**vzJesus Defeats the Devil’s Temptation**

**(How Can We Defeat the Devil’s Temptation?)**

September 19, 2021

Luke 4:1-13 Key Verse: 4:12, “Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Today we are going to learn Jesus who defeated the devil’s temptation. Temptation is something everyone experiences without exception. In today’s passage, Jesus is also tempted by the devil. But Jesus’ case is different from our case. Our case is we are tempted by the devil because we have sinful nature and we are dragged by our sinful desire. But Jesus has no sinful nature: he has nothing to do with sinful nature. But today’s passage says that Jesus was led by Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. Here “tempted” means “tested”. It is like a Return Match. Since the first man Adam had been defeated by the devil, the devil was the champion in spiritual warfare in human world. No one could win the victory over the devil. But now Jesus is a new challenger as the second Adam to the devil the former champion. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to challenge the devil not to lose the battle but to win the victory over the devil’s temptation so that he can prove that he is the Messiah who is able to save us from the devil’s temptation. So in today’s passage we want to learn one thing: ***Jesus*** defeated the devil’s temptation. Now he is the Champion in spiritual warfare in this world. From him and through him we can learn another one thing: How can ***we*** defeat the devil’s temptation? May God help us to learn this one thing through today’s passage! Amen.

**First, “Man shall not live on bread alone.” (1-4)**

In the previous chapter, Jesus started his public life as the Messiah starting from being baptized by John to fulfil God’s salvation plan. After that, God himself offered the inaugural ceremony for Jesus by sending the Holy Spirit in the form of dove and by his direct message from heaven saying, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” After this official ordination ceremony, Jesus’ very first task was to be *tempted* by the devil. Look at verses 1&2. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. To any human being who has physical body, hunger is the most unbearable suffering. They say that 40 days fasting is the maximum limit that human being can endure. So by fasting 40 days, Jesus was in most unbearable and extremely vulnerable condition. In such situation, everything could look like bread. In such situation, no one can resist the opportunity to obtain food by any means. Whether it is in the past or in the present or in the future, the bread problem is commonly very serious matter. It is always number one issue that any human being considers most importantly in their lives. Jesus was in the exactly same situation; in the most extreme hunger after 40 days of fasting. At the very moment, the devil said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”(3) This is the devil’s first temptation to Jesus. *How then can devil’s this suggestion be a temptation to Jesus?* Since Jesus is extremely hungry, of course, eating bread itself is nothing wrong. But it is *wrong* if he does in the *obedience* to the devil’s suggestion because the obedience to the devil’s suggestion means the *disobedience* to God’s will. Here, when the devil says, “If you are the Son of God,” it actually means in the original Greek, “Since you are the Son of God.” The devil knows very well that Jesus is the Son of God. He does not deny it. But he is trying to twist the mission of the Messiah. Jesus was not sent by God to use his supernatural power as the Son of God for his own personal physical need but only for God’s salvation purpose. In the gospel book we never see Jesus used his supernational power for his own personal physical need because to Jesus it was the disobedience to God’s will. In John 5:19, Jesus said his one single absolute principle of his messianic work. It says, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”

How then did Jesus respond to the devil’s suggestion? Look at verse 4. “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” Jesus did not fall into the devil’s trap. Instead, he quoted the word of God from Deuteronomy 8:3. By quoting this word of God, Jesus defeated the devil’s temptation and revealed God’s truth about “what shall a man live on?” Jesus did not deny that man shall live on bread. Jesus knows and admits that man should eat. But Jesus teaches what all the fallen men overlook. Jesus said, “It is written: ‘M*an shall not live on bread alone*.’” Here, he teaches that for man to live, they need something more in addition to bread. What is it? Deuteronomy 8:3 describes it very well. It says, “He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” The context of this teaching was when the Israelites were in the wilderness training after Exodus. During the period of wilderness training, God sent daily bread—manna from heaven for 40 years without fail even one day so faithfully. Through this 40 years daily bread training, *God taught the Israelites* *how to trust in God and depend on him and his word.* When God fed his own people in the wilderness, he did not want them to merely depend on bread alone but depend on God and his word. As you know, physical food only gives us physical life. On the other hand, the word of God gives us eternal life. When we trust in God’s word and obey what he says, spiritually we are alive in the right relationship with God. That’s what God wants to give us. That’s why Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3; “Man shall not live on bread alone but every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

And we have to know that God’s wilderness training through manna is not just limited only in the matter of bread but in the matter of all other practical matters as well. To our students, school study and after studying, getting a suitable job is very important. After getting a good job, “Who am I going to marry?” is also very important. During our life time, our future security is always very important. That’s why diverse insurance business is very common in our time. But, regarding all these matters, we are taught what Jesus says when Jesus defeated the devil in his most vulnerable situation. Jesus said, “Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” This is never-changing timeless truth. We need bread, career, happy family, success in the world but most importantly we need the word of God because only the word of God gives us true life-eternally secure, joyful, meaningful, and even glorious life. Among many words of God, especially for those who are very anxious and worry about their life, Jesus gave a most clear word of promise in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” When we seek first his kingdom and righteousness through eating our spiritual daily bread; deeply meditating on words of God daily and writing reflection of words of God at least once a week and live according to them, we can maintain our spiritual life with the healthy relationship with God. This is our true food which we should live on and it gives us eternally secure life.

