

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT: OOPS!

LUKE 4:1-15

Since We Are Being Made Into The Image Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, We Have No Excuse To Keep On Sinning.

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There Are No Shortcuts In Our Journey Towards Holiness. Oftentimes We Can be in the Exact Center Of God's Will And Still Be In Very Difficult Situations.

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IV. Summary

The Devil Made Me Do It: Oops!

Luke 4:1-15

Last time we were together, we examined the event of Jesus' baptism. When John baptized Jesus, heaven opened, God the Holy Spirit descended on and filled Jesus, and God the Father spoke these words over Jesus, "You are my Son, Whom I love; with You I am well pleased." After His baptism, the Spirit led Him to the wilderness for a time of fasting, prayer, reflection, and temptation. I think that way too often we Christians use our humanness as an excuse for not defeating sin in our lives. I'm hoping that after this morning's message, we will never say that again.

Jesus, in His most human and vulnerable state, overcame all sorts of temptations and never once sinned. We have the same Holy Spirit that filled and empowered Jesus living in us. But alas, I'm sure; we will always use this excuse. I know it's one of Luig's favorite. One day, she came home with a very expensive dress and I said, Why did you buy that dress, dear? You have so many dresses already, and that one is pretty expensive. Can we afford it?"

She looked at me sheepishly and said, "The devil made me do it. I was trying it on in the store and he said to me, 'I've never seen you look more gorgeous than you do in that dress.'"

I said, "Why didn't you say, 'Get thee behind me Satan!'"?

"I did," she said, "and he said, 'It looks smokin' on you from behind too!'"

I. UNDERSTANDING LIFE

The world simply looks at Jesus as a human being Who was simply a good moral teacher who ended up being martyred because of His naiveté. The world mocks the fact that Christians look at Jesus as God. However, I think we Christians often forget that in addition to Jesus being fully God, He was fully human. We often forget that Jesus lived life exactly how we have to live life. He had to eat and sleep. He got tired and hungry. He was oftentimes, sad, lonely, and disheartened. But most of all, He faced temptation like we do. He successfully defeated the devil every time. Here is the main idea of this morning's text. **SINCE WE ARE BEING MADE INTO THE IMAGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WE HAVE NO EXCUSE TO KEEP ON SINNING.** Jesus drew on the power of Scripture and the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation. We have those same helps available to us. But in order to live holy lives, we must understand how God works and how the devil works.

Filled With The Holy Spirit (1a)

In verse 1 through the first half of verse 2, we get an understanding of life. Here we have to come to understand that **THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS HOLINESS. OFTENTIMES WE CAN BE IN THE EXACT CENTER OF GOD'S WILL AND**

STILL BE IN VERY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS. This is going to be very hard for many to understand because we tend to equate pleasure with good and pain with evil. So our defective theology says that if I am obeying God, following His will for my life, and pursuing holiness, then my life should be going well. On the other hand, if I am rebelling against God and living life to please myself, then I should be suffering. I don't see how anyone who has seriously read the Bible could develop that type of thinking and theology, but I know many people believe this. It seems to me that this is more of an eastern philosophical thought of Karma. As we seriously study through the Bible, we easily see that is not biblical theology. In fact, biblical evidence is to the contrary. It seems that those who are closer to God, who obey God the most, and pursue holiness, are often the ones that suffer the most. In fact, no one was more holy than Jesus. No one obeyed God more perfectly. And no one suffered more. Let's start to look at Jesus' journey. In the first half of verse 1, we are reminded that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. From the way this is worded, it seems as if right after Jesus was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, this new journey begins. Since He will take this journey alone, the information recorded in the Gospels had to come from Jesus as the source, since He was the only human present. Jesus reminds us of His baptism for two reasons. First, that experience ended with God saying to Him, "You are My Son Whom I love. With You I am well pleased." Jesus has been anointed for ministry and reassured of His Father's love. Secondly, He will carry this knowledge with Him into the temptation stage He is about to face.

