

Jesus The Son

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[0 : 01] Please turn again with me to the passage we read in Luke chapter 4, Luke chapter 4, the temptations of Jesus.

Heavenly Father, we bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory, our supreme concern, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Have you ever heard the expression, life's too short? Perhaps you're tempted to get into an argument, but you come to your senses and say, life's too short to waste it arguing.

Over the last while, I've learned that life is too short to waste it worrying about things which will probably never happen. It's too short to waste it obsessing about things which really don't matter a whit.

As Christians, we want to make the most of our lives by focusing our attention and our energy and our resources on only the most important things.

[1 : 13] Have you realized, like I have, that the most important thing in life is a living relationship with Jesus Christ? When in 1 Corinthians 2 verse 2, the apostle Paul said, I decided to know nothing among you except Christ and him crucified, he meant what he said.

Nothing except Christ and him crucified. That life is never wasted. That life is never wasted, which is given over to knowing nothing save Christ and him crucified.

And for that reason, as we launch back into our series on the book of Luke, we're going to focus on the God who reveals himself in all his glory and grace in the face of Jesus Christ.

And here again, his invitation to rest in him. This, it seems to me, given the shortness of time, the brevity of life, is the best way to approach the whole Bible, but especially the Gospels.

Today, we're in Luke chapter 4 from verse 1 through 13, and the temptations of Jesus. Having been baptized by John in the wilderness and anointed with the Spirit, Jesus was led into the desert where he's tempted by the devil.

[2 : 48] Before we dive into these temptations, let's see them in context where they are. The immediately preceding passage, chapter 3, verse 23 onwards, is the family line of Jesus.

It seems like an age ago when we looked at the family line of Jesus, but consider with me the last words of chapter 3, that's verse 38. Jesus, the son of Adam, the son of God.

The temptations of Jesus are set in the context of him being the son of God. On two occasions, both in verse 3 and verse 9, the devil's approach to Jesus consists in these words, if you are the son of God.

The temptations of Jesus are the declarations and proclamations of the glorious sonship of Jesus Christ.

So, this passage, you see, fits perfectly into our wider aim of knowing only Christ and Christ crucified. This is who Jesus is, whom to know is life and strength and hope, the Jesus we love and we follow and we worship, the son of God, who is both conqueror and victor.

[4 : 21] Well, for a short while this morning, let's explore this passage under three headings. First of all, Jesus, the spirit-filled son. Second, Jesus, the humble son.

And third, Jesus, the better son. Fill your minds with this Jesus. Fill your hearts with this Jesus. Let your voice ring out in praise of this Jesus. Because, you know, life is too short, really, for anything else. First of all, then, Jesus, the spirit-filled son.

Jesus, the spirit-filled son. Our passage begins, And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.

Within the space of just a few short words, the Holy Spirit is mentioned twice. But this is not the first time we meet the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned ten times in the first three chapters of Luke's Gospel.

[5 : 31] We tend to associate the Holy Spirit with the book of Acts, where he comes in power upon the early church for ministry and mission. But remember, Acts is the second volume of Luke.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is incredibly important to Luke's message. It's the Holy Spirit who unites us with Jesus, and as Christians, unites us with each other.

Throughout Acts, in particular, the presence of the Holy Spirit provides the evidence of genuine faith in Jesus. Oh, Gentiles may say they believe in Jesus, but it's the presence of the Holy Spirit within them which authenticates their profession and unites them with their Jewish brothers and sisters as fellow disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the ground and the foundation of the church's unity. But more than that, it's the presence of the Holy Spirit within us which is the basis of our unity with Jesus.

Because He, according to our passage here in Luke chapter 4, is full of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus for the very same Holy Spirit who filled Jesus and led Jesus out into the desert is the same Jesus, is the same Jesus who reigns in glory at the right hand of God the Father.

[7 : 11] The Holy Spirit poured out upon us when we became Christians unites us with this Jesus. We can't understand the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus without taking this into consideration.

The same Holy Spirit who filled Him lives in us as His disciples. The same Spirit of holiness and peace and love.

This is the ground of our oneness with Jesus. The same dependence upon the empowering beauty of the Holy Spirit of God.

