

The Temptation of the Second Adam

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Date: 05 March 2017

[0:00] Amen. Amen.

So, Romans 5. An awful lot of gospel truth packed into one chunk, huh? Yeah. I have to be really honest. I don't think I can really read Romans 5 without getting pretty intensely emotional.

Because the truths that I love, that I treasure, more deeply than anything, they are right there, spelled out plainly for us. What Jesus has done for us, we see it plainly and beautifully.

On the page is Romans 5. Now, on the other hand, we hear the tempting voice of Satan in our Old Testament and our gospel readings. And that is just painful to read.

Because if you've ever been deceived by that wicked voice, you will certainly recognize it. The wicked voice that says, has God really said?

[1:47] The evil voice that says to Jesus, the perfect Son of God, worthy of all worship, fall down and worship me. I think about that tempting voice.

I think about that tempting voice. And it sounds familiar. I think about that tempting voice. I think we've all heard that voice, haven't we? Tells us that we should go ahead and eat the fruit.

Says, go for it. It'll be fine. You'll get away with it. No one will ever know. Now, as a parent, I see that in the temptation to disobey that children can't seem to avoid.

On that front, looking back, I can't believe now that I am a parent what I put my poor mother through as a child. Now, one thing is I was preparing for this sermon jumped out at me.

I was in the fifth or sixth grade at the time. And was supposed to walk straight home after school.

Well, a friend of mine suggested that I walk over to his house instead. Now, I really didn't think that was a very good idea, but my friend kept it up.

[2:59] He was absolutely certain that my mom wouldn't care, that I wouldn't get in trouble, that everything would be fine. And since he put it that way, how could I disagree with him? Now, for some reason, my mom was not very happy with me when I called her from his house an hour and a half after I was supposed to be home.

Who would have guessed she'd be mad about that? It was news to me. Now, what I'm not getting at is that I'm not comparing my young friend to Satan.

But I am saying that if we, as small children, can encourage each other to be disobedient and get into trouble so easily, think for a second about the craftiness of Satan, who is the father of lies, who can and does convince us to disobey God.

Now, the voice of that temptation unites our Old Testament and our Gospel readings for this morning. We see it in Genesis, where Adam and his wife give in to that voice.

We hear it again in our Gospels, in our Gospel reading, when Jesus hears that voice, and he stands on the Word of God and righteously refuses to give in to the voice of the evil one.

[4:18] So, let's take a look at these two accounts of temptation. See what happened. See what they have in common and where they differ from one another.

Let's look in Genesis 3, starting in verse 1. Now, the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of the tree in the garden? Did God actually say?

Does that sound familiar? I think we've all heard that question echoing in our own hearts and minds from time to time, if we're being honest. I think we've heard that question more or less from other people.

And certainly, as 21st century Westerners, we've heard that question in our culture. Now, at first, Eve sticks to repeating what God said, that they'll die if they eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[5:25] But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

The devil says, Don't worry about it. It's just that God doesn't want you to be like him. And you will be like him if you eat it. God doesn't want what's best for you.

God wants to keep you from your full potential. Satan, the serpent, is lying. And the serpent is telling the worst kind of lie that there is.

Calling God a liar. So easily. Adam and Eve give in, don't they? They disobey. Because they believed the lie.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one, why, she took of its fruit and ate.

[6:22] And she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

They ate, they disobeyed, they sinned, and instantly. They were ashamed. Now, there is a nasty trick of the devil. He still uses that one.

Convinces us that it's a good idea to eat the fruit. Then after it's done, convinces us to hide. But our father Adam followed his wife, and he ate.

And what happened? It's just like God warned them, right? They would die. And this, of course, is more than an immediate ashes-to-ashes, dust-to-dust kind of thing, which doesn't happen to them immediately, if we look at the account.

Certainly, it does mean that they would physically die. Death would claim them eventually. But we are talking about spiritual death as well, which is a far more terrifying thing.

[7:26] Alienation from God, bondage to sin, and it didn't just affect them. We find out that Adam brought it on all of us. We're reminded of that when we see our reading in Romans 5, where we read that sin and death came into the world through one man, Adam, through his disobedience.

Through Adam, sin and death have a hold on all of us. We're born into the world in bondage to sin and death because of what Adam did. And that is an awful and terrifying thing, but the story doesn't end there, because there is Jesus.

Now, theologians sometimes call Jesus the second Adam. If we look at our epistle passage for this morning, you can see why.

He's like Adam in that he is human, and as the first man did, as the first Adam did, he stands as our representative. But, there are also some important differences between the first Adam and the second Adam.

First of all, the first Adam was only a man. The second Adam was fully a man, but also had to be fully God to be mighty to save us. The first Adam disobeyed, and the second Adam obeyed.

[8:52] The first Adam brought ruin, and the second Adam brought salvation. So, with that framework, let's now look at our gospel passage with our Genesis passage in mind.

The second Adam, the Lord Jesus, is being tempted to sin, as the first Adam was. Matthew 4, starting at verse 1. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter 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. Now, Adam chose not to deny himself what was forbidden.

And he took it, and he plunged us all into sin and darkness in the process. But Jesus, who was called to deny himself on our behalf, in order to undo the disobedience of Adam, to fulfill all righteousness for us, He did not do what Adam did.

[10:16] The devil, here, tempts Jesus to abandon his mission, essentially. And what does Jesus do? He stands firm on the word of God, and he does not believe the devil's lies.

The opposite of what Adam does. Again, in verse 5. Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him in 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.

