

**Luke 4:1-13** (Deut 6.4-16; 8:1-6) – **Saying ‘No’ to temptation** Clint Le Page  
 Main Point – Jesus said ‘no’ to the temptation to sin, and through him (with God’s word and Spirit), we can too.

In recent times I’ve been trying to eat healthy; reduce my carb intake and lose some weight, especially for the sake of my inner health.

But that has meant saying ‘No’ to so many temptations.(**SLIDE**)

Saying No, to chocolate, ice-cream, chips and second-helpings.

But the tough one for me, is saying no to cheese, nice cheese and biscuits.(**SLIDE**)

Maybe for you, it’s a different food you’re tempted?-----

More seriously than consuming a tempting food though,

what sins you are you tempted by?-----(**SLIDE**)

Or what sin have you been giving in to?----- In your thoughts, words, actions?-----

And when you know your weakness, like I know mine, what do we do about it?-----

How should we respond when we’re tempted to sin?-----

How do we say No to temptation?-----

This passage is relevant for all of us.-----

We’re in this series in Luke’s Gospel.

Last week in ch3 we saw that very trinitarian moment in **v21(SLIDE)**.

When Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on him, and God the Father said to him, ‘You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased’.

And as Andy said, Jesus was and is, both the Son of God, and the son of Adam.

Jesus, both truly God and truly human, is the champion.

He’s the second Adam.

He has descended from Adam, as we all have, and he came to represent us, and live in our place.

As Andy said, Jesus identifies with us, and he battles for us sinners.

He battles sin, temptation and the devil, in the place of sinners.

He is our champion, and we see that again today.-----

Luke **4v1** says that Jesus went into the **wilderness**.(**SLIDE**)

But he was not only full of n’ empowered by the HS, he was led by the Spirit into this time of testing; ‘to be tempted by the devil’.

This testing is not just permitted it is planned.-----

The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, failed, and gave into temptation in the Garden.

Then after the Exodus, Israel was tested in the wilderness for 40 years.

Now Jesus is tested in the wilderness after 40 days.

God’s people Israel failed in the wilderness [Deut 8.2] – repeatedly not trusting God as they grumbled and worshipped idols.

Will Jesus, fail?-----

He is the second Adam, the true Israel, the perfect human, but will he fail too?-----

If he fails, we’re all lost.-----

**My first point is, Provision.(SLIDE)**

The first area of temptation is in the provision of needs and physical necessities.----

In **v2**, Jesus had eaten no food in 40 days.

We’re told he’s hungry’. Talk about an understatement.

When he’s on the edge of survival, ‘and at his weakest, then, the devil comes.-----

The prince of this world (Jn 12.31;14.30;16.11) would not give way to the Prince of Peace without fight.

Satan beat the first man Adam, will he beat the second Adam?-----

Satan ruined paradise, why not the kingdom of God too?-----

God the Father had just declared Jesus to be the Son of God.

But the devil says, 'If you're the SoG, tell this stone to become bread'.

I imagine every fiber of Jesus' body ached to eat bread, and that he wanted it, so bad.---

Jesus is the Son of God, who can do miracles, he could easily turn rocks into bread.

He has the power to do this, but should he?-----

Remember, for us to be saved, we need a sinless Saviour, who can die in our place and take our sin for us.-----

Jesus knows he needs to resist the temptation to meet his own physical desires, his own appetites, and instead trust God.

The big question is, will feeding my body, my desires, matter more than obeying my God?---

In the Garden of Eden, remember Adam and Eve had abundant food.

But the forbidden fruit looked 'good for food and delightful to the eyes' (**Gen 3.6**).

Eve took and ate it, and gave some to Adam who was with her, and he ate.-----

When Israel was hungry in the wilderness, and they grumbled.(**SLIDE-Ex 16.2ff**)

Yes, they hadn't eaten in ages, but instead of praying and asking for God to provide, they say, 'If only we'd died in Egypt'.

God tests them in the area of their physical desires and they failed.(& Num 11.4ff)

And do we fail too?

Do you fail to be self-controlled and say 'no' to eating too much?