In His times of great pain, Jesus was led, strengthened, and comforted by the Holy Spirit.

In our times of great pain, like our Master, we too can be led, strengthened, and comforted by the Holy Spirit.

[8 : 20] And when we can no longer lift up our heads and pray because we feel so weak, He'll pray with us and for us. Think of irrigation channels in agriculture.

A pump draws water, perhaps, from a spring. And then through a system of pipes, it irrigates and it gives life to a whole field. The water fills the pump and then is distributed to the whole field and crops can grow.

And Jesus was the first to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And from Him, the Holy Spirit moved to the whole church, drenching and irrigating Christian after Christian with His glorious presence, making us fruitful also.

Luke's the gospel of the Holy Spirit. Time and again, as we go through Luke, we're going to learn that all Jesus did, He did in the power of the Holy Spirit. The courage He had, He received from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, the Spirit-filled Son, reigns at the right hand of God, the Father today, continuing to drench His people with the Holy Spirit.

[9 : 38] And the question for us is this, by what means and in what power did Jesus overcome the temptations of the evil one here in Luke chapter 4? By what means in what power?

He was led into battle by the Holy Spirit and it was by the power of the Holy Spirit He defeated Satan and conquered the terrors of hell.

And the very same Spirit who lived in Jesus, or lives in Jesus rather, lives in us today. The same Spirit moves among us. The same Spirit drenches us.

The Spirit of whom the Apostle Paul said, be filled with the Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who gave Jesus courage and strength in His times of need.

The same Holy Spirit who consoled and comforted Jesus in His times of pain. The same Holy Spirit who accompanied Jesus through these long, lonely hours of His passion and death upon the cross.

[10 : 45] The same Spirit lives in you. and wants to do for you what He did for Jesus. To strengthen, to comfort, to accompany you through all the twists and turns of an unseen future.

Do not despair, do not despair, Christian, for the Holy Spirit is within you. And though He may have led Jesus into the wilderness, He gave Him the strength He needed to win through.

Though for a short while you may have found the Spirit has led you into a dark place, surely He will strengthen and comfort you also. So that you can conquer your temptations and fears, your anxieties and sins.

Surely He, the blessed Holy Spirit of God, will be with us when no one else can be. Jesus, the Spirit-filled Son.

Second from this passage, Jesus, the humble Son. Jesus, the humble Son. Well, the temptations to which our Lord was exposed were pitched directly against His Sonship, of His possessing the rights of divine Sonship.

[12:16] Twice in this passage, Satan tempts Jesus with the words, if you are the Son of God. And in this understanding, Satan is trying to erode Jesus' confidence in being the Son of God.

Satan's trying to sow doubt in Jesus' mind as to whether He is the Son of God after all. However, I believe a slightly different translation is preferable.

Not if, but since. Not if you are the Son of God, but since you are the Son of God. Satan's not questioning Jesus' Sonship.

After all, from childhood, in the episode of Jesus in the temple when He was 12 years old, Jesus displayed confidence in God as His Father.

And then, at His baptism, just a few days previous to this, God the Father declared from heaven, You are my Son whom I love.

[13:26] Satan's not questioning that Jesus is God's Son. He is questioning what kind of Son Jesus will be.

Since you are the Son of God, will Jesus be His own man and do His own thing? Or will He be the Son who does His Father's thing and is His Father's man?

Shall He hold on to the glorious dignity He had with His Father before the world began? Or shall He empty Himself? Shall He make Himself nothing to save His sinful people from their condemnation?

This is the temptation Satan is facing Jesus with. The path of prominence or the path of pain?

The path of seniority or the path of suffering? The road of the crown or the road of the cross? Shall Jesus be the Christ of Philippians 2 who makes Himself of no reputation?

[14:39] Or shall He be the Christ of Jewish messianic expectation who rides at the head of Israel's armies triumphing over Rome? These three temptations reveal to us the heart of our Lord.

the Son of God. A heart filled by dependence, service, and trust as demonstrated by these three temptations.

First of all, dependence. The heart of Jesus is filled with dependence. The first temptation is that of the bread. Jesus had eaten nothing for 40 days.

It was to that hungry Jesus Satan said, since you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. You can see the logic.