**Second, “worship the Lord your God and serve him only” (5-8)** In the first temptation, the devil was defeated by Jesus because Jesus stood firm in absolute dependence on the word of God. But the devil did not give up and he approached with a different temptation, related to power and glory. By innate nature, we have a desire to be great and glorious which is good. But because of our sinful nature, the problem is that we don’t know how to get true glory and honor. So in many cases, people bow down to the devil not realizing what they are doing to gain worldly power and glory. The devil knows people’s desire and weakness so he entices people through attractive offers about worldly power and glory. Many people fall into devil’s this trap. Now the devil tries to trap Jesus in this most popular temptation in human world. He led Jesus up to a high place and showed him *in an instant* *all the kingdoms of the world* and said, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.” Here the devil’s offer is very attractive because it offers a short cut – a very easy way for obtaining all the glory of the kingdoms of the world in exchange for just one action of bowing down to the devil. But it is very dangerous trap. If Jesus had done so as the devil suggested, what would happens? He would have broken the first Commandment of God and become a slave of the devil ruining God’s salvation plan through his death on the cross and resurrection.

How did Jesus respond to the devil’s temptation? Let’s read verse 8. “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” This is the quotation of Deuteronomy 6:13, which says, “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only…” The context of Deuteronomy 6 is Moses’ warning to the Israelites about their attitude toward God after obtaining the blessings of the Promised Land. After obtaining the blessings of the Promised Land, they might have indulged only in all the blessings from God and forgot to worship him and prostituted their heart by serving other gods. So God warned them through Moses not to serve other gods but serve him only. In order to worship God, they needed to fear God. Here “fear” does not mean “the fear of punishment” but “the holy reverence of God expressed by wholehearted worship.” Here, the word “worship” is originated from “worth” and “ship.” So by definition “worship” means “to express the value or worth placed on someone or something.” So whatever one values most, thus, love most, and give first priority to is their object of worship. Any object of worship besides God is an idol. So when Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only,’” he meant that he firmly decided to value God most, love God most, and put the first priority to God only because God alone is worthy to receive his whole life devotion. Sometimes we think, “I can serve both God and other things. But the Bible says, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”(Mt 6:24) Jesus did not exchange worshiping God with obtaining worldly glory. By quoting the word of God, again Jesus defeated the Devil’s second temptation. Personally, I confess and repent that I have had an idol besides God. To me myself was my idol. Reserving myself for my own pleasure (watching Korean news and you-tube too much unnecessarily) was my idol. I confess this sin. I pray that I may worship and serve my God only not with divided heart but with all my heart. Amen.

**Third, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” (9-13)** The devil had been defeated two times by Jesus who depended on God’s word absolutely. Then the devil seemed to have learned something from this. In his third temptation, the devil also wanted to use the word of God. So he led Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. Then he said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” The devil tempted Jesus to make him known as the Messiah more quick and easy way. Imagine that Jesus jumped down from the highest point of the temple to the ground like a bird smoothly without any harm. Then what will happen? People will be shocked by Jesus and believe in him and follow him easily since he has such wonderful superpower as the Son of God. But then how is God’s plan for Jesus going to be? Jesus came into this world to solve the sin problem of mankind. It would require him to suffer much, die on the cross and rise again from the dead. Jesus should follow God’s time schedule and God’s way. But the devil’s suggestion implies that God’s way is too slow, ineffective, and foolish. He is saying, “*There is an easy way. You don’t need to take up the cross of suffering. Just jump. Then God will protect you as he promised. Why are you going to take a way of unnecessary suffering? In such an easy way, people will accept you as the Messiah. Don’t you think so*?”

Jesus was fully aware of the devil’s implication. It would cause Jesus not to follow God’s plan at all. Instead of trusting God, Jesus would be putting God to the test. That was exactly the situation Moses wrote about in Deuteronomy 6:16, which Jesus quoted. When the people of Israel faced a water problem, though they had experienced God’s caring love and power many times, they fell into fear, anxiety, and distrust in God and began to wonder whether God was really with them or not (Exodus 17:7). They did not trust God at all. But Jesus never doubted God’s love. Jesus absolutely trusted that God was with him and that the Father’s plan and timing was perfect. So Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”(12) When we doubt God’s perfect love and do not trust in him, even small problem can look so big. But here, Jesus defeated the devil’s third temptation again by using the same principle of quoting the word of God.

Today we learned that Jesus defeated the devil’s temptation by the word of God. Through Jesus’ example, we can learn that the word of God is the most powerful and only weapon to defeat our enemy, the devil. Hebrews 4:15 also says about our high priest Jesus who is able to empathize our weaknesses to the devil’s temptation. Jesus understands our trials and he is able to help us to defeat the devil’s temptation just like he did. May God bless each of us to live victorious life by one thing: Hold and hold on to the word of God as the matter of life and death!

Big idea: Hold on to the word of God and it will give you victory over any temptation.