

This Is Jesus Msg 3
 Jesus Meets Understands My Temptations
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church
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Welcome once again to ERBC.

I'm Rick I'm one of the pastors here and **as I'm welcoming those of you who are here in the Worship Center** I also want to welcome those who are **watching online**, whether that's through **live-stream on our website**, or through **Facebook Live**, or on our **YouTube Page**, or **via the archived feed**.

However you're joining us I'm excited that you're here with us as we continue our **"This is Jesus"** teaching series.

In this series **we've been focusing on the question** you heard asked during that rollin which is . . . the same question that Jesus asked His disciples two thousand years ago . . .

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Who do you say that Jesus is?

So far in our series we've seen that Jesus. . .

- Forgives our Sins
- Meets our Needs

This morning we'll see that he also . . .

Understands Our Temptations

Before we get into our study. . .

We want to recognize that **these are indeed extraordinary times**

Yesterday our president issued a **declaration of National Emergency** to fight the Coronavirus and he has asked the tomorrow be a **National Day of Prayer**

The good news is **we don't have to wait** we can pray right now.

Let's pray together. . .

Father we're thankful to be part of a country that throughout its history has looked to you for strength and protection in times like these.

With so much uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus around the world, people are afraid.

Now is the time for Christians to be strong and courageous, knowing that you Almighty God are with us.

Your Word tells us to cast our cares upon You, because You cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

And we do that now.

We need to pray for those who are sick, and their families, and others who care for them.

We pray for those who are immune-compromised

For those who are living in fear and anxiousness,

We pray for the **most vulnerable** among us . . .

We think of our **elderly and shut-in**, for those who in many ways were already living in isolation, and **now with recommendations that others not visit them** and that they not dine with others, we pray for comfort and encouragement and hope.

For the professionals who are providing medical care, and the **first responders**.

At a time when for many of us the thing that makes most sense is to hunker down, and wait this out, we know many stand on the front lines and the nature of their work doesn't allow them to retreat.

For those researchers working on treatments and a vaccine for COVID-19, we pray for wisdom and success.

We pray for teachers and students as they navigate the new world of distance-learning

We pray for families who are impacted by school and childcare closures

We pray for those whose financial well-being is threatened because their workplaces are shut down

We pray for wisdom and courage for our leaders as they make vital decisions that impact each of our lives.

We pray that the truth that you are able to work all things together for good would be seen here, as many men and women, boys and girls would turn to you the unchangeable God and discover your love and grace and power and Hope, IJN amen.

Continuing our series. . .

This is Jesus . . .

Looking at the fact that Jesus understands our temptations.

Let's start off with a definition of our terms . . .

What Is A Temptation?

There are many definitions.

Let's start with a simple one.

What is temptation?

Anything that promises **SATISFACTION**
at the cost of **OBEDIENCE** to God

Temptation is anything that promises satisfaction; ***"You're going to like this; it will make you feel good; its going to make your life more meaningful."***

It's anything that promises satisfaction at the cost of obedience to God.

What happens, scientist actually will tell us is, that when you give in to whatever the temptation is, oftentimes your **brain releases a little chemical called dopamine.**

It gives you a hit,

It gives you a buzz,

It gives you a thrill.

You want it, you make the purchase.

You want to look, you take a look.

You want to say it, because it's going to feel good to say and so you say it.

Your brain rewards you for it with a little bit of dopamine and there's the thrill, there's the buzz, there's the high, there's the moment, there's "I'm satisfied" followed by

"I shouldn't have done that",

"I feel bad about that", the guilt, the regret and the shame.

Many of you know that cycle.

What is temptation?

It's anything that promises satisfaction, at the cost of obedience to God.

We'll see that in just a moment as we look at the temptation that the devil offered to Jesus

We see it all the time in the temptations that the devil offers to us.

Before we look at that . . .

I want us to start by **debunking a common misconception** that's out there about Jesus.

This misconception says that **because Jesus is God, because he's perfect, because he's never sinned.** . . .

That **Jesus just can't identify with everything** that I have to go through.

I mean, Jesus has just has never faced the **same challenges**, the **same trials**, the **same problems** that you and I have.

In other words, **Jesus just doesn't understand.**

I want you to know tonight that there's nothing that could be further from the truth.

In fact, that verse in the middle of the front page of your notes from **Hebrews 4 tells us why Jesus does, in fact, understand.**

Hebrews 4:15 says . . .

"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin." Hebrews 4:15

We'll see that as we look at Luke chapter 4

If you'll open your Bible or your Bible app to Luke 4 verses 1-13

The Temptation Of Jesus

(Luke 4:1-13)

There we find an incredible story of Jesus fighting off temptation.

