

**Power Over Temptation**  
**Jesus's Power Over Temptation**  
**Mark 1:12-13**  
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Tonight, we come to the next section in Mark's gospel, the section in which Christ encounters Satan in all of his fury in what we call the temptation of Christ. As you think about the tendency that is within all of us to temptation, moving from Christ for a moment whose temptation was different and we'll talk about that in just a few minutes, moving instead to us and our own temptations. There's a perfect picture of fallen man in J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. If you've read the book or seen the film, readers are introduced to a tragic pathetic character called Golem. Golem was once an ordinary Hobbit, but he became obsessed with the ring of power. He killed his best friend to get the ring and then he became evilly obsessed with getting the ring back at all costs. All human kindness, love, and loyalty are eclipsed by his one consuming craving, his one consuming lust. He must have the ring of power which he calls pathetically "my precious."

Before the work of sovereign grace in our souls we were all just like Golem. There were small glimpses of what man was created to be in us, but we had been so terribly marred that we appeared only as pathetic and grotesque figures. We live for whatever we called, "my precious." It was different with all of us. But when we became Christians God changed our hearts. He gave us a new heart, a heart of flesh in place of the heart of stone. However, there remains in us even as Christians part of us that is unredeemed. Unredeemed humanness. It is that part of the person the Bible calls our flesh. And from that unredeemed part of our humanness which has its beachhead in our bodies but is not solely limited to our bodies; from that unredeemed part, our flesh, comes a steady stream of temptations; that is, solicitations to sin. So, for every person, redeemed and unredeemed temptation is a universal and ever-present reality.

I think that's why we find Jesus's temptation and the account of it so compelling. Because it's something we understand and understand all too well. Tonight, I want us to look at Mark's account. Mark devotes only two verses to the temptation of Jesus Christ, but it is a rich text that

has much to teach us about the nature of Christ, about temptation itself, and most importantly I think about how to overcome it in our own lives.

Now let me start, before we look at the text itself by explaining to you the struggle or temptation if you will, I had in my own heart in deciding how long to spend on this issue. As I've studied the temptation and meditated on it, it has opened up to me over the last several weeks in ways that it has not before. I really don't think we fully comprehend or understand what happened there. And I don't think we fully understand and appreciate the connection between Jesus's temptation and our own. Between Jesus's response to temptation and what ours should be. And so, I went back and forth in my own mind. On the one hand, I said to myself, we're just getting started with Mark's gospel. I want to keep some momentum. I don't want anyone thinking it's going to take eight years to get through this book. On the other hand, I have been struck with just how helpful and practical this information is in terms of how we live our Christian lives and experience.

So, here's what I decided to do. It's my prerogative I suppose. I want tonight to study Mark's summary of the temptation of Christ. I want to look at these two verses and draw some principles from them. And then the next three Sunday nights that I'm able to be with you, I plan to take a week each and work through the three representative temptations that both Matthew and Luke have recorded for us and I think you'll be amazed at what we can learn about ourselves and our own response to temptation in light of Jesus and His response.

But tonight, I want us to get our arms around Mark's account of the temptation of Christ. Look at Mark chapter 1 and verses 12 and 13. Mark writes, "Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

As we flow through Mark's brief account here, I want you to notice first of all, direction from the Spirit. You see this in verse 12, "Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness." The word "immediately" is an important word both as I've already pointed out to

you a word that Mark loves. But both Matthew and Luke point out that the temptation of Jesus followed immediately after His baptism. Matthew simply says, “then Jesus was led up by the Spirit in the wilderness to be tempted.” Luke writes, “Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness.” Mark says, “the Spirit impelled Him to go out.”

