

Intro:

This is our last weekend in our 3 week series looking at the account of
The Temptations of Jesus...His encounter with Satan in the desert
At the end of His 40 days of fasting...his preparation for his earthly

2 weeks ago, you heard from Jonathan Neef
(the campus pastor of our upcoming Vernon Hills campus)
And Jonathan covered the first of those 3 temptations.

And last week, you heard from Aaron Cramer
(the campus pastor at our Crossroads Campus)
...who spoke on the second temptation.

Today, you'll be hearing from me, (the Campus Pastor of our Highland Park campus)
("the Friendly Campus"!!)

Can anyone guess what I'm speaking on?

That's right, I'll be speaking on the third temptation.

First, I want to make some general observations about this encounter
between Jesus and Satan

Then, we will focus specifically on the 3rd temptation.

Background:

We are in Matthew chapter 4, if you would like to turn there in your Bibles.

This event occurs immediately following Jesus' baptism.

Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist was preparing the way for the coming Messiah.

John baptizes Jesus at the end of Matthew chapter 3,

and when Jesus comes out of the water, the heavens open, and
a voice from heaven declares,

"This is my son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased."

This would have been the perfect time for Him to begin His public ministry!

On the heels of just having received a glowing endorsement from God the Father.

He has momentum, a growing buzz of excitement,
and He could have capitalized on that...

But Jesus wasn't following market research,

or strategic political campaign protocol

...He was following something else.

Read Passage (Matthew 4:1-11)

So, this remarkable encounter is recorded in 2 of the accounts of Jesus' life
Matthew and Luke

Have you ever stopped to think about how Matthew and Luke *knew about this account?*

There was no one else there, no eyewitnesses, no on location reporters

It was just Jesus and Satan

the Prince of Peace, and the Prince of Darkness.

Jesus had to have shared this with His disciples

...He must have felt obliged to share it with His disciples *for some reason*

Particularly as it shows Him in a moment of vulnerability.

...but why?

1. Well, one of the reasons may have been just that

...to show Himself in a moment of vulnerability.

To show us that He came in direct contact with the

brokenness of the world,

with its enchantments and seductions

to show us...He understands

He knows what we're faced with

Hebrews 4:15 tells us:

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

2. And in that same way, this account is helpful for another reason

It does indeed show us that Jesus can empathize with our weakness,

That He knows what we're faced with

But, in that same way, it also shows us how Jesus dealt with temptation

How was He able to do it?

In this moment, He models for us, a successful encounter with temptation.

...with Satan himself!

So, How was He able to do it?

There are a couple of things we can observe from the passage.

(1.) one is that **Jesus was prepared...**

This didn't take Him by surprise

He was ready because...

-He had lived a lifetime of walking with God, delighting in God
Just read the gospels, and you'll see how often Jesus pulls away from the crowds

...pulls away from the accolades and adoration

To be by Himself, alone with God the Father.

Luke 22:39...as was His habit

-It's too late to try to bolster your faith

in the midst of being faced with a temptation.

Right? -the work has to be done beforehand.

-regular, consistent, fully engaged time with God

Time in personal devotion, in communal worship

allowing the Holy Spirit space to do

transformative work in our heart and mind,

preparing our heart and mind for the moment

a decision has to be made.

-It's too late to try to

build a foundation for your house when the storm hits

-When the storm comes, if you have a strong foundation,
it will stand

If you don't, the house will crumble

-Our life's foundation will determine whether we

stand or crumble when faced with a temptation.

-Our choices will reflect the kind of foundation

Has been built in our lives

(2.) The other observation we can make is that Jesus used

His **knowledge of God's Word**

To counter-attack the enemy

This goes back to Jesus' preparation. He *knew* the scriptures

-God's Word had soaked into the very fabric of who Jesus was.

It permeated everything that Jesus believed about the world

-about who God the Father was

-about what was truly important and valuable.

To the point that When He needed it, He was able to pull it forward in His mind.

So, our Access to this story shows us

1. That Jesus can empathize with us
2. Jesus modeling for us how to successfully face temptation

3. But it also provides us with another benefit, and that is this...

It provides us with a picture of the enemy's work in the world

It is important for us to know our opponent

...to see through their strategy.

If you're a baseball fan, you know how much

time, money and energy is spent in scouting

the opposing teams players...their batters, their pitchers.

Here in this encounter, we see categories of our opponent's deception,

-of the enticements the world can offer to us

It helps us to recognize what kind of deceptions we can be lured by.

In some ways, these 3 temptations are hard for us to relate to.

These are not exactly the kinds of temptations we're faced with on a daily basis.

On the other hand, I think we're going to see this morning, that

the devil's tactics, His *methods* in attempting to charm God's people,

His schemes to seduce them into falling for counterfeit goods...

...those devices never really change.

Satan, as He attempts to derail God's plans in sending the Messiah

-Uses the same routine that he used in the garden of Eden *ensnaring Adam and Eve*

And those are the same lures that we face

today in our daily lives.