Led By The Spirit (1b)

In the second half of verse 1 we see that Jesus was constantly led by the Spirit. One of Jesus' most visible and dramatic qualities was His submissiveness. Jesus constantly said to the Father and the Holy Spirit, where You lead me, I will follow. I can't speak from what age He developed this awareness, but we know that at 12-years-old, He knew He had to be in His Father's house doing His Father's business. But from this time on, we can see that He is focused on marching towards His destiny on the cross. His mission is to save and redeem all those who will receive Him. I think that is something I would really like to emulate in Jesus. I find myself distracted by so many things, that I forget that my destiny is to meet Him face to face and spend eternity with Him, whether that comes through death or through the rapture. I want to be more intentional about listening for the leading of the Holy Spirit and the leading of God's hand. Of course that happens more readily when we are reading our Bibles, praying, and practicing obedience. God promises to lead if we promise to follow.

To A Difficult And Dangerous Situation (2a)

The problem we seem to face is that as the first half of verse 2 illustrates, when we find ourselves led to a difficult and dangerous situation, we are confused. Like I said earlier, we don't expect to find ourselves in these types of situations if we think we are being led by God. After all, doesn't the Psalmist say:

"1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:1-3 / NIV)?

Doesn't it seem to be saying that if we follow God's leading, we should find ourselves lying by the still waters in the green pastures? Well if that was the whole Psalm, that would certainly be the case. But let's read on:

"4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" Psalm 23:4 / NIV).

We will see that Jesus often sends the disciples into difficult and

dangerous situations. We can see over and over again that God often prepares us for ministry in these types of places. Did you catch that? You and I will have to follow the leading of God's Holy Spirit through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. God never promises that if we are good and holy and righteous that we will not suffer. What He does promise is how the Psalmist ended this Psalm:

"5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6 / NIV).

God promises to transform us into the men and women He can use to glorify His Name and to accomplish and become all that He has planned for us. He promises to finish the good work He started in us and He promised to deliver us safely home to our heavenly homes. Much of our training happens in difficult situations. Jesus followed the Holy Spirit's leading out to the desert when He would fast for 40 days. As we learned from Rick Warren when we studied through *The Purpose Driven Life*, 40 days is a significant period in Israel's history. It rained for 40 days and 40 nights when God destroyed the earth in the flood of Noah's time. Moses was up on top of Mt. Sinai for 40 days receiving the Law from God. And because of Israel's disobedience, God led them into the desert for 40 years. Again, like Jesus' baptism identified Him with us, so these 40 days in the wilderness were meant to identify Him with Israel. Israel failed her testing by God. Jesus did not. This time of testing was to prove and authenticate Jesus' identity and His ministry.

I'm reminded that when Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall for King Belshazzar, the message from God was that he had been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Jesus will be weighed on God's scale and He will be proved to be 100% authentic. We should not be discouraged, confused, or fearful when even though we are being obedient to God that we find ourselves in the deserts of life. God uses these times to prove us, perfect us, and to give us confidence. As Jesus demonstrates in these temptations, our attitude towards them is crucial. I'm not so sure if this may sound insensitive to those who are experiencing suffering at this moment, but I hope it will encourage you. For those of us who are not suffering, we should hear the words of James and prepare our hearts to go through suffering:

"2 Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. 3 For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything" (James 1:2-4 / NLT).

II. UNDERSTANDING TEMPTATION

Oftentimes we add to our suffering with bad theology and wrong expectations. Jesus entered His time of suffering and testing with right expectations and a humble and submissive attitude. Here is a bit of theology that we must understand about life. **THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS HOLINESS. OFTENTIMES WE CAN BE IN THE EXACT CENTER OF GOD'S WILL AND STILL BE IN VERY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.**