Or always buying more, accumulating more?-----

Do you say 'No' to looking at porn?-----

Do you say 'No' to dating or marrying a non-Christian?-----

Do you say 'No' to sex because you're single, or not married to the other person?-----

Or if you are married, do you ever say 'no' to asking for sex, out of love for your spouse?----

Or say 'no' to going to sleep so you can love your spouse?-----

Do you say no to always sleeping-in or slacking off, so you can serve others?-----

Do you say 'No' to drinking too much alcohol, to numb the pain or give pleasure?-----

Do you need to say 'No' to stealing or gambling, or grumbling, even when you're struggling financially?-----

What sinful desire do you fight to say 'No' to?-----

What physical desires do you have, that you need to say 'No' to?-----

See how Jesus will not put the physical desires over the spiritual needs.-----

He responds to the devil – "It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone.**"

He quotes **Deut 8.3** which goes on to say,(**SLIDE**) mankind lives "on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

As we'll see every time, Jesus responds to temptation with Scripture.

He quotes the Word of God.-----

Jesus is saying that he will trust his Heavenly Father.

He will trust the Father's providential care and provision.

He will trust God to give him what he needs; even when he's going without.

And feels so hungry.-----

When we have physical desires, and are going without, it can be so hard to trust God, trust that our Father will provide what we need.

Not everything we want when we want it, but he will give us what we need.(**SLIDE-Matt 6.32; 7:11**) We need to trust that too.-----

We so often don't, but Jesus does.-----

**Next temptation is about Power.(SLIDE)**

The devil takes Jesus up high, **v5**, and shows him all the kingdoms of the world, presumably in a vision.

And he says, all these kingdoms have been given to me.

I have authority or power over them, and I can give that to you if I want.

In John's Gospel Jesus calls Satan the 'ruler of the world' (Jn 12.31; 14.30; cf Eph 2.2).

God has permitted Satan to have a measure of authority over this world for a time.-----

But don't picture some battle between pagan gods, like **Thor fighting Loki(SLIDE)** in a Marvel movie.

No, God has ultimate authority; total sovereignty.(**1Tim 6.15-16-SLIDE**)-----

In Luke 4 Satan offers to give world-wide power to J, if he will bow before him.-----

Will Jesus surrender to evil, to get power now?-----

Jesus after the resurrection says he has all authority over heaven & earth.(**SLIDE-Mt 28.18**)

So even over sin, death, and the devil.-----

But what is tempting for Jesus here, is to take the crown without the cross.

It's a temptation to compromise.

Will he take the crown without a cross, or wait for the crown because of the cross?----

**In U2's song 'Vertigo',(SLIDE)** the vertigo in question comes from being at a dizzy height, and also from the offer of an incredible prize. But it comes at the price of kneeling to Satan.

In 'Vertigo' lead singer Bono figuratively has the world at his feet, with the accompanying power, prestige and pleasures.-----

How tempting it would have been for Jesus to reach for power without enduring the suffering; even simply to focus on social justice – healing the sick and caring for the poor and powerless.

Good and important though these are, they were not the main purpose of his work.

How did Jesus respond to the temptation to seek worldly power for himself in the present?-----

He again responds with the word of God.

'It is written – Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'

It's from **Deut 6.13**, which follows soon after the greatest command to(**SLIDE**):

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength.-----

Which follows after the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment (Dt 5.7) to have no other gods beside the LORD.-----

Jesus will not seek power for himself when it means bowing to evil.

He does not compromise.

He loves God first.

He stays faithful to His Father and serves him.-----

We can seek power and prestige, in the work-place, in achievements, and over others in relationships.

And we too need to say No to grabbing for power for our own sakes.-----

Authority is to be used for service, for the good of others, and glory of God, not for selfish ends.-----

Have you been tempted by a lust for power?--- And given-in to that?-----

**Then the third P is Protection.(SLIDE)**

The temptation to seek protection from all danger and harm, especially where we put God to the test.-----

In **v9**, Satan takes Jesus to the top of the temple and says, 'If you're the SoG, jump off', cos God will send his angels to protect you.

