

When Tempted

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[0 : 0 0] Mark chapter 1, we're beginning a journey through the gospel of Mark. I began three weeks ago talking about the baptism of Jesus because it was baptism Sunday for! us and talked about that and then we talked about the man Mark himself who was a teenager during the ministry of Christ. Historians tell us we're heavily influenced by Peter and much of what Mark writes is based upon the testimonies of Peter and you can see that how this book will crescendo into Peter's great statement about you are the Christ the son of the living God. It's right there in the middle of Mark and then when he gets to that point he just rushes straight to the cross. Mark writes in a hurry and loves to talk about pronouncing Christ as Lord and Savior and then to talk about the the cross and last week we looked at John the Baptist and our very first Southern Baptist but today I want us to continue to last joke I want us to continue to look at at Mark and see the strength of the ministry of Christ but but also to see where that strength came from. Mark chapter 1 verse 12 and 13 says this the spirit immediately drove Christ out into the wilderness right after his baptism and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan and he was with the wild animals and the angels were ministering to him. The plan of God for the incarnation of Christ or Christ coming into the flesh was that in Christ's sinless perfection he would die in our place take upon himself the sin of all the world and then all who will surrender to Christ before during our after the cross will be saved and forgiven of their sins as Christ has paid the required price of death for us.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 tells us for our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God that is the plan of God but Satan wants to thwart that he wants to thwart that in individual lives he wants to thwart that in church ministry he wanted to thwart that in the life of Christ and you see it four different ways one is he tried to kill him as a babe with King Herod that was a satanic attack second he tempts him in the desert our passage today later he'd try to kill him but thank God after Christ died on the cross he rose again and ascended and is on the throne and since then his fourth way is that he has declared war on the church he's declared war on the people of God now today we focus on number two and that is that he led Jesus into temptation and and wanted to tempt Jesus to get him to fail it says he immediately went into the wilderness right after his baptism Satan hit him right out of the gate and he hits him by trying to get him to sin he hits him early before his ministry begins he hits him when he's most vulnerable he hits him when he's fasting he hits him in a desolate place in a dreary place in a in a lonely place mark is brief in everything that he says but I want you to notice what he what he speaks of when he speaks of the temptations in the wilderness one I want you to notice the source it was the spirit of God that drove Christ into the wilderness that compelled him to go to the desert the devil didn't drag him out there he didn't just wonder out there I talked to last week about how

John the Baptist was baptizing and ministering in the wilderness lived in the desert ate locusts and wild honey and all that kind of stuff and people came uh Jesus came from Nazareth 70 miles away to to be baptized by him Jerusalem's almost was more than half of that far from from where he was and and scripture says that all Jerusalem and all Judean country came they were coming long distances to hear John but but but I want you to understand that Jesus and he went out there to be baptized he didn't just kind of wander away from John and just happen to be still in the wilderness no scripture tells us the spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness it was spirit driven literally also notice the timing it says immediately sometimes translated straightway and uh uh that is Mark's favorite word probably ethos is a Greek word that's used often in Mark and it's used 59 times in the New Testament 41 of those times it's used in the gospel of Mark and get this 11 of those times it's used in chapter one it was right after his baptism and the timing of that is crucial

I want you to also notice the location it was the desert it was the wilderness it was an arid desolate rough area it's dusty it's dangerous there's rocky peaks there there's craggy cliffs there there's sheer ravines there it's a difficult place also notice the occasion he was there to be tempted by Satan Mark tells us he was tempted while he was there but Matthew tells us that he was there to be tempted Matthew chapter 4 verse 1 says then Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil it does not say that he was tempted by the spirit of God even though the spirit of God drove him into the desert James 1 verse 13 tells us that God does not tempt anyone but God the father allowed this to happen the spirit of God led him to it but our Lord and Savior Jesus had to deal with Satan and he had to defeat