I preach this stuff and I really do believe it. But oftentimes what's in my head doesn't quite slip down into my heart. Can you imagine being led by the Holy Spirit, into this desolated desert spot, the Spirit saying, "Here you are," and then saying, "Good luck."? I'm sure I would be scratching my head, saying something like, "I thought we were going to a 5-star hotel. What in the world can I get out of this place?" But Jesus was focused. In the second half of verse 2 thru verse 12, Jesus helps us to understand temptation. In other words, **THE DEVIL TEMPTS US TO CIRCUMVENT GOD'S WAYS, GOD'S TIMING, AND GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.** In other words, he tries to convince us that God doesn't love us, He doesn't understand us, and that He is not interested in our situation and needs. I also want us to notice a couple of things about the way Jesus handles the devil. He had the power to confront Him power to power hand to hand, toe to toe. It would have been no contest. However, in order to demonstrate the way God designed for us to fight Satan, Jesus provided the model. He countered the lies of Satan with the truth of Scripture. We must always remember that. I have been in deliverance sessions where the demons would hiss at me and spit at me saying, "You're nothing. You're pathetic. You really are nothing." I always respond, "You're absolutely right. I am nothing. But this battle is not between you and me. This battle is between you and the risen Christ. ... And He is something." Satan will always try and bate us into exerting our intelligence, our power, and our authority. Once we fall for this, we are done.

Trust In God's Plan And Provision (2b-4)

In the second half of verse 2 thru verse 4 Jesus shows us how to trust in God's plan and provision. I think this would be a good place for me to let you know that all the quotes Jesus uses from the Bible come from the book of Deuteronomy. This book was written just as Israel's 40-year desert wanderings were coming to an end. It was a recap of where God brought them. They were about to enter the Promised Land and God wanted them to know what life was all about and Who He was in their lives. Listen to one of the summaries:

"1 "Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors. 2Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. 3Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD. 4For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet

didn't blister or swell. 5So you should realize that just as a parent disciplines a child, the LORD your God disciplines you to help you.

6"So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. 7For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with springs that gush forth in the valleys and hills. 8It is a land of wheat and barley, of grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey" (Deuteronomy 8:1-8 / NLT).

The message here is that God's plan and God's provision will never fail us. That is a beautiful sentiment. However, this lesson came at a high cost for the Israelites. Listen to one of the saddest statements in the Bible:

"1This book records the words that Moses spoke to all the people of Israel while they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River. ... 2Normally it takes only eleven days to travel from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea, ... 3But forty years after the Israelites left Mount Sinai, on a day in midwinter, Moses gave these speeches to the Israelites, telling them everything the LORD had commanded him to say" (Deuteronomy 1:1-3 / NLT).

The plan God devised for Israel was a simple 11-day journey to the Promised Land. The very next phrase we read is "40 years later."

Like the Israelites, Jesus was tempted to believe the lie that you need to think of number one first. The temptation is to take matters into our own hands. When the Israelites got a little hungry, they grumbled against God and even threatened to kill Moses several times. They failed their test miserably. They even complained about the miraculous manna God provided from heaven.

Let's pick up the temptation here. In verse 3, the phrase translated "If You are the Son of God," can also be translated, "Since You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Jesus was fasting and we don't know the time God set for Him to fast, but being led by the Holy Spirit He would know when it was time to end the fast. The devil is trying to get Jesus to "prove" He is the Son of God, even though he knows Jesus is the Son of God. The whole spirit world heard God's declaration concerning Jesus at the baptism. What he is therefore trying to get Jesus to do is to operate independently of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. If we were Jesus, would we have exercised such restraint and self-control? It seems to me that Satan often appeals to our pride. He appeals to our desire to do things our way. We probably would have turned the stone to a bread, ate it, and say, there you go Satan, take that.

Look what Jesus does here. He merely quotes a portion of Deuteronomy 8:3: "3Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD" (NLT).

The lesson the Hebrews were supposed to learn was that everything we get, everything we accomplish, everything we become, and even every breath we take comes from the loving and caring hand of God. Since we live in a western technological society, we forget that. We have come to think that our hard work, careful planning, and our diligence is why we have all that we have. But the truth is that we don't live on bread alone. We do not provide for ourselves. God provides everything. God spoke creation into existence. Jesus spoke the end of sin's power

when He said, “It is finished.” God speaks to us through His inspired Bible. The meaning of life is found in the Bible, nowhere else. God’s plan, His promises, and His provisions are laid out in the Scriptures. If we want to successfully navigate through life, we must heavily depend on searching the Bible daily.