Now that’s a fascinating expression, impelled is not a word we use very often and it’s because the translators were struggling to come up with a way to describe the Greek word here. Because the Greek word that’s translated “impelled” is a very strong word. It literally means “to cast out, to throw out, or to drive out.” It’s hard to read verse 12 that way: “Immediately the Spirit cast Christ out into the wilderness; threw Christ out into the wilderness; or drove Him out into the wilderness.” And yet that’s what the word means. The same Greek word is used three more times in this first chapter, and it’s used for casting out demons. Look at verse 34. It says, “Jesus healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out”—there’s our word— “cast out many demons. You see the same thing in verse 39 with casting out the demons and again in verse 43, “He sent them away,” it’s translated.

So, you get the idea that this is a very strong word. Don’t misunderstand, it’s not that the Spirit had to force Jesus against His will, but Mark and ultimately Peter—who’s working behind the scenes with Mark on this gospel—they both want us to know that the Spirit that specially anointed Jesus at His baptism just before this is now completely in control. That’s the picture they want us to get. The Spirit that descended in the form of a dove upon Christ anointing Him and empowering Him for His mission appointed by God as the Messiah, the Spirit that anointed Him that came upon Him that empowered Him is now fully in control. The Spirit cast Him out. The Spirit drove Him out into the wilderness. And this will be true by the way throughout Jesus’s ministry that the Spirit would be in control.

In Matthew chapter 12 verse 28 Jesus said, “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you,” and the implication is that’s exactly what’s true. In Luke 4:14, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.” Jesus’s ministry was dominated by, controlled by, directed by the

Spirit of God. And in so doing He was the perfect example of a servant of God, of how you and I should be—compelled, driven, controlled by the Spirit of God.

So, the Spirit impelled Jesus out. It's added that the Spirit impelled Him out into the wilderness. Now we can't be exactly sure where this was. Tradition, really since the time of the Crusades, tells us that it was the rugged limestone cliffs above Jericho. But we don't know for sure, we know that it was in this basic area, the wilderness there of Judea. But we can't be sure exactly where. The bottom line is it was a dreadful inhospitable place where Jesus went under the direction of the Spirit. Why? Why did the Spirit impel or drive Jesus out into the wilderness? Listen to Matthew 4:1, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." That speaks of purpose. The Spirit impelled Jesus to the wilderness for one purpose and one purpose only and that was to be tempted by the devil.

That brings us to the second movement in this description and that is the temptation from Satan; the temptation from Satan. Look at verse 13: "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts." Notice again how Mark puts it, "Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days being tempted by Satan" by the devil. Being tempted. Now if you had ever or excuse me if you had never read any of the gospel accounts before, what conclusion would you make from that statement? Mark actually uses the word Satan in verse 13 as opposed to the word devil. "Jesus was in the wilderness [for] forty days being tempted by Satan." The immediate conclusion that you would come to is that over a period of forty days Jesus was being tempted, for forty days.

Luke puts it like this, "Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil." Now that helps us understand something because we read those three temptations that are recorded by Matthew and Luke and we perhaps come to a wrong conclusion. Those three temptations are not the only temptations that Jesus endured. Rather, they are representative of the temptations that Jesus faced over a forty-day period. Also, they are the climax of the temptations that come at the very end of that forty-day period. We know that because Matthew's gospel is clearly chronological.

And Matthew puts it like this: verse 1 of chapter 4, then this happened; verse 2, “And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry”; verse 3, “And the tempter came”; verse 5, then the next temptation happened; and then verse 11 says, “Then the devil left Him.” Now with all of that in mind look back at verse 2 of Matthew 4, “After He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He became hungry. And the tempter came.” All of that tells us, listen carefully, that the three temptations in Matthew and Luke come at the climax of forty days of relentless temptation in the life of Christ. They are both representative and the climax. It says in the text that he was tempted by Satan.

Satan is Mark’s favorite way to refer to this enemy of God. Satan is in reality an Old Testament Hebrew word, *Satan*. It’s used eighteen times in the Old Testament to identify the superhuman enemy of God. It literally means “the adversary.” It’s a remarkable statement about this being. We know from other passages and this isn’t the time to do a full study of this being, but we know from other passages that he was at one time probably the prime minister of heaven. The highest of the created beings in heaven, over all of the rest of the hosts of heaven—powerful, majestic, being of splendor. And yet now after his fall he is so much at odds with the God of the universe that his personal name is Satan, the adversary.

