

Lent: Matthew 4:1-11
Deliver Us from Temptation

Sermon

Hobart, March 23rd, 2014

Devonport, 2014

Launceston, 2014

Genesis 2:15-3:7

¹⁵ The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶ But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— ¹⁷ except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.”

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

² “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³ “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’ ”

⁴ “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. ¹

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Ge 2:15-3:7). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Matthew 4:1-11

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil* came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

⁴But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say,
‘People do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’* ”

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

‘He will order his angels to protect you.
And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’* ”

⁷Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’* ”

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹“I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”

¹⁰“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say,
‘You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.’* ”

¹¹Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.²

* Greek *the tempter*.

* Deut 8:3.

* Ps 91:11-12.

* Deut 6:16.

* Deut 6:13.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mt 4:1-11). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

INTRODUCTION:

I. LENT

A. LENT IS A 40 DAY PERIOD LEADING UP TO EASTER

1. during which Christians are encouraged to enter into an examination of who we are by carefully reflecting upon the life and passion of Jesus
2. We have been looking at who Jesus is recently,

B. AND TODAY WE ARE GOING TO BE LOOKING AT HOW JESUS DEALT WITH TEMPTATION.

1. We are going to see how Jesus deals with the temptations that Adam and Eve failed to resist, that all of us have fallen foul of, and still do
2. We are going to be seeking to learn some basic lessons from Adam and Eve's temptations in the garden contrasted to Jesus' temptations in the wilderness

C. PRAYER

BODY:

D. ONE OF THE INSPIRING AND EASY TO FOLLOW ASPECTS OF THE BIBLE IS HOW IT TELLS A SINGLE STORY

1. And how that story is one of redemption and total resolution to the problems that arise

E. WE START IN GENESIS

1. And see that God created all things good
2. In the NT John 1 tells us that we start with God and his Son, the Word, who have always been one
 - a) And that the Father created all things through the Son
3. But Genesis shows that things went downhill quickly
 - a) The first humans who had a relationship with God –who we know as Adam and Eve—were tragically tempted into walking away from their exclusive relationship with God

Genesis 2:15-3:7

¹⁵ The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

¹⁶ But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— ¹⁷ except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.”

^v ²⁵ Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

4. In their innocence they had no first-hand knowledge of good and evil.
5. Their lives consisted of walking with God. At first they had no thought of walking off in their own direction.

6. They had not experienced such a temptation. They knew only good.
7. They had no acquaintance with anything else. Evil was not even in their thoughts.
8. But then the serpent raised the thought, the temptation that they could live life their own way, and decide for themselves what they wanted to do, how they wanted to live and behave.

F. SIN IS LIVING SEPARATELY TO GOD

1. Sin is negative and evil, not because God has a big ego and is a control freak
 - a) Sin is bad because it involves our doing things which aren't good for us, our neighbours and the world around us
 - b) We tend to view sin and simply doing bad or immoral actions or thinking bad thoughts
 - c) But wrong isn't breaking a set of moral rules, or not meeting a particular standard of behaviour
 - d) Sin is living out of fellowship with God
 - e) Living in any way that hurts us and diminishes who we are as people made in God's image
 - f) Living in ways that hurt others, particularly our relationships with others and the creation

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³“It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’ ”

⁴“You won't die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

G. THIS WAS A LIE

1. But Eve wasn't wise enough to discern it
 - a) But more importantly, she wasn't trusting in God's trustworthiness and love and wisdom enough to resist it

⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

H. THEY BOTH FELL TO THE TEMPTATION OF BEING INDEPENDENTLY WISE AND SELF SUFFICIENT

⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

1. The result was they became self-focused and ashamed
 - a) They had become self-conscious, as if they were the centre of attention
 - b) Richard Fairchild describes the result;

Original Sin refers to the origin of sin, but it also refers to the results. Innocence and purity were taken away. With the comprehension of good came the first hand experience of evil. Humans knew the evil of betrayal and guilt. And they knew the separation of evil; alienation from their God and Father. Sometimes I like to call original sin "original separation." Because of that sin, humanity was separated from its creator. As a result of that sin Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden where they had walked and talked with God. They went to live east of Eden, a God forsaken land where people live by the sweat of their brow. A place where the wild beasts of death captures all eventually. To this day their descendants are born in that forsaken land separated from their Heavenly Father.