Lures

I use the word lure for a reason. (my family just got back from a fishing trip...Boyd's)

To survive, a fish needs to use its sense of smell and vision to detect prey.

They see the glitter of fish scales,

or the smooth swooshing movement of a fish tail.

So, to capture a fish, a fisherman needs to replicate that glitter and movement, even the smell

to deceive the fish into thinking it's seeing another fish.

I love fishing lures. (Show a slide of lures.)

They're actually really beautiful.

And many of the old ones are carefully crafted, hand painted little sculptures.

But, they're not the real thing. They're not actually a fish.

The real thing has life coursing through it,

-you cut into a fish, and it is filled with complexity

-a nervous system, digestive system, respiratory system circulatory system

-and it reproduces and creates more life.

-As food for a larger fish, it is nourishment, sustenance, it brings life

The counterfeit (On the other hand) is a fake.

It is made of wood and paint and metal hooks

-You cut into it, and there is nothing more than what you see on the surface.

If a fish mistakes one of these beautiful, glittering enticing objects for the real thing,

If the fish is fooled into thinking the counterfeit is actually the real thing,

It could be deadly.

This is what Satan offers us.

All He can offer us is counterfeits.

Often beautiful, glittering, carefully crafted counterfeits.

But, you get beneath the surface, and there is nothing more there.

And that is what He offers Jesus here in the desert.

Let's look at how these temptations in the desert can actually represent categories of deception that Satan uses all the time in our own lives.

1. Stone to bread

-One category of temptation has to do with the desire to **satisfy our appetites**.
Finding a quick easy way to satisfy our *hungers*, our *physical desires*
But Jonathan Neef spoke on the 2 weeks ago

2. If you're the Son of God, show it by throwing yourself off this temple

Another category of temptation is the **desire for recognition**
To be seen as great, powerful, wise
To find *admiration, respect, attention and affirmation.*
Aaron dealt with that temptation last week

3. And finally, Satan **shows** Him all the kingdoms of the world and all their splendor

So this 3rd category of temptation is

Finding a way to get **what our eyes desire**

What glitters, and is enticing to the eye.

There is more to this one than just that,

and we'll be looking at that in just a moment.

Why did Jesus want us to see this moment?

Because this is how Satan **always** operates

-He creates hungers, deficits, insecurities, and then offers counterfeit solutions

Look at Genesis 3

Eve saw that it was good for food, delight to the eyes, able to make one wise

Look at I John 2

Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and boastful pride of life.

We're looking in particular at the **3rd temptation**

Read the 3rd Temptation

I think the “Kingdoms of the world” can represent a couple of different things

1. First of all, kingdoms are the world’s power structures

...they are the world’s vehicles of influence

By the way,

- when you see “the world” mentioned in the Bible, it is usually referring to The world’s system, that which is in opposition to the Kingdom of God. It is not referring to the physical earth,
 - It is not referring to the beauty of nature,
 - or the many amazing joys and wonders,
 - the good gifts such as music, creativity, love, family.
- Instead, it is referring to but a particular ideology
- It is referring to the world’s system, as opposed to God’s system...
 - there is to the world’s system, and there is God’s system...
 - there are the “kingdoms of the world”, and there is “the kingdom of God”
 - ...and they operate very differently from each other.

Influence and power in the world’s system come about through by apprehending influence

- through exerting power and control
- elevating self, magnifying our work over the work of others

But influence in God’s system operates in a very different way.

- the Bible tells us that God exalts the humble
- Jesus said, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.
- And, “If anyone wants to be great among you, let them be a servant to all.”

I have a friend who is an executive for Verizon

He wasn’t there long before he began to notice the way people got ahead was through a kind of aggressive confidence putting themselves in situations where their work would be noticed making sure they got the credit for successes and shifting the blame to others when there were failures.

As a Christian, my friend tried not to get sucked into those practices,

and as a result, he often got overlooked, passed over, unnoticed for his work

But a few years ago, when he decided that he was going to try to do the exact opposite.

So, he began shining the light on other people’s work...to their superiors

Teeing them up for success

Giving other people credit for successes

And taking ownership whenever he could for

whatever part he played in any failures.

And guess what has happened?

He has never received more accolades for his work than he has since he started taking that tactic.

In several meetings,

-he has been called out for special commendations on his work.

In a couple recent meetings, he was recognized twice...

He never received that kind of attention for his work.

Of course, we're not generally offered (through a supernatural vision)

all the kingdoms of the world,

-But, we are faced everyday with the temptation to grasp at influence

-to advance our own personal interests

-to make sure that others see us, respect us, and give us places of influence

And, every day, we're faced with the temptation to take offense

when we're not respected in the way we think we should be

2. But Jesus is not only presented with all the kingdoms of the world,

He is also presented with "all their splendor"

In other words, it was made to glitter, to appeal to the eye, to be visually alluring

-in such a way that it would generate desire, it would elicit "want"

We are consumers...there are always things we want, that we desire to have

This is the opposite of what we just saw when we studied

Psalm 23 as a part of our Teaching series in the Psalms.

What does Psalm 23 say?

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

-I have everything I need.