The other expression that’s used in the New Testament with almost the same frequency is “the devil.” This is really more a description of his person than it is a name. It is diabolos, the accuser, the slanderer. So, Jesus was being tempted by this majestic, at one time in the past, a majestic beautiful being of almost limitless power in terms of created beings.

Now this is highly unusual. It’s highly unlikely that any of us in this room have ever been tempted directly by Satan himself. Satan is not omnipresent. The Bible says he is not everywhere at the same time. He can only be in one place at a time. Granted he can move from place to place very quickly; Scripture also makes that clear. We have all faced temptations from Satan’s forces, from demons, but it’s unlikely that we have faced temptation from Satan himself.

But there's a larger point here I want you to see. Jesus was tempted in all ways, the writer of Hebrews says, as we are yet without sin. But listen carefully: while He was tempted as we are, He was not tempted in exactly the same way as we are. His temptations were not exactly like ours. They were different in two very important ways. First of all, the source of temptation. If I were to ask you what are the sources from which our temptations come? What would you say? Well, obviously, our temptations come from outside of us, from outside ourselves. We understand that. James talks about that in James 1:2-13 that circumstances can create a potential temptation. In James 1:2 to 12 James deals with the trials that God brings into our lives to test our faith, to build our endurance. But the word translated trial in this first section of James is the noun form of the verb translated "tempt" beginning in verse 13.

So, James transitions from testing to temptation. Here's the point, listen carefully. He covers trials in the first part and then he changes immediately to temptations and this is why. Every trial or difficulty which God brings into our lives, every circumstance that is a trial carries with it the possibility of an inner enticement to sin. The test comes from God; He is not tempting us to sin. He is testing our faith for the purpose of strengthening it, building it, but the temptation comes from within through the circumstance. So, from outside ourselves our circumstances can come a potential for sin; but also, from within.

James goes on in that same passage beginning in verse 13 and following in verse 14 he says, "each one is tempted by his own lust." Each one. That means temptation is universal. "Is tempted," that is, is being tempted. This is a constant reality in our lives. "By his own lusts,"—here is the source of our sin and our temptation. Temptation for us does not have its source in the outer lure as much as in the inner lusts. Here's the key difference between Jesus and us: He was really and genuinely tempted. But His temptations originated outside of Him. There was no sinful craving inside His soul that resonated with external temptation. Whereas ours come not only from the outside, but they come from within as well, out of our sinful cravings.

There's a second difference between our temptations and Jesus's temptation; and that is, the possibility of sinning. Any discussion of Jesus's temptation always raises the question, could Jesus really have sinned? Well listen to James 1 verse 13: "God cannot be tempted by evil." Now that's a profound statement. "Cannot be tempted" is actually one Greek word. And it's used only here in the New Testament and in the Septuagint. Literally translated the word is "untemptable." God is untemptable. It can't happen. Untemptable by evil, that is those things that are morally base and degrading or being attracted into sin. God is untemptable by evil. Scripture clearly teaches that God is in no way tainted by or tempted by evil. Isaiah 6:3, those majestic beings around the throne of God continually cry out, "Holy, Holy, Holy." 1 Samuel 2:2, "There is no one holy like the Lord." Psalm 5:4, "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil." 1 John 1:5, "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all."

So, listen carefully, as God Jesus could not be tempted. He was fully God and as God He could not be tempted. So how was Jesus tempted? He was tempted in His humanity. So, could He have sinned? The answer is no, as the great American theologian W. G. T. Shedd argued, he said, if you were to take Jesus's humanity and represent it as a thin little filament of wire, can that filament of wire be broken? Yes. But take that thin filament of wire that is Jesus's humanity and weld it in the heart of a huge iron bar, theoretically can that little filament of wire be broken? Yes. Practically can it ever be broken welded into the heart of that great iron rod and the answer is no. Jesus deity and humanity were perfectly united. He was one being. And while He could be tempted as a human being, He could not sin because He was God.