Jesus, you're hungry. You are the Son of God. You've had all the marks and attributes of divinity. Now show some initiative and do something to meet and do something to meet your own needs.

[15:49] Use your power for your own ends. Shall this be the kind of son Jesus is going to be? Shall He use His own divine power to meet His own needs?

Shall He do His own thing? or shall He depend upon His Father to meet His needs? Be in mind, these temptations aren't recorded primarily to teach us what kind of Christians we ought to be, but what kind of Christ we worship and in whom we rest by faith.

So, how does Jesus respond? Recalling the words of Deuteronomy chapter 8 and verse 3, He responds, Man shall not live by bread alone.

Man shall not live by bread alone. You know, you never stop being a parent, but the job of a parent is to teach his or her child how to live independently.

We're not always going to be there to look after our children. So, we've got to teach them how they can live without us. The more our children grow, the more independent they should become.

[17:10] But the model of Christian growth is the exact opposite. The more we grow as Christians, the more dependent we become upon our Heavenly Father.

the less we do our own thing, the more we do His. So, what kind of son is Jesus? The independent kind who does His own thing?

Or so very close to His Father? So very dependent upon His Father that He shall not do His own thing? He shall not go His own way.

What kind of son? No matter how much Satan tries to get a hungry Jesus to do something for himself, be that as small as turning a stone into a loaf of bread, that's not the kind of son Jesus is.

Rather, with the words, man shall not live by bread alone, Jesus declares His dependence upon His Father. Father, as a 12-year-old boy, He said, I must be about my Father's business.

[18:22] And in this first temptation, we see Him do precisely that, depending, even for the bread He eats, upon His Father. Dependence.

the second thing that fills the heart of Jesus is service. Service. We read that Satan took Jesus up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and then said to Him, To you I will give all authority and glory, for it's been delivered to me and I'll give it to whom I will, if you then will worship thee. it'll all be yours. But here's a way Jesus can avoid the cross. No need for a cross if all the kingdoms of the world are already His.

Again, Satan's trying to get Jesus to do something for himself. It's as if he's saying to Jesus, there's a shortcut to universal authority and glory, Jesus, which does not involve suffering, sacrifice, and a cross.

Well, you know as I do that the devil is a liar and universal glory and authority belong only to God. But what kind of son is Jesus?

[19 : 56] The kind who gave up all His rights to universal sovereignty and glory when He became incarnate of the Virgin Mary.

The very things Satan was deceptively offering Him, Jesus is the kind of son who empties Himself and makes Himself nothing. is He sovereign over all the kingdoms of the world?

Or at this stage is He servant of all the kingdoms of the world? What kind of son is Jesus? The latter.

There are no shortcuts for Him which will bypass the suffering and sacrifice of the cross. And so emerges two quotes from the Old Testament.

You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve. This is the kind of son Jesus is, not out for Himself, but entirely devoted to the glory of God and the salvation of all the kingdoms of the world.

[21 : 07] He's not out for a shortcut to success. rather in obedience to His Father's will, He serves by suffering and sacrificing Himself on the cross.

Jesus, the servant son of whom we shall later sing in Graham Kendrick's hymn, the servant king. A heart filled with dependence, a heart filled with service, and third, a heart filled with trust.

Trust. The third temptation is that of trusting. Satan, again, twisting Scripture for his own purposes, he's very good at that, challenges Jesus to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, for surely His Father will protect Him.

His Father will send His holy angels to bear Jesus up, lest He strikes His foot against a stone. Well, never mind that at His baptism, Jesus had so recently heard the voice of His Father proclaiming, You are my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased.

It's like Satan is whispering again into Jesus' ear, never mind what God says, never mind about the Word of God, get your Father to prove He loves you.

[22 : 32] Throw yourself down, let Him catch you, Jesus responds, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

Is it not better to trust in what God says than to put Him to the test? Is it not better to trust in what God says than to put Him to the test?

If you can't trust what your Father says to you, then you can't trust Him. One of my go-to commentators on Luke writes of this, Faith is not demanding the spectacular like miracles, but remaining content with the ordinary, the Word of God.

Faith is not demanding the spectacular, but being content with the ordinary. What kind of son is Jesus? He's the kind of son who doesn't need spectacular displays of his Father's love, but rests content in trusting Him with word and promise.

