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The Sermon

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Luke 4:5-13

"The War Escalates"

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TRANSCRIPT

All right, we're in Luke chapter 4, and today we're going to be looking specifically at verses 13-18, but I'm going to begin reading in verse 1. I want to set the whole context for us on this: "The temptation of Christ in the wilderness." And the title of this message is, "The War Escalates."

Beginning in verse 1, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone."'

"And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'

"And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down

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from here; for it is written, "He will command His angels concerning You to guard You," and, "On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone." And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time."

Oh, he'll be back. He'll be back at another opportune time. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is the passage that we will be looking at today, and by Your Holy Spirit You had it inspired through the working of Luke and it is preserved for us down through the centuries. And so as we look into this together, we pray that You will shine light into our minds that we will understand what is taking place here, and that You will teach us correctly, and that You will impact our lives through this account. So, we are Your children, we are in need of Your instruction, so we ask now that You would speak through pages of Scripture to our hearts, to our minds, to direct our lives, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses, we see the ongoing spiritual warfare between Jesus and the devil, and Jesus has already repelled every temptation that's been hurdled at him for forty days and for forty nights, but the devil will not give up. And here in what I have just read, he actually accelerates his attack with an even greater intensity, nothing is being held back. The devil is using all of the artillery of hell to assault the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God-man under attack at this moment.

If Satan can entice Jesus to sin, then Jesus will be unqualified to be our Savior, to go to the cross, to die in our place. If Satan can seduce Jesus to sin, we're all doomed and damned, we have no hope. If the devil can bring down Christ, then God will have lost the cosmic battle and Satan will have won. So in a real sense, everything is at stake here, everything that is important to you and me – our salvation, the person of Christ, the glory of God. It's all on the table right now.

Now, last time we began looking at the temptation of Christ and we noted the first four verses, so I'm going to walk us back through these first four verses, and my temptation is not to take too long and just re-preach last Sunday's sermon, I'm not going to do that. But we noted last time in the first two verses, "The war begun. The war begun." As soon as Jesus began His public ministry, He met the devil head-on.

There's something for us to learn here, that whenever we take right steps in the right direction in the will of God, we can expect to meet the devil head-on, he's not going to just leave us alone, and that is certainly the case here. Jesus has come back from His baptism in the River Jordan. The Spirit of God has anointed Him, the voice from heaven has affirmed Him, and now as He comes, He meets the devil head-on.

So, in verse 1, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit," - yes, Jesus had to be filled with the Holy Spirit in His humanity, in His sinless humanity, just like you and I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in our sinful humanity. And so Jesus is now being empowered by the Spirit of God in His humanity - "and He returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness." This is one of the marks of being filled with the Spirit, that the Spirit of God now begins to govern your life and to guide your life and to direct your life into the path that God has chosen for you. And that is exactly what is taking place here. And so the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, that barren, bleak, forsaken place where no one could live. It is a desert-like wilderness. But He is being led here by the Spirit in order to meet the devil head-on.

And so we read in verse 2 that "Jesus was there for forty days." It's an extended time of prayer and fasting and meditation, and all of this is in preparation for Him to step out of this wilderness time and, literally, to begin His preaching ministry and performing miracles and showing kindness and discipling. It's all about to start, and so He needs His private time alone with the Father, to pray to the Father, to be stored up with spiritual strengths and vitality, again, in His humanity.

We read that "for forty days He was being tempted by the devil," for the entirety of the forty days. Day and night, day and night, the devil was assaulting the Lord Jesus Christ, luring Him, seducing Him, enticing Him, doing everything he possibly can to gain a crack in His character and to draw Him into sin and just derail the train before it even comes out of the station.

And we read, "and He ate nothing." Jesus, during those days, He was fasting. He denied Himself bodily pleasures so that He could be myopically focused upon His relationship with the Father. Nothing else is going on during this time. "And when they had ended," - when the forty days had ended - "He became hungry." You and I cannot even imagine the hunger that our Lord felt as He's famished and suffering severe hunger pangs within Him. Jesus is now pushed to the very limit that a person could even live, going forty days without food. Jesus is now weakened. He's empty. He's starving. He's drained. He's weary. He's tired. He's vulnerable. Jesus is like a heavyweight boxer on the ropes, battered and beaten, but He's still standing. And Jesus will not give in, and Jesus will not give up. He will not go down.