You say well wait a minute that raises another question. If Jesus could not have sinned, then was His temptation real? Can He really appreciate what I go through? Listen, the fact that He did not sin means His temptation was more intense than anything you or I will ever experience. Because as the intensity of the temptation grows for all of us there will come a point at which we succumb. But Jesus never did. To use a similar picture, who endures the most from the torture of the human body? The person who gives in at some point? Or the person who runs that torture all the way out to death itself? The person who never gives in endures the most. And the same

is true in the terms of the soul and temptation. Jesus Christ endured more in temptation than you or I will ever endure because He never gave in. He experienced the full fury of temptation.

Mark goes on to say, “and He was with the wild beasts.” Now that’s a strange comment in a sense, only Mark mentions it. The area of the wilderness where Jesus was is an area known for its wild animals—animals including hyenas, jackals, panthers, and even lions. In fact, lions are mentioned in more than half of the Old Testament books. So, this mention of wild animals is probably intended to accentuate the absolute loneliness and isolation of the place where Jesus was—as well as very real danger. Jesus was in a situation that was exactly the opposite of paradise. And oh, by the way, He wasn’t eating for forty days. This was the circumstance in which He was tempted. We’ll look at the specifics of the three representative temptations next time.

Let’s move on to the next movement, the third movement here in Mark’s account and that is consolation from the angels. Verse 13 ends, “and the angels were ministering to Him.” If you were to compare accounts in the synoptic gospels you would discover something very interesting. Besides Mark only Matthew mentions this and as we’ve already seen Matthew’s account is chronological and here’s how he describes it, listen. In Matthew chapter 4 verse 11 he says, “then” after those three representative temptations that come at the end of the forty days: “Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.” It’s possible that the angels ministered to Jesus throughout the forty days, and they came again at the end of these three great temptations. But certainly, they took on a special role after the forty days were done.

This is a remarkable statement. You know this is true not just for Jesus. This is true for us. You remember the writer of Hebrews tells us many have entertained angels unawares, unbeknownst to us. They are according to Hebrews 1:14, “ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.” It’ll be interesting someday in heaven to discover exactly what that has looked like in each of our lives. Some of us can sort of trace certain circumstances where we wondered but certainly the Bible is clear that it’s true.



But what service did the angels render to Christ? Well certainly they rendered protection. Satan misquoted and misinterpreted this passage speaking of Christ the Messiah, but that doesn't change the truth of it. Psalm 91 verse 11 says, "He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone." This was a promise to the Messiah. Satan urged Christ to distort this text and to misuse it, but it's still true, nonetheless. They were protecting Him possibly from the wild animals, we can't be sure. Certainly, they did that with Daniel. You remember Daniel chapter 6? Daniel told the king, my God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me in as much as I was found innocent before Him.

It's possible that that was involved. It's also possible that provision was involved. You remember the story of Elijah? Elijah was fed by the angels. An angel of the Lord came a second time and said arise and eat and there was at his head a baked cake, baked on, or bread cake rather baked on hot stones and a jar of water and he ate and drank and laid down again. So, the angel in Elijah's case provided for him in the wilderness. It may be that they did the same thing for Jesus. But regardless they were there to serve them. And their presence, listen carefully, their presence is evidence here in Mark's gospel that Jesus passed the test—that He passed the temptation—because God sent the angels to minister to Him.

Now I want us to consider even as we look at these two verses, instruction from these two verses about the temptation that you and I face; specific lessons about temptation that grow out of Jesus's temptation. And these are so important to understand. First of all, ultimately Satan is the author of all temptation. Obviously, our Lord was tempted by the devil, by Satan we see that here, but so is man. Genesis 3, Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan. John 13:2 tells us that Judas was tempted to betray Jesus by the devil. In 1 Thessalonians 3:5, Paul speaking to this new church in Thessalonica says, "when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain." Ultimately Satan is the author of all temptation.