At this point in his life, Jesus is 30 years old.

He was just baptized a few days before.

He's about to start his public ministry.

So, after He's baptized **He goes off into the wilderness to fast and pray** for 40 days.

Now, keep in mind, we are in the midst of an **Easter fast** here at the ERBC.

Many of you are participating in our Easter fast and **for most of us that means giving up one thing** between now and Easter.

The idea is that every time we think about that thing, instead of indulging we're stopping to pray.

If you want more information about the **Easter fast there's a flyer** in your program. What I want you to see here is that Jesus, **His fast is a lot more intensive** than what we're doing.

He's **not giving up one thing**, He's giving up everything.

He's **not eating any solid foods** for 40 days and 40 nights.

So, He's really weak and this is where He's at when He's tempted.

So look in your notes and you're gonna find this story again in the Gospel of Luke.

Follow along in your notes as I read it.

Beginning of verse one of Luke four, it says then

"Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days.

The first thing I want you to see - - **Who is it that tempted Jesus?**

The devil and this is the point I want to make here, is that God never tempts you.

God is not the one who sends temptations in your life.

He doesn't want to trip you up.

The temptations that you have in your life, don't come from God.

Then it continues.

Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry." Luke 4:1-2

"Then the devil said to him,

Again, worth noting that . . .

The devil came to tempt Jesus when He was hungry, when He was weak, when He was vulnerable.

Don't miss this.

That's exactly the same for our lives as well.

That's when Satan brings those temptations into your life.

Have you ever wondered why those temptations that you struggle with all come into your life when you're not ready for them?

When you're most weak?

It's not an accident.

Satan knows when you're weak and that's when he's going to attack.

So, continuing.

"Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.' But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" Luke 4:3-4

"Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 'I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,' the devil said, 'because they are mine to give to anyone I please.'" Luke 4:5-6

"I will give it all to you if you will worship me.' Jesus replied, 'The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" Luke 4:7-8

"Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, 'If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you.'"

Luke 4:9-10

"And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.' Jesus responded, 'The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" Luke 4:11-12

"When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came."
Luke 4:13

Don't miss those words. . . .

Until the next opportunity came.

Somebody once said. . .

"Temptation is SEASONAL but it never CEASES."

There will always be a next time.

Which is why we need to stay on guard.

I want us to look today at . . .

How To Fight Temptation

Three things we can do . . .

Admit that I am Tempted**Admit it to God – Admit it to someone else.**

Remember - **It's not a sin to be tempted**

We know that, because **Jesus was tempted**, and **Jesus never sinned**

The **sin is not**, in being tempted

The **sin happens** when you give in.

Two of the biggest mistakes we can make when it comes to temptations is to **Deny that it's happening** or to say that **it could never happen to me.**

1 Corinthians 10 provides word of warning.

It says . . .

"If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience." 1 Corinthians 10:12

Admit you're being tempted

Admit it to God – Admit it to someone else.

And remember. . .

When you admit this to God, you're not telling him anything he doesn't know.

It's not like he's surprised, ***"Oh, really? I had no idea."***

No, **you're agreeing with God.**

Here's what you're doing.

When you admit that you're tempted, you're inviting God's power into your life.

Admit you're being tempted

And then second . . .

Understand that I am in a SPIRITUAL BATTLE

A lot of these battles that we face, we would say they're physical issues.

Certainly, when it comes to the CORONAVIRUS we would say that this is a physical, or a medical problem.

But the reality is that we are in a battle with a spiritual enemy who is looking for opportunity to exploit any physical thing he can and use it to his advantage.

We're in a real battle.

With a real enemy.

Galatians 5 talks about the conflict between the flesh and the spirit.

The Apostle Paul writes. . .

"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want." Galatians 5:16-17

We are in a **real battle**, with a **real enemy** who **really does want to trip us up.**

And he's clever.

In the passage we read from Luke that describes the devil tempting Jesus, **did you notice how the enemy used scripture** to tempt Jesus . . .

Satan quoted or in some cases misquoted scripture.

Did you know that Satan knows the Bible?

And **with a little bit of creative editing** he can twist it to say all kinds of things.