Original sin speaks of the origin or sin and its results, but it also speaks of our sin. Adam and Eve started a trend. Sin has become a family tradition for humanity. Paul said, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one human being and death through sin, and so death spread to all humankind because all sinned." (Romans 5:12) The first sin was a prideful betrayal of the God that had given life and everything else good. Every sin since then has basically been a repeat of that same betrayal. ³

I. AND SO LIFE ON EARTH HAS CONTINUED ON

1. Each of us hurting ourselves, one another, the creation and God himself

³ Richard C. Fairchild, "Sin and Despair, Salvation and Hope"; <http://www.spirit-net.ca/sermons/a-le01sesm.php>

2. Each of us living primarily for ourselves
3. Each of us trusting in our own wisdom, being proud, and insisting on being self-sufficient.

a) Roy Almquist

Did God really say you cannot eat of that tree or you will die? So queries the serpent. That's just not true; you will not die. So begins this subtle form of identity theft we call moral compromise. The first step toward the erosion of a relationship with God begins with a sense that God cannot be trusted and that if Adam and Eve are to fulfill their potential, they will need to end this relationship of trust and obedience to God ~ it is holding them back ~ it is limiting their potential.

Who needs God when we can be God-like through our own cleverness, control, and achievement? I own this garden, and I will eat whatever I choose. To such sentiments there are legions who would say ... Right on! I am in charge of my life ... I will determine what is right and wrong by what forwards my fortunes and secures my future. I will not bend my knee to God, but I will bend anything else that furthers my progress and secures my future success.⁴

J. WE CAN SUMMARISE THE TEMPTATIONS ADAM AND EVE FACED AND THAT WE ALL FALL VICTIM TO UNDER THREE CORE AREAS;

1. Genesis 3:1 Appeal to physical appetite and desire

3:1 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

- a) The temptation is, please your physical senses how every you want
- b) Being motivated by what outwardly appeals to our senses, rather than seeing the big God centred overview of life

2. Genesis 3:4 Temptation to deny reality. Believing everything will be ok no matter what we do.

Genesis 3:4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman

⁴ Roy Almquist, Identity Theft – Genesis 3: 1-7; Matthew 4: 1-11; <http://wmchapel.org/2014/03/identity-theft-genesis-3-1-7-matthew-4-1-11/>

3. Genesis 3:5 Appeal to our vanity and desire to be have power and influence

⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

a) Too often trying to impress others and gain power and our own way over them

b) Selfishly looking to appear good to ourselves and others rather than accept our nakedness and trust God to make us the best we can be for ourselves, for others, for the creation and most importantly for our loving Creator

4. Rather than being led by God to bear his image, they wanted to be like God, but their own version

K. WE ARE GOING TO SEE THAT THESE SAME THREE TEMPTATIONS THAT ADAM AND EVE FELL TO WERE OVERCOME BY THE SECOND ADAM, JESUS CHRIST

II. JESUS' TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS

A. FIGURATIVELY JESUS REVISITS AND REVERSES THE FIRST ADAM'S

1. Jesus is God made man. God with man, the exact representation of God, not a man-made distorted version.

a) Adam and Eve were man, created to be with God, but they yielded to the temptation to live independently.

2. Instead of a garden where everything is good and as it should be to begin with—Jesus the son of God is born into a corrupted world, a wilderness where things are no longer good

a) Where everyone is suffering from joining in Adam and Eve's yielding to temptation and living apart from God

(1) **Follow their own desires**

(2) **Denying the consequences of living apart from God**

(3) **Seeking independent power and importance**

3. So Jesus, instead of a garden, is tempted in the wilderness.

4. Richard Fairchild;

Instead of affirming himself in acts contrary to God's instruction, he affirms himself by being obedient unto God... ⁵

Matthew 4:1-11

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³ During that time the devil^{*} came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

5. This is like Adam and Eve being tempted by their physical desires, to take and do what appealed to their physical appetites.

⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"^{*} "

B. JESUS' LIVES BY FAITH IN THE FATHER

1. He doesn't seek to please his own desires, to take care of himself
 - a) He lives not just on physical sustenance, but by the word of God
 - b) In other words he has faith, he lives by trusting and depending on his relationship with the Father, totally
 - c) His priority isn't himself
 - d) He lives God's way of love rather than selfish, independent living
 - e) Dr Allen Ross;

⁵ Fairchild

^{*} Greek *the tempter*.

^{*} Deut 8:3.

Jesus saw through the clever little ploy of Satan. He defeated the temptation by appealing to a clear principle of Scripture. But He was not just quoting a favorite verse; He was drawing in the whole context of the passage to show that if God puts you in a place of deprivation for some spiritual purpose you do not try to change it solely for the purpose of satisfying your physical needs. The first thing that the person must do is try to discover what God is doing through the deprivation, what spiritual growth is desired and how it should be achieved. This would show that one does not live by bread alone, but by everything that God says and does.⁶

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶ and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'* "

C. ADAM AND EVE DENIED THE TRUE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING SELFISHLY AND INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD.

1. The serpent got them thinking that it didn't matter what they did, they'd be ok.
2. Jesus knew the consequences of living a lie.
 - a) He knew the consequences of doing whatever we like and expecting a good result

⁷ Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'* "

3. Jesus refused to show off or abuse his relationship with God, to test God
 - a) He knew the reality of God's love and faithful care of him
 - b) He didn't doubt, he fully trusted the Father, he didn't need to test the Father's reliability

⁶ Dr Allen Ross, An Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew—The Temptation of Jesus, <https://bible.org/seriespage/temptation-jesus-matthew-41-11>

* Ps 91:11-12.