Satan that was his mission that was his ministry and Satan hit him straight out of the gate while he was vulnerable while he was alone while he was in a tough place and that's often the way the evil one tempts he'll hit you straight out of the gate if you're here this morning you get convicted about sin in your life that you've been struggling with or maybe you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ and he convicts your heart today and you surrender your life to the Lord Jesus or you are a Christian but you know there's sin in your life and God convicts you of that and today you repent of that and to get that right and you want to leave this place right with God doing right watch out on Monday morning because when you wake up on the wrong side of the bed the devil will be smiling at you he loves to hit you straight out of the gate some of you may not even make it to lunch today but he loves to especially when we get charged to grow in the Lord he wants to shut that down he wants to shut that down

[8 : 35] I mean if you're playing ball a man gets I'm ready for football you can tell in a minute if you're playing ball a man gets a ball in the backfield it's best to just go ahead and hit him in the backfield don't let him get his steam up and that's exactly how Satan loves to do us he loves to hit us straight out of the gate it's a satanic strategy he also hits us when we're most vulnerable he'll hit us in our weak moments he'll do it when you feel spiritually weak he'll do it when you feel physically weak he'll do it when you feel emotionally weak he looks for those opportunities he also does it when we're alone most of our temptation will come in life when you're in your own head when you're by yourself and the random thoughts or the things that you're exposed to come about it's often an attack and too often the sins that people commit with other sins are because they didn't take care of it when they were alone and when you're in a tough place a tough place can be a tempting place a tough place can be a discouraging place a tough place can be a lonely place but when you're out of place

Satan attacks and God was not unaware of that and God is not unaware of that he never is unaware of that he led Christ to the spot and he led him through it and I want you to notice how notice the company scripture says he was with angels and with wild beasts he was being strengthened and being provided for by angels and let me run a rabbit a minute by the way grandpa that passed is not your guardian angel nor is the cardinal that flies into your yard today when saints go to glory we don't become angels you wasn't an angel when you're on earth you're not an angel when you go to glory actually we're above angels we have something angels don't have and that's redemption scripture does not tell us that God provides us a body guard that will guard us it does say in Psalm 91 verse 11 for he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways not an angel but angels

Matthew 19 also speaks of the angelic protection of children when Christ speaks of my translation don't mess with kids that's what Jesus says if you cause one to sin you'd be better to have a millstone thrown around your neck that's worse than a cinder block around your ankle folks and to be thrown into the depths of the sea Jesus said that he was serious about it angels protect angels provide for angels strengthen and they do it all at get this get this they do it all at God's command God gets the credit not the angels not dead relatives God gets the glory and so if you leave here today and are almost in an accident but you're not in an accident and you're protected because angels envelop your car and took care of you don't give glory to the angels give glory to God because the angels wouldn't have been doing anything if God hadn't dispatched them to be right there at the time

God gets the glory I'll say that again God gets the glory give God the glory we get distracted at times angels ministered to Jesus how'd they do that?

I like what one commentator said he said and I quote envision Jesus sleeping at night while angels flying around him welding swords that cut off the scorpion's tail the leopard's teeth the jackal's claws the boar's tusk and the snake's fangs end of quote well I don't know if that's exactly how it went down but I will tell you that in the area in which Christ was there are leopards there are jackals there are boars there are snakes there are scorpions they inhabit the wilderness that he was in and it's described that way to let us know that Christ was in the desert dealing with spiritual battles but he was also dealing with physical battles and through it all he was never alone even when nobody was in the desert with him he was still never alone Jesus gives us the same promise in John 14 when he promises us we will never be alone I will not leave you alone