Knowing our Shepherd means knowing His character, His faithfulness.

And the more we gaze at who He is,

the more we are content with what we have.

We're able to say...

"I know my Shepherd loves me,

and will provide every good thing for me."

Knowing the love of our shepherd brings a sense of contentment.

I shall not want.

Temptation only works when it connects with our desires

If we get to a place of contentment...able to say

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"

Suddenly temptation is no longer a threat.

In fact, in Phil 4, Paul says that he's learned a secret.

And what is that secret? He's learned to be content, whatever his circumstances
-whether he is in need, or in plenty

And how is he able to do that...the very next verse says,

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

In other words..."The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Temptation only works when it connects with our desires

If we get to a place of contentment

Suddenly temptation is no longer a threat.

There a great passage in the Psalms that talks about where our desires come from.

Psalms 37 "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

(Contentment will never come to us as long as we are desiring the wrong things.)

Satan, through our culture, loves to present us with glittering packages

-possessions

-success

-respect

-admiration

But when they are unwrapped, it ends up they are empty

They are never able to live up to their promise

Parable

Once upon a time a little girl walked by a five and dime store and saw a beautiful string of imitation white pearls. It was love at first sight. She looked into her tattered, tiny purse and found just enough money to buy them. My, how she loved those pearls, and wore them almost every day. At night she would hang the beloved pearls on a hook next to her bed.

One afternoon her dad asked, "Honey, do you love me?" She replied, "Oh, daddy, I love you so much." He said, "Enough to give me your pearls?" She stood silent, her heart sinking, stunned by what she just heard. Then, as tears welled, she managed to softly whisper, "Yes, daddy, I do love you enough to give you my pearls." And she reached behind her neck, slipped the clasp loose and gave him her treasure. As she did, her dad pulled a small box out of his pocket and handed it to her. She carefully opened the box and there resting on a soft blue velvet background was a string of real white pearls. Years later she would wear those very same pearls on her wedding day.

You see, God is asking us, “do you love ME?” “Do you delight in Me?

And when we answer yes

He follows up by asking, “Do you love me enough to give me

-the counterfeit pleasures,

-those coping mechanism,

-need for control

-the grasping for recognition and influence

-the searching for shortcuts to immediate gratification

Can you surrender those temptations with open hands?”

And when we do

-when we give Him those

-imitation white pearls

-those counterfeit glittering packages

-He offers us a string of gleaming genuine white pearl, the real thing.

So, Jesus was offered All the Kingdoms of the World

And..all their splendor

And what is the requirement? How could He get them?

The requirement was worship,

the requirement was simply...worship the wrong thing

You see, Satan wanted to lure Jesus

-with a string of imitation pearls

-with counterfeits

-with empty shortcuts

And he knew the only way to do that was by

getting Jesus to worship the wrong thing

Worship has to do with what we regard as great

-with what we lift up as having ultimate value

-with what we delight in

What we worship determines what we **delight in**
And what we delight in determines
what our **heart will desire!**

In other words... **worship transforms our desires**

If Satan could get Jesus to elevate the wrong thing
...to delight in the wrong thing
Then he could get Jesus to desire the wrong things

But what was *Jesus response?*

“It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only.”

-How can we make the Lord our Shepherd,
so we shall not want?

-How can we learn the secret of being content
...whatever our circumstances?

-How can we desire the right things,
so that we're not lured by counterfeits and empty imitations?

Jesus was seemingly immune to Satan's temptations

And for Him, it all came down to worship

Because regular rhythms of **fully engaged** worship, *delighting* in God

Transforms our *heart and mind* to desire the right things

And temptation is only effective when it connects to our desires.

-Satan and the world can only be successful in luring us with counterfeits
-if we're desiring the wrong things.

You may think that time spent in worship

-though regular personal devotional practices
-and though regularly gathering with the people of God for worship

You may think it's unproductive time.

But it is providing space for the Holy Spirit

You see how worship is the antidote to temptation

Worship reestablishes a proper perspective

It prepares us to confront the moment we are faced with temptation

worship

-though regular personal devotional practices

-and though regularly gathering with the people of God for worship

realigns us with what is true

Last week I threw out my back...

Has your compass on your phone ever been out of alignment?

What are you supposed to do to get it realigned?

You move it in a figure 8, and it recalibrates

It fixes itself once again on true north.

True worship a spiritual realignment, a spiritual recalibration

Fixing our sites once again on our true north...on our Creator.

Worship is the antidote to temptation

Jesus stood firm because He was properly aligned with God's created order

He was prepared to reject the short cut to power,

...because He understood where true power resided

He was prepared to reject the splendor of the world's kingdoms

...because he understood what His true treasure was

Jesus stood firm because He was prepared through a lifetime of living as a worshipper

With regular life rhythms of time in God's presence,

May we become focused worshippers

-Allowing time in God's presence

(-both in personal devotion

-and in corporate worship setting)

-Allowing that time in God's presence to transform our hearts and minds

And to realign us

recalibrating our hearts to our "true north"

And may a life of worship

prepare us for the moments when we are faced with
Temptation.