

Luke 4:5-8
2nd temptation

SLIDE

This Lenten season –
the weeks leading up to Easter
we are looking at the temptations
that Jesus faced in the wilderness

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Let's listen to, watch the scene

Here's the verses we are going to focus on this morning

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4:5 *The devil led him up to a high place
and showed him in an instant
all the kingdoms of the world.*

6 *And he said to him,
"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.*
7 *If you worship me, it will all be yours."*

8 *Jesus answered,
"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God
and serve him only.'
[Deuteronomy 6:13]"*

Back in **Luke 4:1**,
we read that the Spirit “*led*” Jesus into the wild.
Now we read that the devil “*led*” Jesus
to a high place (v. 5).

Jesus allowed the devil to lead him places,
only because the Spirit first led him there.

Here we are on our journey
realizing that Jesus allowed the devil
to lead him somewhere.

And so, the second temptation begins.

This is where Jesus and we are radically different.

Even allowing ourselves to entertain a vision
from the enemy can be fatal for us.

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A few years ago I was on a high cliff
overlooking the Rift Valley in Ethiopia

- It was one of the highest cliffs in the country.
I was very hesitant – no I was afraid
to go to the edge,
feeling the expanse would suck me toward it.

- I got a good view...
but from what I considered a safe distance
back from the edge

When we stand on an edge, proud and confident,
there is always a wind waiting to push us over.

Think about all the celebrities
who walk tall to the edges,
pushing boundaries not only of their art form,
but also of morality, character, and achievement.

Many celebrities have fallen,
I believe, because deep within them
is a voice that tells them they can
ultimately control the wind
as they stand high on the edge.

They're not necessarily explicitly unbelievers;
they are just firmly believers in themselves
more than they are in God.

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God will not compete with anyone or anything;
even one's positive self-esteem.

Humility is expressed in more than words and attitudes;
it is an inner state of the heart
that must be cultivated and nurtured
through continual acts of humbling oneself,
even in the face of opportunity and success.

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“Humility,”
it has been said,
“is not too high a view of ourselves or too low—
it is an accurate view of ourselves.”

We are tested in these moments,
when things are going right.

If we begin to believe our own reviews,
we can lose our way.

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*Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall.*
Proverbs 16:18

This is the moment Jesus has been led to by the devil.

The devil,
otherwise known as the traitor and slanderer,
will lead you to places.

- You won't even know you are standing on a height,
because the way will seem so normal,
so the result of your faithfulness and goodness,
so the result of your gifts and good choices.

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“Make a name for yourself”

that was the encouragement from parents & grandparents
& people invested in your reputation.

While well-meaning,
that sounds exactly like the devil in sheep's clothing.

We are not here to make much of ourselves.
Jesus knew that, even being the Son of God.

- He was here to make much of his Father.
- We are here to make much of Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is here to glorify the Father and the Son.
- And the name-serving continues.

The devil wants you to make a name for yourself,
to operate in your gifts for the satisfaction of yourself.

That's what he was doing with Jesus in this 2nd temptation.

But nonetheless,
the devil may lead you there,
hoping for an “opportune” moment (Luke 4:13)
to give you one little push—
into losing your God-given name and replacing it,
quietly in your heart,
with the name you have made for yourself.

You may be led to a high place many times in your life;
the key is to walk away
before you make that kingdom your own.

Could the high place of glory in your heart and mine
become the low place of humble service
that it was for Jesus?

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It is a common idea

that we see the world not as it is,
but as we are.

In other words,
none of us sees the world objectively;
we all have perspectives and ideas
based on our brain and heart,
and we look for certain things in order to see them.

What the devil saw as a high place for Jesus,
and what celebrities and politicians see
as a high place for themselves,
was a low place for Jesus.

Jesus was seeing the high place
not as it was,
but as he was.

For Jesus,
the high place in his heart
had just taken place in his baptism.
He was seen by his Father,
and he saw his Father and the Spirit
at the same time.

Jesus's experience of love in those waters,
was the high point of his life.

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To know we are seen by God,
to have our identity and purpose spoken clearly by God,
to be overwhelmed by God's great affection for us—
that is the high place in Jesus's heart.

But the best the devil had to offer was from a vantage point for

- self-serving power,
- acclaim,
- and privilege.

He wanted to give Jesus the power

- to do whatever he wanted,
- with whomever he wanted,
- wherever he wanted.

He was chipping away at Jesus's wants—his desires—and was finding Jesus's desires utterly foreign to the ones that drove other human beings.

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Could the highest place in our heart and mine become the low place of humble service that it was for Jesus—

- a low place of humble fellowship with God,
- of humble communion with others on the same journey into Christ,
- humble worship oriented around
 - seeing the world served,
 - the poor fed,
 - the captives set free,
 - and the human heart loved back to life?

