

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park

Home Worship Service

Led by Pastor Andy Kowald

March 6, 2022

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome everyone! Also to those of you who are joining on love-stream.

Today our Bible reading recalls the temptation of Jesus, just after He was baptised. Have you ever been tempted by something, and you just couldn't resist...!

- I remember when I was about 7 or 8 years old, stealing lollies from my parents special lolly cupboard.

It wasn't easy... The cupboard was one of these 'off the wall' cupboards, with nothing between the bottom of the cupboard and what you could stand on! At least for a little kid.

But, I often woke up before Mum and Dad did, and I figured a way... The taste of some of those lollies was ... addictive! And the truth is, I got away with it... until now!

As I grew up, I began wondering why it was that it was so hard to stop falling for temptation. What was it that made it hard to resist temptation... Maybe it was the devil...! ***The devil made me do it!***

I came across a story that helped me understand that there might be a devil in the world, but he isn't the one that MAKES me sin. He can tempt me to sin, but he can't MAKE me sin!

The story is about a little boy who was afraid of a dog – a yapper dog...

Here's the thing: when he and his Dad and older brother would go around to this particular place, this yapper dog would come belting out yapping his head off, and the little boy would get frightened. He would quickly run down the path and jump into the back of a ute that was always in the yard. And the little dog would circle the ute yapping...

He realized one day that his Dad and older brother just walked in and the dog paid no attention to them. He just came after him!

It took a while, but he eventually realized that the little yapper dog didn't get hold of him and spin him around and toss him into the ute... HE got in all by himself!

This is a story that Christian counsellor John Anderson uses to explain the power of the devil. THE DEVIL ACTUALLY HAS NO POWER! It's a lie!! He has been undone by Jesus! His power to hurt us, is found in US! In OUR fear. And in OUR response to His lies!

Today we look at the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness after He was baptised. And the gift that His life is to us as WE face temptation ...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Songs

[God So Loved](#) CCLI#6138599

[Trust in You](#) CCLI#7025522

Bible Reading

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

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.'" ⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here." ¹⁰ For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." ¹² Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Message

I once baptised a person in this church, a mature adult, and after he was baptised he later said to me: "When does it start...?" I said what...? He said, "The pain." What...? He said, "You know, the struggle."

Where did he get THAT idea from?

Well, Jesus didn't have such a pleasant time after His baptism did He? I mean, the Holy Spirit threw Him into the desert where He went without food for 40 days, and was tempted by the devil.

Maybe he thought his baptism had something to do with Jesus' baptism?

We are also told in Act 9:15-19 that apostle Paul got the same deal from Jesus when HE was baptised. Jesus told the man who baptised Paul (Ananias), ***¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.***

The Bible says that the temptations that Jesus faced were really a TESTING of His faith...

In Deuteronomy 13:3b we read: ***The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.***

Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8 to answer the first temptation. We read verses 2 and 3...

²Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

God is not tempting Jesus to fail! God is actually putting Jesus' heart to the test ... TO STRENGTHEN HIM for the path of life that God has planned for him in the future!

It's like a driving instructor. Their job is NOT to deliberately try to flunk the learning driver. It's their job to discover that they CAN drive, the way they ought to!

When someone LIKES you. THAT'S what they are on about!

But when someone DOESN'T like you, they are looking to cause you to FAIL!

When the evil one was tempting Jesus, he sounded SO SWEET!

- Jesus, you are SO hungry. Turn a couple of these stones into bread. Come on, You know that You will one day feed 5,000 people with a couple fish and five loaves of bread!
- Hey, and what's wrong with the Lord of lords and the King of kings assuming control over the kingdoms of the world? Isn't THAT what will happen at the end of time anyway!
- And surely there's nothing wrong with believing the Bible: that the angels would protect You! Don't You believe what the Bible says!

But just like the devil trapped Eve at the beginning of time, "Come on, there's nothing wrong with eating that fruit! ... OK God said, 'Don't' but... If you eat it, you can be like God. Surely God wants you to be like Him!"

But that's actually not true...

God made us as human beings, in His image sure, but our life as human beings is to be Godly human beings who obey God! Not to imagine that we are like God Himself!