[14 : 21] I will come to you he promised he'd come to us and that God would give us a comforter the spirit of God to carry us through those times Jesus was not alone he had angels there he had animals there and the devil was all mixed in there as well and that's what Mark tells us now Mark don't deal with the type of temptations that Jesus faced because he's in a hurry he just tells us that he went there to be tempted and that he was tempted while he was there but Matthew 4 gives us a good idea of what was going on at the end of his 40 days he gives us three temptations that Jesus faced at the end of the 40 days scripture is quite clear that he was tempted throughout those 40 days but in Mark excuse me Matthew chapter 4 beginning in verse 1 it says this then Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and after fasting 40 days and 40 nights he was hungry and the tempter came and said to him if you are a 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 fasting in the desert for 40 days can easily kill you especially if you don't have enough water and in that time of weakness

Satan comes and tempts him to do a miracle to find food now Jesus was in the desert fasting and praying and leaning on the father and that was the point to provide his own bread is not leaning upon the father and being obedient to what the father led him and that's the rub here that's the problem and that's why Jesus quoted scripture about resting more in the obedience of the word of God than in our basic desires but the devil don't stop there he says in verse 5 of Matthew 4 then the devil took him to the holy city and sent him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him if you are the son of God throw yourself down for it's 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 and Jesus said to him again it is written you shall not put the Lord your God to the test so what the devil does next the devil threw out the temptation to jump from the pinnacle of the temple we believe that probably is referring to the highest point on the wall of the temple mount which would be the southeast corner and if you were to throw yourself off of that you would throw yourself into the depths of the Kindred Valley that separates the Mount of Olives from the temple mount it's a deep crevice there he said do that to prove that God will protect you his main point was to cause him doubt to not trust the Lord but test God instead and Christ answered him with scripture again he answered him with scripture then the third temptation is mentioned in verses 8 through 10 it says again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and he said to him all these I have given you if you will fall down and worship me then Jesus said to him be gone Satan for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only you shall serve so lastly he tempts Christ to bow down to him and in return he could rule the world and Christ responded with only worshiping the Father now what I want you to understand about these temptations are

I hope you see that each one of these temptations is about the direction and the power and the positioning of the ministry of Christ the intent of the devil is to make him sin by defying God and choosing a second best route instead of God's best the other intent was to throw him off course for his whole ministry because the devil was not the only one that was going to try to persuade Christ to do things that he was not led by God to do people would do that as well and I believe these temptations kind of precede what people would expect out of him as well some people just wanted a savior on their terms to be able to have God do what they wanted him to do for them instead of surrendering their life to follow him and trust him others really believed that prophecy proclaimed him to be something different than who he is and to do something different than what he's done and this may shock you but some people misunderstood prophecy in that day and this may shock even more some people misunderstand it today they sell a lot of books on it but they misunderstand it especially that guy a great example is the guy that wrote the book called 88 Reasons

Why the Rapture Will Take Place in 1988 it's a pretty cheap book on eBay now it was a hot seller at the time the reality is people sometimes want God to be something different than what God is or wants him to do something different for them than what it's his will to do and when Jesus came out of the desert he had faced that kind of temptation he had been tested he had been tried and the challenges that he faced by people after that never faced him I don't believe because he had already experienced all that these challenges were always about defying the will of God and going another way and that's always the challenge of temptations and every time we face temptation we need to remember some things

I'm going to give you three one is we are not alone when we're tempted I told you that temptation often comes when we're alone but you're not really alone when you're tempted for one the temptation comes from Satan and his powers and principalities of the air as Ephesians talks about and I'll tell you it is an attack so always keep that in mind it's bigger than what we see and second the Holy Spirit of God is with us and angels are dispatched by our Heavenly Father and they're there to assist and to strengthen and to guide and to drag us out of that we are not alone when we're tempted second thing is this there's always a way out the devil would love for us to think there's no way out often I have people tell me

[21 : 58] I didn't have a choice I had to give in that's a lie that smells of smoke 1 Corinthians 10 13 says this no temptation has overtaken you that's not common to man God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it and that goes back to my previous point you're not alone ever there's a way out and the last thing when we stand Satan will flee you need to rely on this passage you need to hear it you need to digest it you need to write it down put it on your dash put it on your mirror put it on your head memorize it

