

(Basics) 35. Jesus Overcame Sin

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes that overcoming temptation is essential for achieving holiness, using Jesus as the ultimate example of resisting sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 12:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 12:1-4, James 1:13, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Overcoming Temptation", "Holy Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of holiness and overcoming temptation. He uses the analogy of a father driving in a car and telling his son to run after him, highlighting the impossibility of humans trying to be like God. The speaker explains that holiness can only come when we are willing to say no to temptation. He also discusses how Jesus, as a man, encountered and overcame temptation in the power of the Holy Spirit, offering us the same power and hope. The speaker encourages listeners to have a goal of living like Jesus and pressing on towards that goal, gradually becoming more like Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We want to continue looking at the life of Jesus as the perfect example God has given us on earth and demonstrating how God wanted man to live. And today we want to look at His holiness and His purity. God is holy and He tells us, Because I am holy, be holy yourself.

But for us who are human beings, created with a free will, holiness can come only through overcoming temptation, through saying no to temptation. We're not inherently holy. When we are born, we're inherently sinful.

In fact, even when Adam was created, he was not inherently holy. He was inherently innocent. He had to choose God and say no to temptation in order to be holy.

Now in the same way, today, to be holy, we have to be tempted. In fact, this is one purpose of temptation. Temptation is not meant to lead us into sin.

It's quite the opposite. It's meant to lead us to holiness. Holiness is like being spiritually healthy and strong.

Why do people go to a gymnasium and do exercise there with bars and weights and subject their muscles to resistance with springs and various things like that. Why is all that equipment lying around a gymnasium

for? It's not easy. It's not easy to lift those weights and do exercise with all those springs and various things.

In fact, it's a strain. But why do people go through that strain? They are even willing to pay money to go through that strain. You know why? Because they want a physically fit body.

And they know that that physically fit body can only come if every muscle in this body is subjected to strain and resistance. So all that equipment in a gymnasium is meant to subject different muscles in their body to resistance. Now, a person whose muscles are not subjected to resistance will just be a fat, flabby man.

And when doctors advise a fat, flabby man to get rid of his fat, they suggest exercise. Or in other words, subject your muscles to some resistance. It's exactly the same principle spiritually.

We have to be subjected to resistance. We have to have somebody resisting us. And we have to resist in return and overcome in order to be spiritually fit and muscular and strong.

Or in other words, holy. And that's why the Bible says in James chapter 1 and verse 2, consider it all joy when you encounter various types of temptations. Now, that's not the common understanding of how to face temptation.

Most people think, oh boy, temptation. I wish I never faced it. That's like a fat man saying, oh, I don't want to do any exercise.

It's such a labor, such a problem. What's the result? He never becomes muscular. And a Christian who says, oh, I don't want to face any trials.

I don't want to face any temptations. He'll never be a spiritually muscular healthy Christian. That's impossible.

Holiness can come only if you are willing to say no to temptation. And so James says, so what should you do? Consider it all joy. It's like the fat man going into the gymnasium and considering it all joy when he finds these various bits of equipment around him and he begins to exercise and gradually the fat melts away from his body and he comes out later in a year or so time.

He's a healthy, strong, muscular man. Wasn't that good? Wasn't it good? Shouldn't he consider it all joy when he subjects his muscles to resistance? It's exactly the same thing what James says here. But because people haven't understood it, they think that avoiding temptation and avoiding trial is the best way.

It's not the best way. Now, the amazing thing is that even someone who was sinless, like Jesus, had to be tempted. That's quite a mystery.

Why did he have to be tempted? In Matthew chapter 4, we read that the devil came to him and tempted him. And three of the temptations are mentioned there. And in Hebrews 4.15, we are told that he was tempted in every respect, like us, but he didn't sin even once.

It's amazing that Jesus Christ, the perfect sinless son of God, was also subjected to temptation in every area. The Bible says in Hebrews 6 and verse 20 that Jesus is our forerunner. Forerunner means somebody who has run the race in front of us and shown us the path in which to follow.

So, as one who has gone in front of us, he says to us today, follow me. And the Bible says in Hebrews 12, verse 1 and 2, let us look unto him who ran this race in front and let us run the race behind him. Consider him who was faced such contradiction of sinners against himself, Hebrews 12, 3 and 4, who resisted sin unto blood.