However, and this is important to understand, Satan uses a variety of tools to tempt us. One tool he uses is circumstances—external circumstances. He puts us into a circumstance where we will face temptation. All of us have experienced that. Here are a few biblical examples and these are just a couple. Achan, you remember his story, he was just doing his job, just going up through the city. And he says, “I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them” and then I hid them. The circumstances in which he found himself, alone there seeing this was the tool, the bait Satan hung out in front of him. And for us too, our circumstances can be a source of temptation.

David in 2 Samuel 11 it says, “Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.” There are a lot of sermons in this verse, but the main thing I want you to see here is that it was his circumstances that created the opportunity for temptation. Proverbs 30, the writer of this section of Proverbs says, “Feed me with the food that is my portion, that I not be full and deny you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or that I not be in want and steal and profane the name of my God.” He says, “Listen, don’t give me too much or my circumstances may cause me to sin against You, and don’t give me too little or my circumstances may cause me to sin against You in different way.” He’s acknowledging the reality that our circumstances can contribute to our temptation.

Jesus’s, of course as we’ll look at next week, His circumstances were fasting for forty days and forty nights and He became hungry. There’s an understatement. And the tempter came and said to Him, command that these stones become bread. It was the circumstances in which He found Himself that Satan capitalized on. Listen folks realize that you’ve got to be on your guard against external circumstances. You may be minding your own business, doing your own thing and suddenly you find yourself in a circumstance that absolutely is a source of temptation. That’s a tool of Satan in your life.

Not only does Satan use circumstances, and this is related, but slightly different, he uses people. People can be a source of temptation. The most obvious one in Genesis, is Genesis 39:7, “It came about after these events that Potiphar’s wife looked with desire at Joseph and she said, ‘Lie with me.’”

There is temptation—a tool; she is becoming a tool of the devil in Joseph’s life to tempt him to sin. But that temptation is coming not directly from Satan but through a person. Beware. Proverbs 1:10, as Solomon gives counsel to his sons, he says, “My son, if sinners entice you, don’t consent.” Realize you’re going to face temptation from people around you who say, “Hey let’s go do this.” Or, “Are you really happy in your marriage?” Or, “It won’t really matter.” Proverbs 7 describes a similar situation: “At the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, and I saw among the naïve, and discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense, passing through the street near her corner; and he takes the way to her house,” and you remember as the story unfolds she is the source of temptation as she says, “Come!” Proverbs 16:29, “A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good.” There are so many examples of this. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’” Listen, temptation will come at you not only from a circumstance in which you find yourself, but from people. Be alert, be on your guard.

Satan not only uses circumstances and people, but he also uses the perversion of Scripture. This is an unusual one, but it’s clear in the case of Christ. Matthew 4:6, Satan says to Jesus, (can you imagine? Talk about the audacity, Satan quoting Scripture to Jesus.) “throw Yourself down; [from the pinnacle of the temple] for it is written, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU’; [and] ‘THEY will BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’” Satan perverted the Scripture to tempt Jesus. And folks the same thing happens today with many Christian people. They hear somebody on television who tempts them with the perversion of Scripture to do what’s wrong.

And the final tool I’ll highlight in Satan’s toolbox is our own lusts. James 1:14 says, “Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own craving.” Those cravings within our

fallenness that cry out to be satisfied. Each of us inherited a unique package of cravings to which we are susceptible. Our own lusts, James says.

There's another point, a third point that we learn from Jesus's temptations and that is that all temptations are common to man. We'll see this more next week, but it's put this way in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man." Now don't misunderstand this. This does not mean that everyone experiences every temptation. Nor does it mean that everyone who experiences the same temptation you do chooses to give into that temptation. This is how some people excuse their sin. They'll say, "Well everybody's tempted by it. Everyone does it. Everyone gives in." That's not what Paul means, nor is that true. He's simply saying that all temptations that are experienced among humanity are common to humanity. There is no temptation that is unique to you. That's the bottom line. No temptation you face is unique to you. There's frankly great comfort in that, because the rest of the verse then comes to say, "God is faithful, He will not suffer you to be tempted or allow you to be tempted beyond that which you are able."

