shortcut. But he also, instead of coming to this perfect man, the second Adam in the most beautiful place on earth with a full belly and with a friend, with someone, instead he comes to Jesus alone in the desert after 40 days of not eating or drinking. And yet he prevails. Check this out. Verse 10, Scripture again. Verse 11,

Then the devil left him, and the angels came and attended him. The irony should not be lost on you that the angels still attended to Jesus, but in the right time.

[24 : 06] But this also, to me, calls to attention this verse from James chapter 4. It says in verse 7, Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

I want to introduce to you what C.S. Lewis in his book, Mere Christianity, calls the great sin. What is the great sin? The great sin is pride.

He points out that you can really trace every sin back to pride and that the devil is willing to give up a minor offense for a major offense in the form of pride. Right? Think about it like this.

The sin of impatience, let's just say. What you're really saying when you become impatient and angry is, God, I can handle my timetable better than you can. I know better. Right? What about the sin of jealousy or to covet your neighbor?

God, I deserve that stuff more than he does. I want it. Maybe you're not even talking to God. Maybe you're just saying, I deserve this stuff more than he does. Pride. And what I want to say is this. The moment you respond to temptation is the moment in which your trust or your pride wins.

[25 : 21] You either trust and you resist temptation or you believe that you somehow know better. Which is pride. So what I want to leave you with is this.

These four points of successful resistance. To mount a successful resistance, you need these four things. Number one, to engage in prayer and reflection.

Engage in prayer and reflection. Part of this is to confess. To confess to God your sins. To confess to him your temptations. Where you've fallen short. But even just to talk to him and thank him for the temptations that you have successfully resisted.

And then reflect on that. Give thanks for that. Part of this reflection is to, number two, immerse yourself in scripture.

We've said that from the beginning of this sermon all the way to almost the end of the sermon now. Immerse yourself in scripture. Know the Bible. Did you notice that when Jesus was responding to temptation, to the devil, he quoted scripture?

[26 : 29] I don't think that that's on accident. Number three, identify and avoid triggers. So if you're someone who has identified a problem, that's not the problem.

That you have something that you're struggling with. No, but don't continue to go down that path. Don't continue to put yourself in a position where you can succumb or be tempted by those different things.

Identify the problem and then avoid the triggers. Avoid being around it as much as you can. And then number four, establish accountability.

Establish accountability. Something that is so neat for me right now in my season of life is I have a person that I get to meet with every week.

He and I both love Jesus. He and I both are trying our best to continuously not just resist temptation, but to also live our lives in the most God-honoring, manly way that we possibly can.

[27 : 33] In high school, we used to call it accountability buddies. Find an accountability buddy. Someone you can have open and honest conversation with to lean on in your struggles, and you'll lean on each other.

It's a beautiful thing. So here's the conclusion for all of this. Proverbs states, Just, or excuse me. Proverbs states, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

In all your ways, submit to Him and He'll make your paths straight. Who can we fully trust in? Just Jesus. Who can we mount a successful resistance behind?

Just Jesus. Let's pray. God, thank you so much for today. I thank you for those who are listening and watching, and I pray that no matter when they are listening or watching, that you would bless them today.

God, I pray, I pray too that you would help all of us to continue to mount or to create successful resistance. And I pray that as we go about our days, that everything that we say and do would be to glorify you and to put you, Jesus, first.

[28 : 49] It's in your name I pray. Amen. Hey, just a few things before you leave today. I want to invite you to come here in person to church with us.

Maybe you have a church home, and hopefully you live close by Greensburg, Indiana, but if you do, we want to invite you to come here to First Christian Church. Our address is 425 North Broadway Street here in Greensburg, Indiana.

You can find a ton of information on our website, which is FCCGreensburg.com. We hope that you follow us on social media to help stay plugged in to what's happening around here, and also just so that we can pour into you and encourage you.

That's one of the big things that we love to do here on our social media, is to encourage you and to equip you to live life in a Jesus-first type of way. You can also call into the church office if you have any kind of faith questions or want to just talk to somebody.

You can call us here at 812-663-8488, or you can email me at tyler at FCCGreensburg.com, or you can also reach out to Ray at ray at FCCGreensburg.com.

[30 : 03] But thank you so much for being with me today. And this week, as you go and as you live your life, continue to put up successful resistance.