

**JESUS RESISTED TEMPTATION FOR US****I. A victory for us over Satan and sin;****II. A victory for us over the curse of sin.****Matthew 4:1-11**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**TEXT:** *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is 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 is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

⇒ May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen. Ps 19:14

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

"The Temptation of Christ" is often read without pondering the great comfort that is ours in this amazing account.

To fully grasp this comfort we must keep in mind what is called "the dual nature of Christ." Jesus us both true God and true man in one person. While Scripture reveals that Jesus limited the use of his divine attributes and powers while he served us on earth as our Savior, he NEVER was devoid of them. His true humanity was evident then on earth just as it will be evident to us when we get to heaven. For as Paul writes: **... in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...** Col 2 But while on earth, that "fullness of the Deity" was not evident in his human body except when he did miracles.

It seems that Satan forgot this fact when in his arrogance and hatred he sets upon Jesus, whose body is weakened by 40 days of fasting, with temptations meant to destroy him and his mission. As a child, I used to think that Satan was pretty stupid to tempt Jesus, the Son of God. After all, Jesus is God, and while the Bible doesn't specifically answer the question "could Jesus, the Son of God sin," it does say: **(Jesus) will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.** 2 Tim 2 To me, that says that Jesus, true God, cannot disown, or deny, or contradict himself. As both true God and true man in one person,

Jesus could not sin.

So as a child, I not only wondered why Satan was so stupid as to even try to tempt Jesus, but as the Bible clearly says, why did God the Holy Spirit actually lead Jesus into temptation? It says: *Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.* The answer offers us great comfort. JESUS RESISTED TEMPTATION FOR US! I. Victory for us over Satan and sin; and, II. A victory for us over the curse of sin.

I. As to the stupidity of Satan we must be careful. Yes, it is indeed stupid to resist God's will. But we do it all the time. The first commandment requires that WE SHOULD FEAR, LOVE AND TRUST IN GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS. But we must confess that our sinful nature is so completely corrupt that we cannot get through one day without grumbling and complaining, without lust and a covetousness that feeds jealousy and envy, discontentment. We cannot get through one day without worry and anxiety over our own lives or the lives of our children or grandchildren. We don't even NEED Satan to be sinners, but we are surely ripe subjects for Satan's assaults that would lead us into doing things that have sad and devastating consequences.

Rather than mocking Satan for being so stupid as to tempt Jesus, our God and Lord, let us ponder the great comfort that is ours in Jesus' victory over Satan and sin. Paul describes it this way: ... *just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.* Ro 5. Adam fell into sin and we inherited that sinful nature that disqualifies us from eternal life whether Satan should tempt us or not. We and Adam fall, but Jesus stands! Adam's disobedience makes us sinful; Jesus' obedience makes us righteous.

And the ultimate comfort and assurance is this: Jesus is not just a sinless and perfectly righteous human being who did not fall to Satan's temptations, but Jesus is also TRUE GOD! The righteousness of the man Jesus is the righteousness of God Himself! And it is THAT righteousness of the God Man Jesus that is imputed freely to all who believe in Jesus!

So we have no fear of Satan's most dire accusations against us, or the sin that so easily besets us. God has declared us righteous! See Jesus resisting Satan and believe what God says is yours because of Jesus!

Jesus resisted temptation FOR us. In addition to the comfort of this victory in our behalf over Satan and sin, there is the comfort of Jesus' victory over death.

II. Yes, because we are declared righteous through faith in Jesus we also have eternal life. Eternal death, or eternal damnation in hell, does not exist for us. But until we are taken from life in this sinful and dying world to heaven, let

us ponder what Jesus' victory over Satan's temptations offers us in regard to our having escaped death even while we live in this world with our sinful natures and while our bodies are obviously wasting away until we die and go to heaven.

When I was a child and heard this story from my Sunday School teacher, I secretly wondered, why these particular temptations? The first temptation would never work on me since I would never let myself get that hungry in the first place. To this day, I've never fasted for any spiritual reason. Satan would have to come up with something different to catch me!

Then there was the temptation that Jesus jump off the Temple. Wouldn't work on me! I'm not a risk-taker. I won't even bungee-jump!

The third temptation brought Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. There, using his amazing powers, Satan somehow showed Jesus *all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor*. He promised: *All this I will give you, ...if you will bow down and worship me*. I don't want to rule the world! Just give me enough money to pay my bills!

Though these particular temptations would not tempt me personally, they were, in Satan's evil mind, especially tailor-made to destroy Jesus. He challenges Jesus' divine nature: *If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread*. And again: *If you are the Son of God ... throw yourself down. For it is 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."* And again, "I, Satan, am God, not you!" The Bible says: ... *the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you..."* Satan does not have the power of God, but he has amazing powers to be able to give Jesus a view of all the kingdoms of the world! How he could do this we aren't told. But many have lusted and coveted after what Satan promises to deliver!

That Jesus, true God, cannot deny Himself and sin, and even as true man did not inherit a sinful nature due to His holy birth by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, he nevertheless had a human body that hungered, got weak and hungry after 40 days of fasting and even suffered whatever physical pain and distress that went along with his physical condition, felt the emotional hurt of losing his father and friends in death, and would soon suffer the pains in his sinless body of the physical beatings and crucifixion, this now offers us the comfort of His victory over death.

The writer to the Hebrews said it this way: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin*. Heb 4 Our Savior able to fully understand and sympathize with us in our weaknesses. He knows what we go through! While God cannot sin, our Lord Jesus could surely feel the pangs of hunger, and Satan's talk about some warm bread didn't make those hunger pains go away!

To win this victory in our own lives through Jesus, he also sets before us the power he has given us. That power is in the word of God. Even Jesus

answered Satan with God's Word. Listen to what Jesus said over and over again: ***It is written... It is written... It is written!*** God loves to be quoted by a heart that is holding to His Word for strength and salvation.

Satan's temptations are no small matter. But our Savior resisted them all and won the victory for us. His example informs and teaches us about Satan's tactics and goals, and His promise is that with God's Word and prayer we, too, will finally overcome and holding to His blood and righteousness, share in that victory! Amen.