Trust In God’s Timing (5-8)

Well that didn’t go well for Satan. Jesus trusted fully in God’s plan and God’s provision. In verses 5-8 we will be shown how to trust in God’s timing. Let me just point out that Matthew and Luke reverse the order of these next two temptations. Most scholars feel that Matthew’s order is the most likely actual order. Luke switches the order in order to emphasize the connection between the temple and Jesus’ obedience.

In this case the devil took Jesus to a place, probably beyond space and time, where Jesus could see all the kingdoms of the world, all the power and authority, and all the riches that go along with them all at one moment. Satan laid it all out before Jesus and said, this can all be Yours right now, if You will just bow down and worship me. The point of fact is that Jesus will inherit all of this. It is meant to be His. It was all created for Him and through Him. But Jesus will take rule and control of it all in His resurrection state. He must first go through the cross to inherit this all. Satan is tempting Jesus to shortcut the whole process of suffering, humiliation, and crucifixion. He is trying to get Jesus to take what’s rightfully His but not according to God’s timing.

I know it is so hard for us to trust in God’s timing, but it is something we need to get a feel for and insight into. I had a professor who used to always say, “God is not often early, but He is never late.” When we are tempted to take things into our own hands, we need to prayerfully consider what God wants from us. Perhaps what we want is the perfect thing to want and perhaps even in God’s will for our future. However, we need to be sensitive to His timing. Clearly when called to worship the gods of this world like lust, power, addictions, pleasure, and wealth, we can be sure we are worshiping the devil and not God. Jesus would rather suffer and die according to the will of God rather than to receive all the power and things of this world and be out of God’s will. Jesus answered from Deuteronomy 6:13. He said, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

When we have a need to be loved, it is a shortcut to indulge ourselves in sexual immorality or pornography. When we have a need to be important, it is a shortcut to act like we know it all or try to prove our importance. When we have a need to be affirmed, it is a shortcut to look to other people for affirmation. God has told us He loves us and has great plans for us. We must be very humble and sensitive to God’s leading and most of all His timing.

Trust In God’s Ways (9-12)

In verses 9-12 we learn from Jesus how to trust in God’s ways. There was a place at the corner of the temple wall that overlooked a deep valley. It was said to be dizzying drop of over 450 feet. I want to point one thing out here. Satan knows the Bible and he will often quote it to you. Unless you are a careful Bible student, you will easily be fooled. Probably the biggest task in

deliverance sessions is to correct wrong understandings of the Bible and God's commands. Satan quotes a legitimate Psalm here. It comes from Psalm 91:11-12. However, he misapplies its true meaning. Satan is trying to get Jesus to prove He is the Messiah. Surely this miraculous jump would prove to all that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16. The original verse in Deuteronomy read like this: "Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah" (NIV). That was a bad place for the people of Israel and for Moses personally. The people were grumbling against God because they were thirsty. God told Moses to go and speak to the rock and water would come out. Moses was so angry at the people he hit the rock twice. Water came up, but listen to what God told Him:

"12But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!" 13This place was known as the waters of Meribah, because it was where the people of Israel argued with the LORD, and where he demonstrated his holiness among them" (Numbers 20:12-12 / NLT).

God has laid out clearly in the Bible how He expects us to comport ourselves as His children. I have seen people do the most horrible things in the name of trying to accomplish God's will. Lying can be justified, slander can be justified, and cheating can be justified all in the name of trying to do good. But God will never accept that. We are called to do God's will God's way. If we are humble, obedient, gentle, patient, and demonstrate the fruit of God's spirit in our lives, then we will not be putting God to the test.

