

Jesus - Tempted as We Are

by Zac Poonen

Jesus, who was tempted in every way as we are, is our Forerunner and example of how to overcome temptation and live a godly life.

Scripture: Galatians 5:24, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 5:7, James 1:14

Topics: "Temptation", "Obedience To God"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the secret of a godly life found in Jesus, who was tempted in every way like us but never sinned, making Him the perfect example for believers to follow. The local church can truly reflect Christ's body when believers have seen Jesus in this light, as the church is meant to uphold this truth. Jesus, born of the Holy Spirit, was tempted in every way yet never sinned, showing that victory over temptation is possible through obedience to God.

Transcript

The secret of a godly life lies in Jesus Who lived on earth as a Man, and Who was tempted in every way as we are, but never sinned even once in thought, word, deed, attitude or motive or in any other way (1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:15). Since it is only those who have come to a godly life who can live together without strife as one body in Christ, we could go one step further and say that a local church can be the expression of Christ's body only where believers have seen our Lord Jesus in this way. This is the truth of which the church is to be the pillar and support (1 Tim. 3:15,16). Temptation is not the same as sin. Jas. 1:14,15 makes that clear. Our mind has to agree with the temptation before we sin. It is clear from Matthew 4 that Jesus was tempted. But His mind never agreed with any temptation even once. Thus He never sinned. He kept His heart pure. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. He did not have the 'old man' that we were born with. We have sinful flesh, whereas Jesus did not have sinful flesh. He came only "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom.8:3). But the Bible teaches that our Lord "was tempted in all points as we are" (Heb.4:15). We do not have to analyze this, even as we do not analyze the mystery of God becoming Man. We only have to believe it. At every point, in every temptation, Jesus obeyed His Father, unlike Adam.

God's Word says about Jesus, "He learned obedience and was made complete" (Heb. 5:7-9). The word "learned" is a word that relates to education. So what this verse is saying is that Jesus received an education in obedience as a Man. In each situation, He obeyed His Father and thus completed His education as a Man. Thus He became a Forerunner for us, so that we too can follow in His footsteps,

overcoming temptation and obeying God (Heb. 6:20). Our Lord can sympathise with us in our struggles against temptation, because He too was tempted like us (Heb. 2:18; 4:15; 12:2-4). The purity of Jesus as a Man was not something that He received on a platter, but one that was acquired through battle. But those battles were not endless ones. Every temptation was conquered - one after another. Thus, over the period of His lifetime, He faced every single temptation that we are tempted by - and overcame.

All of us have lived in sin for many years, and our sinful flesh can be likened to a box full of poisonous snakes that have been well-fed - by us!! The names of these snakes are impurity, anger, malice, strife, bitterness, love of money, selfishness, pride, etc. This box has an opening at the top from which these snakes put out their head whenever we are tempted. We have fed these snakes in plenty during our unconverted days. As a result, they are well-fed, healthy and strong. Some snakes have been fed more than others, and so those lusts have a greater grip on us than others. Now that we have died with Christ to sin, even though these snakes are still hale and hearty, our attitude to these snakes has changed! We have now been made partakers of the Divine nature and "those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Unlike in the old days, now, when a snake puts its head out of the opening of the box (when we are tempted), we hit it on the head with a stick. It goes back into the box. When we are tempted again, the snake puts its head out again, and we hit it again. Gradually it gets weaker and weaker. If we are faithful in each temptation to hit the snake instead of feeding it, then we will soon find the pull of temptation weakening. The flesh cannot be 'shot' or 'hanged' in a moment. It can only be crucified. Crucifixion is a slow death, but it is a certain one. That is why we consider it all joy, when we are tempted (Jas. 1:2) - because it gives us the opportunity to hit the snakes and weaken them. This would not have been possible otherwise.

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