He did it back in Genesis 3, in the first temptation, when he approached the woman and **slightly twisted God's words** in order to get her to eat the forbidden fruit - - - and he **continues to do it today.**

It's **amazing what you can do with a little bit of creative editing**

One of my favorite examples of that was put together by the creative team at **Central Christian Church in Las Vegas.**

They took what is arguably **one of the best feel-good movies of the 90's**

They **didn't change any of the video footage** or even the original dialog,

But **just by adding a voice-over**, and **some different background music**, and a **little bit of creative editing**, they were able to create a trailer that promotes a movie that promotes a totally different message.

Take a look at what I'm talking about. . .

Forrest Gump – Evil Is As Evil Does

It's amazing what a little editing can do.

And believe me, the enemy that we do battle with has many more weapons in his arsenal than just Pro Tools, and Final Cut Pro.

That's why the Bible again and again challenges us to take advantage of our most powerful weapon which is the Word of God.

Hebrews 4 says. . .

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Heb. 4:12

The psalmist tells us that God's Word is the key to winning the battle against temptation.

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11

How did Jesus handle temptation?

He **RESISTED IT**

He **USED THE WEAPONS GOD PROVIDES**

And ultimately **He Won The Battle**

And we can too, but it begins by understanding that we are in a battle.

A real spiritual battle.

And there are some common sense things we can do to not be defeated.

Things like

**Avoid the PEOPLE and PLACES
that TEMPT me**

I don't know what the people and places are for you

But there's an old saying

"If you don't want to get stung, stay away from bees."

Avoid the PEOPLE and PLACES

And that might mean there are certain people you need to disassociate with.

"Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Corinthians 15:33

There may be people in your life, and maybe your desire is to lift them up, but you've been around them long enough to know that that isn't happening, and instead of you lifting them up, they pull you down.

Avoid the people and places that tempt you

And then remember. . .

What you FEED GROWS

What you STARVE DIES

This is practical right?

Whatever you feed grows stronger and bigger.

Whatever you starve, grows weaker and eventually dies.

For example, **if you feed yourself a lot, what's going to happen?**

You're going to grow.

If you starve yourself, work with me, what are you going to do?

You're going to die.

If you feed your plant at home, what your plant's going to do?

Live and grow.

If you starve your plant it's going to die

Unless you bring your plant to our house, and then whatever we do to it, it will die.

That's just kind of how it works.

If you feed your fleshly nature, what happens?

Your **desires to sin grow.**

If you **starve your fleshly nature, it starts to die.**

If you **feed your Spirit, your Spirit grows stronger.**

Your intimacy with God increases, and this power in you to overcome the desires of the flesh increases as well.

What you feed grows, and what you starve dies.

So instead of just thinking "No, no, no, no, no."

Lean-in to God

Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

And then a third thing you can do to fight temptation. . .

Focus on GOD not the TEMPTATION

To say that we are living in a confusing and frightening time is an understatement.

We see the television news reports or scroll through our news feeds and we are overwhelmed with information – **sometimes conflicting information** – about the corona virus.

Of course, **living in frightening times is not a temptation**, it's just our circumstance, but **there are some temptations involved in dealing** with this particular circumstance.

Let's examine this through the lens of a Bible story you are probably familiar with.

It's found in Matthew 14.

Immediately after Jesus had fed the 5000 which we looked at last week, Jesus told his disciples to get back in the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side of the lake.

As they did, a wind came up, the seas became rough, and the boat was battered by the waves.

Then they saw a figure walking toward them on the water.

They became terrified, thinking it was a ghost.

Jesus called out to them, Don't be afraid, It's me.

Peter said, "Jesus, if it really is You command me to come to You on the water."

Jesus said, "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus.

Can you imagine what a sight that must have been to see?

But **then the text tells us that Peter looked around**, he saw the wind whipping the waves into a frenzy, **He became frightened**, and began to sink so he cried out "**Lord, save me.**"

Jesus reached out his hand, took hold of Peter and said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

They got into the boat and the wind stopped.

It's **easy to be critical of Peter in this story**, but let's remember – he is the only person who knows what it's like to walk on water.

Peter had faith - - enough faith to get out of the boat

But then focusing on the circumstances around him, tempted him to doubt the One who had called him out of the boat.

For our purposes, let's **think of the wind whipped waves** as the Corona Virus.

It's frightening.

But **Jesus has called us to come**, to follow Him in the midst of these stormy circumstances.

Like Peter, when our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we successfully navigate the temptations around us, and when we take our eyes off of Jesus, we sink.

What temptations might we be facing right now?

The Temptation To Fear

The Bible is full of commands to not be afraid.

2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that God has not given us a spirit of fear.

Fear is not a fruit of the Spirit.

Now I'm **not telling you not to be wise**, but we **don't need to be afraid**.

God is in control.