Glancing ahead, in **Luke 4**,

- Jesus will leave the wild in the power of the Spirit,
- enter a synagogue,
- and begin to proclaim the high places of the kingdom of God—
- places where “the year of the Lord’s favor” (v19) does not mean acclaim or big houses,
- but rather the transformation of the human heart by Jesus in us offering selfless, cruciform love in Jesus’s name.

The devil’s high place was a low place to Jesus;

Jesus’s high place was a low place to the devil.

He couldn’t be convinced

of what many are so easily convinced of—

- that power turned upon oneself,
- the accumulation of wealth,
- the honour offered by others,
- even the acclaim that comes from generosity and benevolence—
- is the highest place that one could attain.

Jesus blessed what was unseen.

And he knew that changing a human heart

was worth more than all the kingdoms of the world.

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We can live from this perspective,

knowing that to *“act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly” (Micah 6:8) with our God*

is the highest place to which we could be led.

The devil simply took Jesus to the wrong place.

He wasn't tempted,

because his heart wasn't in it.

In this, Jesus passed the test

that Israel's kings and power brokers,

even the great King David, never could.

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What we see in an instant, at a glance

and while our dopamine is triggered,

can disorder our desires.

In an instant,

everything can change.

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Why does this passage include the phrase “in an instant”
before “all the kingdoms of the world”?

Other translations say, “in a moment of time.”

Speed seems to be part of the meaning here.

Why does that matter in this 2nd temptation?

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In his book,

***The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry:
How to Stay Emotionally Healthy
and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World,***

John Mark Comer writes:

Because what you give your attention to
is the person you become.

Put another way:
the mind is the portal to the soul,
and what you fill your mind with
will shape the trajectory of your character.

In the end,
your life is no more than the sum
of what you gave your attention to.¹

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In other words, be careful little eyes what you see.

Attention.

Focus.

Speed.

¹ John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2019), 54–55.

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The average person touches their smartphone more than 2,500 times per day.

This distracting habit is linked to

- decreased productivity,
- poorer relationships (inattention/presence),
- memory loss,
- habit-formation
- and addiction based on the constant dopamine hit.

Social media,
those quick reads on the world
and the opinions of all our “friends,”
is a psychological environment
as our focus becomes our reality.

We are not all-powerful robots,
filtering out the bad and only taking in the good.

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We see it, and we absorb it.

We must train ourselves & young ones
to avert their eyes from what will snake around them
& drag their spirits down.

- That’s not intense parenting.
- That is pre-emptive self-help 101.

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Hurry and immediate desire gratification
are like hurricanes,
spinning out of control,
and are sweeping up many around the globe
with their force.

We have become people
who want things in an instant,
without delay—
delivered to us almost as soon as we desire them.

Jesus did not live in our fast world
as a human being pre-resurrection.

He lived in a slow world,
where seeing “all the kingdoms”
would be a longer-than-lifetime process
of viewing drawings and paintings,
listening to oral descriptions by travelers,
or reading narratives about other lands
and using one’s imagination.

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The devil showed Jesus all of it in an instant.

It was an “internet Google images search”
before it existed.

What we let in through our eye gate
matters for the persuasion
of our emotions
& our thinking
We must guard what we see in an instant.

Our phones have our attention,
and what has our attention
is what we become
and, inevitably, what we begin to value.

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Jesus saw it all in an instant,
and speed is one of the enemy’s tools of persuasion.

- Slow down,
- un-hurry your life,
- remove yourself for seasons
- from the instantaneous gratification
of your phone—
- and practice examining the choices before you
- **in light of your identity in Christ**
- and your God-ordained vocation in the world.

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All gain, no pain.

That is often the enemy's play.

Watch for it and resist the temptation
to believe it is possible.

No eternal gain comes without

- some sacrifice,
- some pain,
- in the present.

We must lose our life in order to find it (Matt. 16:25).

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Jesus is taken to a high place
which is a horribly low place to him,
compared to his high place,
which is a holy low place!
and is shown, instantly all the kingdoms of the world.

Impressive.

- These spheres of influence,
where someone exerts their rule and reign
over people, land, and more.

The devil, satan,
using the only tools in his arsenal to

- un-name,
- un-seat,
- and dis-order Jesus's desires pulls out a big one—

all the impressive arenas of control exerted in the world.

SLIDE

I like to see kingdoms,
in this case, metaphorically
rather than as geopolitical – actual
cities, states, countries, and alliances.

- For example, the kingdom of education.
- The kingdom of entertainment.
- The kingdom of finance and economy.
- The kingdom of science and technology.
- The kingdom of government and leadership.
- The kingdom of animals and creation.
- The kingdom of home and family.
- The kingdom of the human heart.
- The kingdom of inner and outer space.

I could go on.

As these are revealed to Jesus,
in an instant,

Jesus hears the future whisper of
 this song,
 this word,
 spoken in a time to come.