Jesus fought off the temptations of Satan by the mere power of God's Word as found in the Bible. Again, I know you are probably tired of me saying this. But if you do not regularly read, study, memorize, and apply the Bible, you will be an easy mark for Satan. He is not all that creative. **THE DEVIL TEMPTS US TO CIRCUMVENT GOD'S WAYS, GOD'S TIMING, AND GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES.** Don't let him fool you. And another thing we should be doing is studying Scripture together. Because I have seen people confused about the interpretation of some piece of Scripture and they have become arrogant about their interpretation and wander far away from Scripture.

III. UNDERSTANDING VICTORY

Part of winning any contest is to know when you have won. Jesus helps us in understanding victory in verses 13-15. **GOD BRINGS US THROUGH TIMES OF TESTING IN ORDER TO PREPARE US FOR MINISTRY.**

Learning To Defeat Evil (13)

In verse 13 Jesus shows us how to defeat evil. The devil cannot stand up to truth. I encourage Christians not to hide their flaws because when we are in the hiding mode, Satan can play all sorts of tricks on us. Don't try and pretend to be someone or something you are not. That type of pride will destroy us. Jesus simply applied the truth of Scripture to Satan's lies and defeated him. The devil left Him but we know he'll be back to try again. The Matthew account says that when the devil left, angels came to minister to Jesus.

Leaning To Minister In The Spirit (14)

Verse 14 illustrates that the difficult times in our lives are designed to help us learn how to minister in the Spirit. Jesus then returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Jesus was baptized and received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led Jesus to the desert in order to be tested and proved. During that time Jesus was being prepared to minister in the Spirit. We must realize that when we are going through dangerous and difficult periods of life, God is training us to minister to others in the Spirit.

Learning To Recognize God's Hand (15)

And finally it sure comes in handy to learn to recognize God's hand. Jesus taught in the local synagogues and His teaching was so insightful and Spirit filled that everyone praised Him. But Jesus knows in His heart the people who were praising Him that day may be the same ones crying, "Crucify Him!" later on. We must not get caught up in people's praise. There is the story of how Charles Spurgeon handled praise. After a particularly powerful sermon a woman came to him and said, "That was one of the best sermons I have ever heard preached in my lifetime." Spurgeon answered, "The devil told me the very same thing as I finished the sermon." We are honed and shaped by God not so we can gain personal wealth or fame, but so we can serve God and bring Glory to Him alone. **GOD BRINGS US THROUGH TIMES OF TESTING IN ORDER TO PREPARE US FOR MINISTRY.**

IV. SUMMARY

We are children of God most high. We have been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus. If this is so, how can we continue to go on living in sin? We must stand up and fight against sin. Jesus showed us how to win. **SINCE WE ARE BEING MADE INTO THE IMAGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WE HAVE NO EXCUSE TO KEEP ON SINNING.**

Satan made the temptations look appealing to Jesus. What harm would it do to turn a stone into a piece of bread for a hungry man? What harm would it do to get to His inheritance by shortcutting around the cross? Surely wouldn't it be good to do a miracle so people would recognize Him as Messiah? Jesus knew the ugliness and damage of sin. We don't often see through it.

Rick Green wrote this about temptation:

"A former policeman with whom I stayed on a choir tour told me about being on duty during an ice storm. The ice was a half-inch thick on every tree in the area. He was called to a site where the ice and falling branches had caused a power line to come down; his duty was to keep people away from the area.

"There was a small tree near the fallen power line," he said, 'the kind with a short trunk and lots of long thin branches. While that fallen power line was crackling and popping with electricity, it was throwing out sparks through the branches of that small tree. The sparks

would reflect off the ice-covered branches sending out a rainbow of glimmering colors. I stood there and watched, and wondered how anything so beautiful could be so deadly.'

I was reminded of the power of sin. We see something that seems beautiful, but when we reach out to touch, it becomes death to us.”

Look, I know the appeal of the temptations we face are all shiny and glittery. But they are deadly and they will cause us to doubt God’s love, God’s provisions, God’s wisdom, and God’s timing. Jesus has given us some real insight as to what we can expect life to be like, He has given us an understanding of how temptations work, and most of all, a method to gain victory over sin in our lives.