Notice this time Satan quotes Scripture at Jesus.

Yes, the devil knows the bible too.

And it is true, as J says in **Mt 26,(v53-SLIDE)** he could call on 60 thousand angels to help him if he wanted.

But here the devil wants to confuse Jesus, by misunderstanding & mis-applying the Scriptures.

The devil quotes Ps 91 and tempts Jesus to test God's promises to suit himself.-----

If you look at **Ps 91**, v3 & 15(**SLIDE**) speak of God rescuing the one who trusts him.

But Jesus has not come to rescue himself. He's come to rescue others.

He bears the punishment so we can be protected.

He dies so we can live.

He's forsaken by God on the cross; so that we can be welcomed, included, loved.-----

Jesus responds to the evil one with Scripture, and again from a passage in **Deut, 6v16**.

'Do not test the Lord your God'.

Jesus again chose to trust God, not test God.-----

How do we put God to the test?-----

Do you say, 'God if you do this for me, then I'll trust you', 'then I'll obey you'?-----

God if you give me the partner I need, the money I need, the healing I need, the miracle I need, then I'll follow you forever?-----

Maybe you test God by giving ultimatums, "God if you don't protect me in this way, provide this, do this; then I'll ...."-----

Sometimes God is so gracious, and reveals himself, answers prayer, and provides.

But let's not put God to the test.-----

So we've seen Jesus was totally obedient.

He didn't give-in to temptation.

Jesus is stronger than Satan [has bound the strong man, Lk 10.20ff].

He **wins**, he beats the devil.[**SLIDE**; likely until Lk 22.39-46, 53].

God the Father announced that Jesus is 'The Son of God', and three times he shows that he is.-----

And what's funny, is that in time, and in a way that glorified God, Jesus obtained everything Satan tempted him with.

Jesus would miraculously produce bread for hungry crowds, obtain all authority in heaven and on earth, through his death and resurrection; and receive the service & worship of heaven's angels, as he rules at the Father's right hand.-----

And like for Jesus, so it will be for us: the waiting will be worth it.-----

Which brings us to, **Our Personal temptations. Final point.(SLIDE)**-----

To be tempted isn't sin, it's what we do next that matters.[cf Jesus Heb 4.15]

We must not give into it.

**James ch1 says,(SLIDE)** "Each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death".

Sin acts as an angler, who baits the hook with a deceptive lure.

The lure then floats along in front of us, and our sinful flesh is enticed.

We crave what God forbids and give ourselves convincing reasons to succumb:

"One look won't hurt." "You'll miss out if you don't." "It's not a big deal."

"Just this one time." "God will forgive you." "You deserve this."-----

If we surrender to our evil desires instead of God's Spirit, then sin comes to fruition.

Sin rewards us with an initial rush of enjoyment and satisfaction.  
 But that sense of fulfillment is soon replaced with regret.  
 And that's an opportunity for repentance.  
 But if we resist repentance, sin's influence in us grows like a cancerous tumor in the soul, and we can become calloused to God. Inevitably, death results.-----  
 When play with a sinful desire in our minds, sin will usually follow.-----  
 We must stop. But HOW do we do that?  
 For sometimes the temptation is so so strong.-----

There are some clear things to learn from Jesus' example in Luke 4.

When we face temptation we do well to respond with Scripture.

When you're tempted, quote Scripture to yourself.

Memorise it, read it, pray it, even sing it.-----

A course that has helped many men in their struggle with pornography and sexual sin is the **Valiant Man course.(SLIDE)**

And it helpfully calls people to a 3-step process when they face temptation or lustful thoughts:

It calls people to say 'No', out loud even – 'No, I will not sin in that way'.

Then 2, quote a Scripture, a memory verse.

Like **1 Cor 6**, 'You are not your own, you were bought at a price, therefore honour God with your body'.**(SLIDE)**

Then thirdly, you reinforce that truth in some way – reading your bible, getting on your knees and praying, going for a walk and listening to a podcast, putting on Christian music; something to feed your faith.