* Deut 6:16.

c) Nor was he going to show off what God could do for him in a vain spectacle

d) Allen Ross;

The second temptation had to do with trusting God. Those who truly know God and experience the reality of their faith daily do not need to find something spectacular to convince themselves and others.

Today there is a growing pre-occupation with miraculous signs. Now God will do miraculous things--when He chooses to do them. But if people seek the spectacular in order to believe, or to convince themselves of the faith, it betrays a weak faith.

Remember how in the vision of the rich man and the poor man Lazarus in their rewards, and the rich man asked Abraham for Lazarus to be sent to his family to warn them, thinking that they would believe if one came back from the dead? The answer was, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets [Scripture], they will not be convinced even if one rises from the dead" ([Luke 16:31](#)).⁷

D. POWER AND GLORY

⁸ Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

1. Adam and Eve wanted power and glory

a) They wanted to have control of life and the world around them, to have their own way

b) To be like God, without being like God, without humbly trusting and being totally dependent in him

¹⁰ "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'" "

¹¹ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.⁸

⁷ Ross

* Deut 6:13.

⁸ Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Mt 4:1-11). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

2. Allen Ross;

The third temptation had to do with fulfilling the commission or plan of God with a shortcut, not doing God's way. This is the common temptation to avoid the means to get to the ends, or as is said, the end justifies the means. But with God there is a way to accomplish His plan for your life, and it calls for absolute devotion and obedience to Him. But Satan always offers shortcuts, that if looked at carefully, will ruin your life.⁹

E. JESUS FAITH AND TRUST WAS IN GOD ALONE.

1. He didn't put himself on a pedestal
2. He didn't seek to fix his life or the world independently of God
3. He and God were one
 - a) Jesus love for the Father, and his reliance on the Holy Spirit was total, unequivocal

4. Roy Almquist

The glory and delight of this classic Temptation Story is that Jesus does not overcome Satan's enticement with some dramatic show of force, but simply by clinging to that special identity that resides in his sacred relationship with His Heavenly Father. Jesus makes it clear that he will remain hungry when others are hungry ... he will dependent on God's goodness and his promises. He will not take the short cuts offered but, rather, he will cling to the identity that has been established ... you are my Son, the Beloved.¹⁰

⁹ Ross

¹⁰ Almquist

CONCLUSION:

I. SO WHAT IS THE KEY TO OVERCOMING TEMPTATION?

A. DISCUSS:

B. RICHARD FAIRCHILD

We all face temptation and we all give in to it. When you give in to it, remember that God offers us the righteousness of Jesus to replace the unrighteousness we possess. God offers us forgiveness and a way to come home to our Heavenly Father when we have wandered away. But when you face temptation remember that you can't stand up to it. The mother and father of our race gave in to temptation. And the rest of humanity has followed in their footsteps. That is except for Jesus. He not only resisted temptation, but he even drove the tempter away. And he can do the same for us.

When you are tempted, don't trust in your own abilities or strength, because you are sinful from your origins. Instead trust in Jesus and his strength, because God is gracious from the beginning. Where humanity fails, Jesus prevails.¹¹

C. THE KEY TO JESUS OVERCOMING THESE TEMPTATIONS

1. were based fully trusted his faithful loving Father to take care of him in these three areas;

- (1) **To provide for his physical needs, and give him the desires of his heart when they were good and in line with God's**
- (2) **He Trusted the Holy Spirit to reveal to him the true realities of life, to give him God's wisdom and enable him to rely and trust in God's faithfulness**
- (3) **He trusted the Father to give him the position and ability to fulfil his destiny as the King of his kingdom**
 - (a) **But that would come by humble, costly sacrifice, not by taking Satan's short cut to power and position**

¹¹ Fairchild

D. JESUS IS OUR COMPANION IN HELPING US SHARE IN HIS FAITH IN OUR FATHER AND RELYING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Jesus' faith in his Father and the Holy Spirit is what we need to overcome temptation to sin
 - a) To overcome the temptation to live independently of God
 - (1) To follow our physical desires rather than God
 - (2) To deny the realities and true consequences of living our own way and thinking we can get away with it and prosper better on our own
 - (3) To try and get power and control of our lives apart from God
2. Our communion with him, our regular prayer and reading of His word, our involvement in the life of our congregation, our thinking and contemplating God's ways, all help us to learn more about the trustworthiness and reliability of God and his grace and love
3. Because overcoming temptation is about trusting in him rather than ourselves
4. And that is what Lent and beyond that Easter and the entire Christian life are all about

E. PRAYER