I want to remind you of something I said at the very beginning of the study in Luke's Gospel, two and a half years ago. Luke was a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, and so according to the great church father Tertullian, the book of Luke is, and I quote, a digest of Paul's Gospel.

[24 : 12] A digest of Paul's Gospel. Luke was heavily influenced by Paul's example and teaching. And so as we come to the end of this section, we're asking ourselves the question, in view of the temptations of Jesus, what kind of son is he?

And the answer comes not in the words of Luke, but in the words of his mentor, Paul, who in Philippians 2 wrote about this Jesus and said, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, since he was the son of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Who was the Christ crucified for us, who we remember today, the Christ we worship, the Christ we imitate, the Christ we proclaim, the Christ for whom we want to live, this is he, the humble son of a glorious father.

The humble son. And then lastly, Jesus, the better son, Jesus, the spirit filled son, Jesus, the humble son, and third, Jesus, the better son.

For this last point, I want to go back to the last verse in chapter 3. Jesus, the son of Adam, the son of God.

[26 : 16] Given that the temptations are set in the context of what it means for Jesus to be the son of God, in the first instance, we want to suggest that Luke is setting up a direct contrast between the unfaithfulness of Adam as the son of God compared to the faithfulness of Jesus as the son of God.

The same Satan who tempted Adam in the garden tempted Jesus in the desert. But whereas Adam fell at the first hurdle, that of doing something to satisfy himself with the forbidden fruit, Jesus stood tall.

Adam failed in his sonship, but Jesus was faithful in his sonship. You see the contrast Luke is drawing here? A contrast which leads us to the conclusion that Jesus is the better son than Adam. The apostle Paul will later pick up on this point in Romans 5 when he talks about how the sin of Adam brought death, but the righteousness of Jesus brings life.

You see it here in the temptations. Whereas Adam sinned, Jesus succeeded, and by faith in him, we share in Jesus' success.

[27 : 55] We who by nature descendants of Adam have no right to it, become sons and daughters of God by the grace of Christ. Jesus, the better son than Adam.

But then there's also this. Throughout this passage, Luke is deliberately contrasting Jesus with the wilderness journeys of the children of Israel under Moses.

He's contrasting Jesus in the desert with the children of Israel in the desert. You can read of their journey in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Both are set in the wilderness. Jesus uses quotations from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy to resist Satan's temptations.

The nature of the temptations are similar between the two accounts. Upon whom shall the wandering children of Israel depend for help. We find them grumbling, complaining, wishing they were back in Egypt.

[29 : 14] We find them building idols at the foot of Mount Sinai and bowing down to worship foreign gods. The prophet Hosea, who lived 600 years after, puts it in a nutshell when in Hosea 11 verses 1 and 2, he speaks God's words.

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away. They kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols.

Because, you see, Israel was the Old Testament son of God and proved so very unfaithful, so very disloyal. By contrast, at his baptism, Jesus hears the voice of his father saying to him, you are my beloved son.

With you I am well pleased. In other words, not only is Jesus the better son than Adam, he is the better son than Israel.

He is so very humble, he is dependent, he is obedient, he is trusting. Exactly the kind of son we need as those who are by nature sons of Adam and are so very much like the children of Israel.

[30 : 48] We need a sinless son to be our sinless saviour. we need a sinless son to be our sinless saviour.

But then, and this is where we close, all the way through this study today, I've made mention of the cross and the path of sacrificial suffering. It doesn't seem right, does it, that this perfect son of God should end his days condemned and dying upon a cross as a criminal.

It doesn't seem right that on that cross he is bearing the wrath of God reserved for sinners when he himself deserves no wrath because he is the perfect son.

No, it doesn't seem right until you realize that it was for us he was being condemned and it was for us he was dying.

The sinless son was bearing the punishment we sinners deserved. The sinless for the sinful, the righteous for the unrighteous, glory be to God life is too short to get caught up arguing with one another.

[32 : 24] It's too short to waste. Rather filled with the same Holy Spirit who filled Jesus we're going to live to proclaim this Christ and him crucified.

We're going to offer his righteousness and his sinless perfection and the joy of knowing him to a world that desperately needs to hear about it.