Number four: temptation is not sin. This is so important to understand. Some Christians think that the presence of temptation is the same as sin. So, they just give in and give up. "You don't know how many times I've been tempted to do this." That's not the point. Christ was tempted in all points just as we are yet without sin. In fact, Jesus was tempted repeatedly over forty days by Satan and then at other times throughout His life; He was tempted by His disciples at times. Mark 8:33, "Turning around and seeing His disciples, [after Peter's comment] He rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind Me, Satan.'"

That's shorthand for "You're tempting Me to do what's wrong, I'm not going to do it." He was tempted by the Pharisees on a number of occasions. Matthew 22:18, "But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, 'Why are you'" and He uses the same word that's translated "tempting" in the passage we're looking at here. "Why are you tempting Me, you hypocrites?"

Don't make the mistake of believing that being tempted to sin is the same as sin. Because if you buy that then you begin to give up. "Ahh I just can't imagine. You can't imagine how often I'm tempted to do this." So what? Get over it. Fight it. Battle it.

And that brings me to my next point and that is you will never be without temptation in this life. You will never be without temptation. In fact, at the end of Luke's account of Jesus's temptation listen to what he says. "When the devil had finished every temptation,"—those three that are recorded there and the forty days— "he left Him." Interesting if it stopped there, but it doesn't. He says, "he left Him until an opportune time." Satan wasn't done with Jesus. And he isn't done with you either. Get over the idea that you will ever be free of temptation. You will be tempted to sin your entire life, often to the same sin. Spiritual maturity is not the absence of temptation; maturity is consistently with increasing frequency saying "no" to the temptation. If you're tempted a hundred times a day to sin and you say "no" that doesn't mean that you are spiritually immature. There are a hundred opportunities to throw yourself on God and to turn that temptation into a praise and thanksgiving. And our Lord's responses to temptation provide a wonderful pattern for us to follow. But that's for next week.

As we finish our study very briefly let me give you three primary applications of Jesus's temptation. Those are the principles that we've just covered that we need to know about temptation. Let me give you the three primary applications that flow out of Jesus's temptation that we're supposed to get in the temptation of Jesus. Number one is an apologetic application in the sense of an argument for. Jesus's power over temptation was intended to be a clear defense of Mark's claims that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, the Son of God. In resisting temptation Jesus showed His utter uniqueness.

All men are tempted, that's common but not a single exception to that including Christ has ever been found. But with the exception of Christ, all men regardless of how holy they may be, sin. That means Jesus is in a category all His own. He is unique. And don't miss this, Mark has just identified in verse 11, Jesus as the unique, special Son of God. What clearer testimony than for Jesus to do in the next paragraph what no one else has ever done and that is demonstrate His

power over Satan himself; shown by the response of the Father in sending His angels to minister to Him. This is an apologetic for the power and deity and Messiahship of Jesus Christ, His power over temptation.

There's also a theological application. This is an interesting question. What exactly is the significance of forty days in the wilderness? I think that there is in the time and location of Jesus's testing both a comparison and a contrast. The comparison is with the nation Israel. For forty years she wandered in the wilderness under the direction of God. Jesus on the other hand was led by the Spirit around the wilderness for forty days. But I think the contrast is the main point and the contrast is with Adam. Turn to Romans for a moment. Romans chapter 5, Romans chapter 5 and verse 14, in this discussion of sin, Paul brings in Adam and he says, "Adam"—at the end of the verse— "is a type of Him who was to come."