3 steps, say No, quote a scripture and reinforce it with something helpful.-----

We fight with God's word.-----

**Eph 6 says,(SLIDE)** our real battle is against the powers of evil.

And we fight by putting on the armour of God, and wielding**(SLIDE)** the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (**Eph 6.16-17**).

And as we trust God's words, and believe God's promises, we hold up the shield of faith, to extinguish the devil's flaming arrows.-----

As believers in Jesus we have God's Spirit [Eph 1.14], and by the Spirit we can live God's way.**(Rom6 & 8; 1Cor 10:13)**

Temptation sometimes feels irresistible. God assures us it is not.-----

Feeling anger doesn't necessitate being bitter, yelling, swearing, or punching.

Being tempted with wrongful attraction doesn't need to lead to lust, masturbation, or adultery.

Or a grab for power, prestige or pleasures.-----

To say No to sin, we need God's Spirit, we need God's word.-----

We also need to pray.-----

Jesus said to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, **Lk 22.40(SLIDE)**, pray that you will not fall into temptation.

Like them, we should pray.

But what did they do?-----

They fell asleep. Over and over they slept when they should have prayed.-----

So yes, respond with scripture and seek the Spirit's strength in prayer.-----

But you know friends, it'll never be good enough.

We will still fail; and so often, still sin.-----

We need to rely on Jesus the SoG, our sinless high priest, our intercessor.-----

He overcame temptation for us.-----

More than quoting God's word we must trust in God's Son.

Trusting God's word is secondary.-----

What I'm saying is, Jesus endured temptation in our place, he overcame the devil for us.

So we need to flee to him in faith and trust.-----

Christ conquered our enemy, he is our champion, so flee to Christ.-----

More than a model to follow, we find in Christ mercy when we fail.

For we've all given into temptation, we've all sinned.-----

So come to Christ for forgiveness.-----

Dane Ortlund writes in his amazing book, **Gentle and Lowly(SLIDE)**, speaking about **Matt 11.28,**

The minimum bar to be enfolded into the embrace of Jesus is simply: open yourself up to him. It is all he needs. Indeed, it is the only thing he works with.

Who qualifies for fellowship with Jesus: 'All who labour and are heavy laden'.

You don't need to unburden... yourself and then come to Jesus. No payment is required: he says, "I will give you rest". His rest is gift, not transaction.

Whether you are actively working hard to crowbar your life into smoothness, or passively feeling weighed down by something outside your control, Jesus Christ's desire that you find rest, that you come to him out of the storm, outstrips even your own. He is tender, open, welcoming, understanding.-----

So Come to Christ for forgiveness. And Come to Christ for mercy when you're falling.---  
Jesus rescues us.

He is our ever-present help in time of need and temptation (**Heb 4.15-SLIDE**)-----

We resist the devil, by running to Jesus.-----

The best strategy when you face temptation is to run to Jesus.

He is our strength and our shield.

He is our high priest who prays for and intercedes for us.

He is our victory, and our confidence.-----

However well you know the Word of God, don't think you don't need to flee to the Son of God, you do.

Jesus overcame the tempter for us.-----

And often, that running to him will involve, reading or remembering scripture.

But the focus isn't then on what we do, it's on who he is, and what he's done.-----

I know from my own life, and from pastoring many people, that it's not just praying,

'Lord help me stay strong', 'Help me say No to temptation', or 'Lord please take it away.'

But pray instead that you will see and enjoy Christ – see more of his glory, his grace.

Pray you'll know more deeply how loved and forgiven you are in him, how much your Father loves you, how much Jesus has given and done to save you.-----

For if we focus on Christ, and enjoy the God he brings us to, we won't want to sin.-----

So in your heart and mind, rely on Jesus, rest in him, find refuge and rescue in him.-----

So when you struggle or sin this week, think of Jesus looking at you with love.

Don't let feelings of guilt make you postpone turning to him in prayer, instead run to him for grace.-----

The primary application from today is, Jesus is God's Son and our Saviour, trust him.---

Say No to temptation by trusting in God's Son.

Let's pray