

Lent 1  
February 14, 2016

*"Jesus Crushes Satan"*

### **LUKE 4:1-13**

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**J**esus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" <sup>5</sup> The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. <sup>7</sup> So if you worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" <sup>9</sup> The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. <sup>10</sup> For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; <sup>11</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" <sup>12</sup> Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Immediately after anointing Jesus at his baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus out in the desert to be tempted by the devil. In the Lord's Prayer we pray "Lead us not into temptation." Here we see the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into temptation. Why would the Holy Spirit do that to Jesus? I think you know the answer to that question. The Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus to be our Savior leads Jesus into the desert to be tempted so he can win the victory over Satan and crush him.

So we come into this worship service this morning rather bruised and bloodied and banged up after our battles with Satan this past week. I cannot say, "I have sure done a good job of fighting temptation and I am proud of what I have accomplished." No, I have to admit that Satan has often had his way with me. I cannot find the victory in myself. I desperately need Jesus to crush Satan for me and give me the victory. The Lord our God told Adam and Eve that he would send the Seed of the woman to crush the devil's head. That crushing took place at the cross, but it also happened in the numerous victories Jesus won over temptation. Let's take a closer look at how Jesus crushes Satan in his battle with the devil in the desert.

#### **Jesus didn't turn the stones into bread**

First we see Jesus crush Satan by not turning the stones into bread to satisfy his great hunger. "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and the end of them he was hungry." Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had descended on Jesus at this baptism. Now the Holy Spirit is leading him out into the desert to be tempted by the devil. It is all out war and the Holy Spirit is eager to

have Jesus go hand to hand in combat with Satan to crush him on the field of battle.

Satan knows how to attack us when we are the most vulnerable. It was no different for Jesus who was tempted in all parts as we are yet without sin. "The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.'" Was Jesus hungry? Sure he was. He hasn't eaten for forty days. Did he have the power to turn a stone such as this into a nice warm loaf of bread? Sure he did. Freshly ground whole wheat flour. Intensely flavorful Red Durham wheat harvested from the high plains of Colorado. Baked in the oven to perfection. Filling the house with smells that make your mouth water. Tear off a piece while it is still warm. Cover it with Irish butter. Pour a cup of freshly ground and freshly brewed coffee. Am I making you hungry? The temptation was real for Jesus. He had the power to make the best bread anyone has ever eaten.

This was not the time for Jesus to satisfy his hunger. The plan was to be hungry and be tempted and not give into temptation. Jesus said, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'" The full quote from Deuteronomy says, "Man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." The Lord fed his Old Testament people with manna that came down from heaven. Every day God's Word gave them enough food to eat. They did not have to doubt the promises of God. If Jesus had listened to the devil and turned the stone into bread, he would not have been obedient to the will of his heavenly Father and to the Holy Spirit who had sent him out into the desert to be tempted. Jesus crushed the devil by trusting the Word of his heavenly Father and not giving into his extreme hunger.

This wonderful book that we cherish, the Holy Bible, is filled with promises of the Lord our God that can sustain us in life, even in the worst of times. We know these promises such as Romans 8 that says, "Nothing else in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Satan will do everything in his power to separate us from the promises of God that sustain us. Feeling down? Have a pity party. Pop another pill. Pour another glass. Kick the dog. Yell at your mom or dad. Look at another web page. Go shopping. Satan spots those times when we are weak and vulnerable. He knows how to jerk our chain and touch our buttons. How can he be so good at what he does?

Jesus crushed him by relying on God's Word rather than giving into the intense hunger and the quick fix. That crushing victory is your victory. The Revelation says that you overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. With our eyes of faith we see Jesus crushing Satan. We have his victory as our victory.

### **Jesus did not worship Satan**

Satan tries again. He never stops trying. He won't go away until someday we are safe in heaven with Jesus. He takes Jesus to a high place and shows him all the kingdoms of the world in a flash. It scares us to think that Satan can do that. He can flash images into our minds. At first you might think that this is such a dumb move on the part of Satan. He tells Jesus, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

Satan doesn't own all the kingdoms of the world. He does not have the power to give these kingdoms to anyone he wants. Why would he even think Jesus would fall down and worship him?

Satan is no bozo. He knows exactly what he is doing. He is presenting to Jesus the possibility of being the grand leader of the all the kingdoms of the world. People are starving. Jesus, you can handle that. Great kings are beating up on their people. Jesus, you can handle that. Families are fighting and not showing love and concern for each other as they should. Jesus you can handle that. The jails are overflowing with criminals. Jesus you can handle that. Terrorists are putting together bombs designed to kill and maim as many people as possible. Jesus can handle that. How much more inviting it would be to help people with the daily problems and troubles and forget about going to the cross, and suffering and even being forsaken by his heavenly Father for the sin of the world. Was this temptation real for Jesus? Sure it was. Jesus even prayed, "Father if it is possible let this cup be taken from me, not my will but yours be done."

Jesus crushes Satan with another verse from Scripture, also from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus answered: "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" If Jesus made the decision to help all the kingdoms of the world instead of going to the cross he would not have been worshipping and honoring the will of his heavenly Father. He would have been honoring instead the wishes of Satan.

In these last days in which we are living, Satan is still offering an alternative path to that of following Jesus and the way of the cross. Jesus tells us so clearly that he wants us to take up our cross and follow him. Satan says the way of the cross is totally out of style with people. He uses his best sales pitches to tell us that being nice to people and helping them with their problems of life is for better than telling the truth about their sin and pointing them to Jesus as the one who suffered for their sin so they can be forgiven and have eternal life with him.

### **Jesus did not jump of the top of the temple**

Satan is still not done with Jesus. He is never tired of coming after us either. This time he even quotes Scripture to craft another subtle and sinister temptation. He leads Jesus to Jerusalem and has him stand on the highest point of the temple. Satan leads and Jesus follows. Jesus is purposely allowing himself to be set for another temptation so he can administer another crushing blow to Satan and his kingdom. The devil tells Jesus, "Throw yourself down from here." Then he quotes from the Psalm that says the Lord will command his angels to watch over us.

Satan knows how much Jesus needs the love and attention of his heavenly Father. Didn't the Father speak from heaven at his baptism and say, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased"? Why not jump off the temple, let the angels rescue you, and let that help you be convinced even more how much your Father loves you?

Once again Jesus crushes Satan by quoting Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus answered: "It says; Do not put the Lord your God to the test." If you read these words in Deuteronomy chapter 6, it says, "Do not test the Lord your God as you did at

Massah.” It was at Massah that the people were thirsty and they questioned whether or not the Lord was with them. Moses had to provide them with water by striking the rock. If Jesus had jumped down from the top of the temple and depended on the angels to rescue him he would have been questioning the love and support that his heavenly Father had for him. Jesus is totally confident in the love his heavenly Father had for him. He did not question that love or have to put it to the test.

Satan knows how to get us to put our God to the test. I think of how important it is to spend time in prayer asking for the Lord to give us strength and help for each new day. It is also important to arm ourselves with the Word of God for the daily battles of life that face us. If you were a soldier serving our country or a police officer in our community you would not think of facing enemies or criminals without being well equipped with a protective vest and a gun. How foolish and sinful it would be to say, “Well, the Lord is taking care of me, I don’t need to pray or read my Bible to be strengthened in my faith.” Jesus dealt Satan a crushing blow. His victory is our victory especially for all those times when we have put the Lord to the test by failing to trust him as we should.

The battle in the desert was over. “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.” One by one Jesus will continue to crush Satan. I want to end this sermon with these comforting words from Isaiah that we can use in time of temptation. “So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you: I will uphold you by my righteous right hand.” Amen.