He knows the **number of hairs on our heads** and the **number of days of our life**.

Nothing can touch us outside of His sovereign control.

John Paton, was a **19th century Scottish missionary** to the **New Hebrides islands of the South Pacific**.

His life reads a little like an Indiana Jones story as he ministered to cannibals, and faced death on numerous occasions.

Listen to what he wrote:

"I realized that I was immortal till my Master's work was done. The assurance came to me, as if a voice out of heaven had spoken, that not a musket would be fired to wound us, not a club prevail to strike us, nor a spear leave the hand in which it was held vibrating to be thrown, not an arrow leave the bow, or a killing stone the fingers, without the permission of Jesus Christ, whose is all the power in Heaven and on Earth."

The same is true for us.

We are immortal until our Master's work is done.

Now again, **I'm not saying we should be foolish.**

We should use the brains God gave us.

We should wash our hands, disinfect surfaces, and stay away from others if we are sick.
But we **don't need to be afraid**, but instead focus on God who is in control of all things.

A second temptation we might face is . . .

2. The temptation to fill our minds with things that are not helpful.

Every newscast, every news feed, is full of stories about the corona virus.

There is a **lot of information out there, some of it true, some of it speculation, and some of it patently false.**

And, **with the way our news feeds work**, when you click on something, you tend to get more stories about that subject.

So if you are clicking on stories about the Corona virus, your feed will be filled with more stories about the corona virus until you think that it is the only thing that is going on in the world.

It's **good for us to be informed**.

It is **not good for us to be obsessed**.

This is especially important if we are already battling with fear.

Philippians 4:8...

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” Philippians 4:8

So let me ask you . . .

What are we filling our minds with?

What are you reaching for first thing each morning?

The T.V. remote to turn on the news, your phone to scroll through the news updates, or your Bible.

Are we filling our minds with uncertainty, or are we filling our minds with the words of the One who knows all things?

A third temptation that we might face at times like this is . . .

3. The temptation to be unloving.

Our daughter Kelcie went to a restaurant near us this week to pick up some sushi.

While she was there, she asked the manager how she was doing.

The woman replied, ***“Not good. People don't want our food because we are Asian.”***

You have probably heard other stories like this.

Businesses and individuals being targeted because of their ethnicity.

Friends, **this is not how we are to live as followers of Jesus.**

And **not just as it relates to this virus.**

As disciples of Jesus, we **are to act in love toward all people at all times**, no matter what.

This is a time when the church can make an impact on our communities by the **way we live** and by the **way we love**.

Some practical things we can do:

- **We can check on and shop for our elderly neighbors** who might be afraid to go to the store because of their age or health.

- **We can smile and greet others in a friendly way** in spite of social-distancing

- **We can avoid a hoarding mentality**, only looking out for ourselves.

- We can share what we have.

1 John 3:16 - 17 says,

“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” 1 John 3:16 - 17

Today we might translate that, **“Whoever has the world's toilet paper, or cleaning supplies, or hand sanitizer...”**

1 John 3:18 goes on to say,

“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.” 1 John 3:18

When we focus on God, and on what He has done for us, it should motivate us to extraordinary acts of love toward those around us.

Peter succumbed to doubt when he took his eyes off of Jesus, and **focused on the circumstances** around him.

In a like manner, **if we don't keep our focus on the God who calls us to follow Him** through these particular circumstances in our lives, **we too will succumb to temptation.**

Just before Jesus' arrest, He went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

He took Peter, James, and John with Him and asked them to

"Remain and keep watch." Matthew 26:38

Jesus stepped away from his disciples and began to pray.

When He returned, He found the disciples sleeping.

Listen to Jesus' words to them,

"So you men could not keep watch with me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation."

We need to be watching and praying.

Focusing on God and staying alert to His leading is how we will navigate the temptations facing us today.

Our memory verse for this week comes from 1 Corinthians 10...

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." 1 Corinthians 10:13

The promise is that **when we are tempted, God will provide a way out.**

We don't have to be fearful, we can focus on the God who loves us and is in control of our lives.

We don't have to fill our minds with things that cause anxiety and worry, we can **fill our minds with the truth of God's Word.**

(One way to do this is to start your day off with our Easter devotions.)

We don't have to operate out of prejudice or **panic** or **self-preservation.**

We can remind ourselves of the one who gave up everything for us, and we can follow his example.

Hebrews 12:1 encourages us to

"Run with endurance the race that is set before us. . .

Verses 2 & 3 tell us how we can do that

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

He will help us find the way of escape from any temptation.

Let's pray together. . .