Now that's an interesting expression, he's obviously talking about Jesus. So, there's some connection typically between Adam and Christ and then he develops that. There's a lot in this text, I'm not going to cover it all, but I want you to notice verse 19. "Through one man's disobedience"—that's Adam, through Adam's disobedience— "the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

You see the temptation of Christ and really His entire life is a contrast. But particularly here in the temptation we have a contrast. Think about it for a moment. Adam was in the best possible circumstances, the Garden of Eden, he had everything he needed and everything he could want. After one temptation by the devil he chose to sin. That's us, he's our representative, he did what you and I would have done. Jesus the second Adam as the Scripture refers to Him was in the worst of possible circumstances. He was completely deprived of everything even the most basic life's necessities, and not after one temptation, but after forty days of intense temptation by Satan, He did not sin once. You see the contrast. He is our perfect representative. In Adam we all sin. He did what we would have done. He was our representative. In Jesus we all obeyed because He served as our representative. He did what we never would have done and obeyed God perfectly even in the face of the full fury of Satan's temptation.

Finally, there's a practical application in several ways. The wonderful fact that Jesus didn't sin, that He demonstrated His power over the most intense of temptations means several things. First of all, it means He's qualified to be our substitute. Hebrews 9:14 says, He offered "Himself without blemish [without sin, without taint] to God." The fact that He kept Himself pure from sin made Him able to be our substitute. It also means He can help us with temptation. How? How exactly can Jesus help us? With sympathy; He understands. Hebrews 4:15 says, "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Listen folks, whatever your temptation, while Jesus may not have endured exactly your temptation, He endured temptation in every category in which you are tempted. We'll talk about that over the next few weeks. He understands. He was tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. He can provide sympathy. But it doesn't stop there. He can't only provide sympathy in helping with temptation, He can also provide intercession. Luke 22, He says to Peter, "Peter behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat." He wants you to cause you to fall, in the denial, of course. "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." Jesus helps by interceding for us. You believe that? Do you believe that in the face of your temptation Jesus intercedes? Listen to His prayer in John 17 verse 15. "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but [Father, for these of Mine, and these You've given Me, I pray that You would] keep them from the evil one." Guard them from falling. Jesus helps us with sympathy and with intercession. He also provides help. Hebrews 2 says at the very end, because He's become like us, verse 18, "since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid, [to the help] of those who are tempted." Provides real help.

And finally, He's our pattern. In the three representative temptations that Scripture records for us, Jesus shows us how we too can have power over temptation. This is the amazing thing: We have been infused by God with the power of Christ. In fact, turn to Ephesians as we finish our time together tonight. Let me just remind you of this great reality. In Paul's prayer at the end of Ephesians, he says in verse 18, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, that you

may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance [in the saints, what is] the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.” “These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.” We talked about this when we went through this. You know what Paul is saying here? He’s saying, “I’m praying that you will understand the power of God that is at work in us who believe. And it’s the very same power that God raised Jesus from the dead with.” You have within you power over temptation. Not in you personally, but in the power of the Spirit that you have. Next time we’ll look at how you and I can exercise that power. Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we thank You for the wonderful example of our Lord. We thank You for His temptation. We thank You that it revealed for all to see who He really was. He was in a category all His own. Unique in that in the face of the most extreme temptation, He did not sin. Father, we thank You as well that He was in that life of obedience our representative, that He lived the life that we should have lived. He responded to temptation the way we should respond to temptation. And His perfect obedience is credited to us who so imperfectly obey. And Father we thank You as well that because He was tempted He is able to sympathize, He’s able to intercede for us, He’s able to provide real help and He by His obedience and temptation set a wonderful pattern for us. Father help us to learn that temptation will always be a reality in our lives as long as we’re in these bodies. But Father I pray that You would help us to learn how to overcome temptation in the very power of our Lord that is at work within us. Lord we realize that we will never arrive at perfection, that we will always choose to sin and yet Father we know that by that power we can see in our lives because we’ve already experienced it and because of the many who’ve gone before us we know that we can experience a decreasing pattern of sin and an increasing pattern of righteousness. Oh God, may that be true in the lives of everyone here tonight, everyone who is a part of this church. Don’t let us give in to temptation. But may we battle it in the power of Christ in whose name we pray, Amen.