Satan is trying to tempt Jesus into demonstrating his power and authority out of pride. trying to derail his mission of saving us through humbling himself, even unto death on a cross.

And there's a certain kind of sound logic in what the devil is getting at here. He even quotes Scripture to back up his point. That's a little bit of a tricky thing.

[11:27] But what does Jesus do? Jesus resists, and again, he stands on Scripture. Jesus said to him, Again, it is written, You shall not put the Lord, who are God, to the test.

And then Satan gives him one last temptation. Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He said to him, All these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me.

Now, this might be Satan at his crappiest. He is suggesting to Jesus a path to kingship that involves abandoning his mission, involves him not going to the cross for us.

And then he's tempting him to commit idolatry, tempting him to worship Satan. And what does Jesus do? Yet again, he quotes Holy Scripture, he refuses to give in to the temptation.

Stands with God's promises instead of the devil's lies. 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.

[12:42] In Genesis, in Matthew, we see some common threads, don't we? In each case, we see a man tempted, to sin.

But on the other hand, these are two very different men. And these are two very different outcomes. But even the outcomes, as different as they are, have something in common.

They affect us. Did Adam's sin affect us? We saw that earlier in Romans 5.

Sin and death came into the world through one man's sin. I'm pretty sure that none of us are exempt from that. I know that I'm not. We are in a real bind.

Adam's disobedience, as the father of all of us, as our representative, has left us dead and condemned. But, there is a second Adam, a perfectly righteous representative for all those who believe.

[13:46] One who undoes the disobedience of the first Adam. Adam's sin doesn't get the last word. Romans 5.15, But the free gift is not like the trespass.

For many died through one man's trespass. Much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many.

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation. But the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

We die through one man's trespass. But if that's true, and it certainly is, how true is it that the grace of God in Christ abounded for us.

[14:58] We were condemned because of the first Adam's trespass. But we are justified. We are cleared from guilt through the perfect obedience of Jesus on our behalf.

Death reigned. But because of the obedience of Jesus, we have abundant life. By one man's disobedience, by the first Adam's disobedience, the many were made sinners.

But by one man's obedience, the second Adam, Jesus, many will be made righteous. And our readings for this morning certainly give us a perfect snapshot of that one man's disobedience.

Adam taking the fruit and eating and the consequences that it caused, the reign of sin and death.

But we also get a perfect snapshot of the other man's perfect obedience, the obedience of Jesus, which brings forgiveness, justification, and life.

In our Gospel reading, in Christ's refusal to give into temptation, we see an example of what theologians call the act of obedience of Christ.

[16:12] And what in the world is that? And what does that mean? Well, we think often of what's called the passive obedience of Christ, his willingness to undergo suffering and death for the sake of our salvation.

But his act of obedience is his perfect obedience to God's commandments on our behalf. Because only perfect obedience could undo Adam's disobedience and ours, and only perfect obedience could justify the guilty.

So what does that mean for us? Well, we know what it's like to be tempted. And more than that, we know what it's like to give in to sin. We know what it is to be in bondage even to sin and death.

We have all been there. But, is that the last word? No, it's not. Jesus was perfectly obedient for us. Jesus resisted temptation for us. Jesus was righteous for us so that his righteousness might be given to us as a free gift. That's what we see in our Romans 5 passage.

[17:22] So that when the Father looks at us, he sees the righteousness of his Son and he is pleased with us. Not through what we have done, but through the righteousness of Christ. We failed to resist temptation.

We failed to obey God's commandments. We failed to keep God's law. But Jesus did all of those things.

He didn't fail. And we get the benefits through the sheer gift of grace. We have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. As the theologian Martin Luther once put it, He made his righteousness mine and made my sin his own. And if he made my sin his own, then I do not have it and I am free.

We are free, brothers and sisters, because Jesus resisted temptation for us. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness for us. Jesus obeyed even unto death for us.

[18:31] and we are free. During Lent, we reflect on our sins and failures. And that's not a bad thing.

We probably could stand to do more of that than we do. But let's make sure that when we do that, we're reflecting rightly. Because confident in the victory of Jesus, we can see the lies of the devil for what they are.

the tempter might promise us all kinds of things, but we don't, we know that they do not compare, those lies do not compare to the promise of eternal life that Jesus has won for us.

And we have the victory because Jesus has the victory. And that doesn't mean that we won't still fail sometimes, that we won't struggle against sin, that we won't stumble.

But it does mean that when we do, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. It means that when we are tempted, especially when we fall into temptation, we don't have to run off and hide like Adam and Eve did because we have a sympathetic high priest who is tempted as we are, but without sin.

[19:50] And Jesus isn't surprised by our failures. They don't catch him off guard. He knew them very well when he had to live a perfectly obedient life to save us.

He knew them well when he was nailed to a cross because of them. So when we stumble, we don't have to be afraid to come to him for mercy and repentance because he loves us so much that he suffered death that we might have life.

We can come in perfect trust with the full assurance that his blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. And that, I hope and pray, brothers and sisters, is what our Lenten repentance looks like.

Now, without this one man, Jesus Christ, the reign of sin and death and the lies of Satan would have the final word in our lives and in our world.

but because of Jesus Christ, sin and death have been defeated, the tempter's head has been crushed, and all who believe will have eternal life.

[21:01] So by the obedience of Jesus, goodness has the final word, life has the final word, God has the final word. So even as we reflect on our sins and our failures, remember that God has the final word.

And the grace that is ours in Jesus has that final word. In the name of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Amen.