In the second temptation, the devil takes Jesus to a high place, as though Jesus could be OVER all the kingdoms of the earth. But this was not the will of God. The truth is Jesus ***did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself and became a ... human!*** Philipians 2:7

Equality with God is not a thing to be grasped! We were created to be human beings, not equal with God! We were created to live as humans in obedience with God. And having become a human being, this is exactly what Jesus does!

The risen Lord Jesus does not fill us with His Spirit and His resurrection life to make us SUPER humans! He fills us so that we might be truly human! Full of His Spirit. Following the will of God.

So what about when WE are tempted?

In a way, your whole life is a testing: Hey, is God there...? No He isn't! Yes He is! No He isn't! Did you see God! Yes I did! No I didn't!

- We are constantly looking at God's Word – it's the only sure and clear truth that we have about God!
- We are constantly talking to Him – that's what a good Father and His children do.
- AND we constantly find ourselves wondering about whether God really IS in our lives for our good!

God leads us into this wondering ... for our strengthening! For our GOOD.

But the evil one uses this same wondering against us!

When someone likes you, as God does, it is always for your good.

When someone doesn't like you, like the devil, then it is so that you might fail!

If I might draw us back to our baptisms: our baptisms tie us to the victory that JESUS had when He was tempted. If you relied on tallying the victories that I have had over the devil, you might be waiting a while! MY story is that I'm now tied to Jesus and HIS victory over the devil. Jesus was completely obedient to God, AND IN OUR BAPTISM we are tied to HIS obedience.

Having been completely given life by being tied to Jesus, don't be surprised that your journey of obedience to God will also take you through the cleansing that the fire of suffering brings. We are told this in Romans 8:16,17

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Our human flesh would like God to always do we WE want Him to do. But He simply wants us to talk to Him and to trust Him.

When Jesus was on the cross, the people called out, ***If you are the Son of God, jump down from the cross! Save yourself, then we will believe in You.*** Like the devil: ***Jump down from the top of the Temple and God's angels will save you!*** But Jesus did not come down for the cross. The angels did not save Him from hurting His feet. They did not save Him from His agonizing death. He simply did God's will and it was good for us! Forever.

The devil will tempt us. But we can resist him. James 4:7-8 says,

7 Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Someone once reminded me that sheep in the outback are like this. They all need water, but sometimes they stray too far from where they knew there was water. They think that the grass is greener over there...! And they wander too far away, and they perish...

The closer they are to the water, the more secure their life is.

The devil calls us to leave the security of God's loving ways – His patient, forbearing, loving ways. He tries to change our mind about what is good. But trying all he can do. He can woo me, but he can't make me! So we do well staying near to God and His loving ways. Then the wooing of the devil will begin to smell like what it really is: not something desirable and good, but something rotten and dying.

Yes you will be tested, but Jesus has been tested before you, and you have been drawn into His results. Amen.

Song

[Desert Song](#) CCLI#5060793

Confession and Absolution

Dear heavenly Father,
You have called us into the baptised life...
We often treat it like it was a ticket to heaven...
This is not what You intend. We are sorry. Please forgive us.
In our baptism You have tied us to the death and resurrection-life of Jesus...
We have forgotten what a gift that is for us.
We have forgotten that each day You have dealt with our failings, and each day You raise us to new life.
We have lived like we depend on what WE desire. This is sin. Please forgive us.
Please create in us a clean heart, and renew in us a right spirit.
In Jesus' name. Amen

Our heavenly Father HAS had mercy on us! He has sent His own Son to die for us. His Word is true, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I therefore declare: Your sin is forgiven! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers

Prayer points to ponder:

- Thank you Jesus that you draw us close to you. Help us to know when Satan is trying to disarm us and to acknowledge when we need your help. Thankyou for the gift of redemption through our baptism and that when we turn back to you, you will always forgive and accept us, despite our weakness and failings.
- We ask for your continued wisdom and guidance on our Call process, for our Call Committee and for the Pastor you are preparing to call to Our Saviour.
- We pray for your comfort, help and healing to those suffering with COVID or those who may be isolated from others because of COVID. Reassure them of your presence in their lives and your unending love.
- Be with those struggling with loneliness, depression, financial or health concerns. We pray especially for people in our own community. Remind them of your unending love and care for them and prompt each of us to reach out to those who need our support and friendship.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favour, and give you peace. Amen.

Song

Sing Wherever I Go CCLI#7138601