James 4 7 submit yourself therefore to God resist the devil and he'll flee from you draw near to God and he'll draw near to you what Jesus do he relied on scripture and I give you these scriptures today to rely on now notice what happens when this season of the Lord's temptation is over in Luke chapter 4 verse 13 it says and when the devil had ended every temptation he departed from him until an opportune time an opportune time means that Satan will be back now scripture tells us when we resist him he will flee for a little while and the strength that we have against the temptation that we face is the word of God that's what Jesus used in the desert it's what we need to use we have to stay laser focused on the word of God if Jesus need to rely on it how much more we need to rely on it and I hope you understand that the whole strategy of Satan against Christ was to change his focus on the gospel to somehow distort the focus of the gospel if he could kill our hope by having Jesus fall into sin and no longer be a substitute for our atonement then sin wins and that was his point or if he could change the focus of the ministry of Christ from a gospel driven reliance upon the father to instead a power hungry miracle driven reliance upon popularity then sin wins there is no eternal difference in a popularity contest but thank God

Jesus saw straight through his attempted deceptions and I'm telling you by the spirit of God we need to as well stand when temptation comes stand stand stand firm on the word of God you're not alone stand firm on the word of God no temptation has come upon you except what's common to man and God will always provide a way out stand on the word of God stand against the evil one and he will flee from you you can rest in that my friend draw near to God and he'll draw near to you we just have to stay laser focused on the hope that we have and the hope that we have is in the word of God and if we don't rest on it if we're not familiar with it if it's not at the tip of our tongue when temptations come we'll fall every time our hope is found in the power of the blood of Christ and the strength of the word of God and we rest our life on it now if you've never done that if you've never surrendered your life to the Lord

Jesus Christ the process of salvation is to acknowledge that you are a sinner you've done wrong and that you can't provide a way out by yourself that in reality you need to ask the Lord to forgive you and to cleanse you and from this day forward you commit your life to follow him it's a decision that requires a change in our direction that's what repentance means it's not just an intellectual engagement to it it's saying from this day forward I'm going to live for the Lord Jesus Christ I want him to guide me in the deserts of my life I want to remember him on the mountaintops of my life I want him to guide my life and if you've never made that decision I want you to know scripture says today's the day of salvation he'll meet you where you are and he'll say if you think you have a need for that

I'll tell you you didn't come up with it on your own the spirit of God has led you to this point and you just need to follow his lead maybe you're here and you have done that but you've never acknowledged that publicly it's been a private matter for you and Jesus by his example and by his commission tells us to follow that with baptism it is a public confession of what Christ has done in our heart and life you've never been baptized as a believer I'll tell you it's a major stumbling block in your Christian walk because it's the first step of obedience and it's something that you've missed a long way so you just need to be obedient and follow the Lord in that we won't do it this morning but we'll guide you through that prepare for that in the days ahead maybe you're here this morning God's leading you to Pickens First Baptist Church and you know this is the place where God would have you to serve you join with us let's do everything we can till the Lord returns to uplift his name to lean upon his word to share his gospel or maybe you're like a lot of folks here and there's stuff in your life that you need to lay down before the Lord you need to trust him with it you've been pandering in stuff you don't need to be pandering in you've been dwelling on thoughts you don't need to be dwelling on you've been going places you don't need to be going and you need to lay that down before the

[29 : 29] Lord you can do that where you stand in just a moment you can do it at this altar or I'll be happy to pray with you through that but let's do whatever we need to do to get our hearts and lives right today before we leave this place and then let's have our shield of faith up and ready when the evil one picks his head back up and we go back to the word of God and stand firm and watch him flee that's the goal here let's get right Lord Jesus I love you I thank you for your word I thank you for the encouragement of it I thank you for allowing Christ to go through it because he understands he's actually faced every temptation that we face he understands our circumstances so God I pray that we'll surrender our lives today and be obedient give us the boldness and the obedience to do exactly what you tell us to do right now

Father I pray in Jesus precious name amen miracle