Jesus endured every temptation that can ever come to any human being. He was tempted in every point as we are. And he overcame in the power of the Holy Spirit as a man.

If he had faced temptation as God, there'd be nothing great about it. In fact, the Bible says God cannot be tempted. That's what it says in James chapter 1, verse 13.

God cannot be tempted. So, Jesus had to give up that privilege when he walked on earth as a man in order to be tempted. In order to be an example for us.

If he overcame temptation in the power of God and he tells us, I mean as God, and he tells us who are human beings to somehow overcome it when we are not God, that would be like a father sitting in a motor car and driving away at 80 kilometers an hour and telling his little son to run after him on the road, follow me. Isn't that ridiculous? A father driving in a car at 80 miles an hour and telling his son to run after him. How can Jesus say follow me? If he encountered temptation as God.

In fact, in any case, as I said, God cannot be tempted. No, but Jesus encountered it as a man and overcame in the power of the Holy Spirit and that is the same power he offers us. That's what gives us hope.

When we face temptation, the devil would like to rob you of that hope. By trying to tell you, no, you can't overcome temptation, you'll always be defeated. But you tell him, how did Jesus overcome? Oh, he overcame as God.

Is that what the Bible says? No, he overcame Satan. How? By quoting the word of God to him. You can overcome Satan in the same way.

The Bible says you take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God and you can drive the devil away too. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus prayed, sought for help, and overcame. Now, if today we have to face some temptation which Jesus never faced, we could say to him, well Lord, you don't understand what I'm facing, but we can never say that.

Because he does understand. The Bible says he can sympathize with our struggle, with our weakness. It says in Hebrews 4.15. And one thing that Jesus demonstrated through his life on earth, was that with the power of the Holy Spirit, as a man, we can obey every commandment of God.

If we don't do it, it's because we're not wholehearted as he was. That's why the Bible says in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 6, anyone who says he abides in Christ must walk as he walked. Is that possible? If it's not possible, there wouldn't be such a command in scripture.

The living Bible says anyone who calls himself a Christian should live as Christ did. Is that really true? Jesus Christ's life was a demonstration of how we are to live. Now, we may not be able to say that we are walking like Christ.

In fact, I've never met anyone on earth whose walks like Jesus Christ. Neither you nor I. But if we make that our goal, and if we have faith, we should press on to that perfection where we say, Lord, I want to walk like you. And, from one degree of glory to another, the Holy Spirit will conform us to that likeness.

Paul said he hadn't attained it himself, but he was pressing on. He said, I pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He wanted to live like Jesus lived.

And he made that his goal, and little by little by little, he approached it. But a person who's got no goal, he's never going to get anywhere near there. It's like climbing a mountain.

If you don't have the top of the mountain as your goal, what's going to happen? You're just going to be at ground level even after 25 years. But if you keep the top of the mountain as your goal, every year will find you higher and higher and higher and higher and little more and little more and a little more like Christ. This is Christian growth.

How did Jesus overcome? When he faced temptation, and he felt the pull of it, he resisted it in the power of the Holy Spirit. He died to himself, and he overcame. And the Bible says, arm yourself with the same mind.

1 Peter 4, verses 1 and 2. Now there could be a misunderstanding here, because some of us don't understand what is the essence of sin. The essence of all sin is essentially doing your own will. Now, if that is the essence of sin, then what's the essence of holiness? Denying your own will and doing the will of God.

That's holiness. And we read that Jesus said in John 6, verse 38, I came from heaven not to do my own will, that is not a sin, but to do the will of God, the will of him who sent me. That's holiness.

In the garden of Gethsemane, he said, not as I will, father, but as thou wilt. Jesus offered up his human will as a perpetual sacrifice. He said, I never want to do my will.

That's what it means when it says he never sinned. He never did his own will. We see that little child, a child wants to do his own will.

That stubbornness is sin. Jesus warned his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. He said, pray, your flesh is weak.

Your spirit may be willing to live a holy life, but the flesh is weak. That's why we need the power of the Holy Spirit to deny our will and to do the will of God. Make that your goal, dear friend.

Believe today that it's possible for you to live a holy life, to climb higher and higher up this mountain of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

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