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It may have been spoken into his heart at his baptism,
 but who knows:

*The seventh angel sounded his trumpet,
 and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:
 ‘The kingdom of the world
 has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,
 and he will reign for ever and ever’*

Revelation 11:15.

Imagine the devil saying,

Jesus, you can have now
 what you’ll have to wait to get through deep suffering
 the “in an instant” temptation is leveraged again.

This cup could pass from you.

The enemy may have been with him in the garden later;
 again, we can’t know in what way,
 but the tone of the garden of Gethsemane text
 feels similar to the tone of the wild text—
 only with the greater intensity
 of spiritual labor evidenced on Jesus’s part.

Jesus will receive the kingdoms of this world;
the un-namer's play is to offer it all

- sooner,
- instantaneously,
- and without suffering.

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All gain,
no pain.

Now there's a temptation.

That is often the enemy's play.

We may have opportunities to get great things
through shortcuts,

- and the enemy will convince us our time has come,
- our ship has come in,
- our big break has arrived.

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But the Holy Spirit within us will whisper:

There is a greater kingdom coming your way than this;

don't fall for short-term gain

and long-term loss—

choose the better way of long-term gain

and short-term loss.

It is the way of the cross.

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Let's revisit how the enemy speaks to us.

Last Sunday, we noted that the images of the devil we have from the 1,000 or so years of art history, including the images we get from Dante, Milton, and others, are not biblical.

Though Jesus may have seen the devil in a way we can't, as a physicalized evil, biblically satan is understood to be the influence of evil, the personal presence of evil, inviting us to sin and break covenant with God— or to ultimately extinguish our own life and/or the lives of others.

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We see the evil one at work explicitly in a mass shooting.

But more often the enemy is at work, insidiously, speaking into our hearts and minds ideas and thoughts that disorder our desires from the desires of Christ.

When the devil spoke to Jesus,
we don't know how that conversation took place.

But I believe,
even with our limited spiritual sight,
the battle of words had similar qualities to ours.

We are going our way in life,
then a dark thought catches a hold of our minds
and we catastrophize about it for weeks on end.

Life is being stolen.
That is what the word of the enemy does.

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Like the devourer himself,
the extinguisher of inward and outward
the word of the evil one
comes only to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

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To hear the voice of God is to be given to.

- To hear the voice of the enemy
is to be taken from.

To hear the voice of God is to be brought to life.

- To hear the voice of the enemy
is to be drawn to death.

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If you hear **hope** in the inner thoughts
you are entertaining,
feed them with the promises of scripture
through the whispering of the Spirit

If you hear **despair** in the inner thoughts
you are entertaining,
confront them with the scriptures
and reorient with your favorite songs of worship
and the words and prayers of the faithful.

The devil will speak to you,
just as the devil spoke to Jesus.

The devil will seek to cause you to lose faith
in your name before God—Beloved—
and your calling in God to live out
your covenant life as a son or daughter
of your loving heavenly Father before others,
inviting them to come alive to do the same.

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Here's to hearing God and responding with joy.

And here's to hearing the devil
because you will
and responding with the scriptures,
the sword of the Spirit,
and the promises and the praises of Jesus.

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The enemy has power,
and according to **Ephesians 2:2**,
that power and its tentacle powers
permeate the air we breathe
and the world in which we live.

1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions & sins,*
2 *in which you used to live*
when you followed the ways of this world
and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air,
the spirit who is now at work
in those who are disobedient.

We should not take that lightly.
We are in a battle,
and if we forget that truth,
we will be taken out.

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Just as a genie in a bottle can grant 3 wishes, the enemy has some Trojan-horse prizes to deliver to the soul that surrenders to its desires.

- Those prizes always look good on the outside;
- satan's offerings don't look evil, smell evil, or convey evil—at least not immediately.
- They are like poison hidden in candy;
- the devil's promises are veiled in innocence and possibility.
- They seem healing and satisfying—then they sting with the strike of a scorpion.

The small pleasures the enemy offers can become heart desires—desires radically out of alignment with those Christ is forming in us.

We think we are on the way of life, and we find out

- what we did,
- what we chose,
- how we acted,
- has us firmly on the way of death and pain.

or just as two lines that run close together
but slowly diverge,
we move with confidence until

- some shock,
- some trouble precipitated
by our slowly growing sin
wakes us up to just how far we are from home.
- We give an inch,
and the devil takes a mile.

This is where Jesus's vocation,
being clear and settled
in his affections and disposition,
held him.

The enemy had the power to give him
all the splendor & authority of the kingdoms of the world.

This is where it is so important
that we understand who we are

- That we are called sons & daughters of God
- That we are loved

Find the community around you
that will fan the truth of God in you into flame,
that will help you resist the candy-coated poison
the enemy is seeking to feed every single one of us.