Jesus is so resilient. He is so strong-willed in the power of the Holy Spirit that He will not give into the temptations that are being hurdled at Him. And He stands as Exhibit A for you and me here today, that we too must be resilient to obey the word of God and to put up a buttress against every temptation that would seek to lure us into sin. And none of us can use the excuse, "Well, I was up all night," or, "I was tired," or, "I missed a meal," or, "I'm just not feeling well today," and use that as a lame excuse for falling into sin as a result of a temptation. No. Jesus is Exhibit A. He is a mighty champion, and He will not go down. He presses on, just like you and I must press on.

And so this brings us now to verse 3, "The wickedness, unleashed." And so now as Jesus is the weakest, the devil seizes the moment and comes at Him with the last three temptations that are like his secret weapons. Jesus is

more vulnerable now than on Day One of the fast or Day Two or Day Three. He's gone forty days.

And so we see, beginning in verse 3, we see the temptation to compromise His priorities. We looked at that last week, just to remind you. In verse 3, "And the devil said to Him," - the devil spoke directly to Him with an audible voice - 'If You are the Son of God,' - that could be translated, "Since You are the Son of God." This is so subtle. This is so seductive. He begins with a theological truth: the deity of Jesus Christ. This is the cornerstone of Christianity. "Jesus is Lord," is what the early church would say when they would greet one another. And the devil begins by being doctrinally orthodox here. He begins by establishing this truth, of all truth, that "You are the Son of God." - 'then tell this stone to become bread.'"

Now, when we first read this temptation, we think to ourselves, "So what is the temptation? Where is the temptation? Jesus Himself taught us to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It's the will of God that we would have daily bread to sustain us so that we can serve the Lord. What is the temptation here?" And in 1 Timothy 4, Paul will tell Timothy that "God has given to us all things richly to enjoy." Among those would be bread and physical food.

So, what is the temptation? This is so subtle. The devil is so shrewd as he can just slip a temptation through the crevice, through the crack, through a keyhole and plant that into the mind to then begin to pull and to lure. Well, the temptation is very simply this: it is the seduction to re-prioritize things in your life, to prioritize your physical needs over your spiritual needs. It is the temptation to place greater importance upon feeding your stomach than feeding your soul.

It is so subtle how the devil can take something even that's good but then cause the priorities to be inverted such that now you would be living simply for that which is temporal and not eternal. And so the temptation is to live for the earthly and not for the heavenly. That's the temptation here. That's the hook with the bait on it that's being cast in front of the Lord.

And verse 4 says, "And Jesus answered Him." The word "And" I pointed out to is very important because it indicates kind of a rapid-fire succession, that what the devil said, those words are no more in the air than Jesus is already countering them and resisting them. I mean, you cannot let temptation just linger in your mind and roll it over in your mind and let it seep down into your heart. It has to be resisted immediately and not allowed to establish a **beach-hold** in our life.

And so verse 4, "And Jesus answered him." Jesus saw right through it. He saw what you and I have to take maybe 10 or 15 looks at what the devil said to detect what the evil lure was. But Jesus immediately saw right through it. And again, this is in His humanity because He is filled with the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah 11:2, it said that the Messiah when He comes that the Spirit would enable Him to have understanding and insight and wisdom and discernment, just like you need such insight as you live your life.

"And so Jesus answered him," - He saw it for what it was and said - 'It is written.'" And when He says it's written, He's obviously referring to the word of God. He's referring, and He will quote Deuteronomy 8:3, and that tells us how well Jesus knew the word of God, that He could be out here in the middle of the desert in a barren land without a library, without tools, and have immediate recall of Scripture and just the right Scripture. "He says, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone."'"

I want you to know that it is not just the quoting of Scripture that makes temptation to be repelled. Jesus is doing more than just saying the words. He is obeying this verse. He is embracing this verse. He is owning this verse. He is walking in this verse. Just like you and I, we can have a headful of Bible knowledge but be very weak and spiritual warfare. No, Jesus is making the decisive decision here to obey this text, Deuteronomy 8:3, and as He quotes it, it is to maintain His priorities of the spiritual over the physical, of the heavenly over the earthly. Matthew's account of this adds the rest of Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." But Jesus here, with

strength of resolve and strength of will, stands against the devil and resists the devil and resists this temptation armed with the word of God.

The only, the only chance that you and I have to resist temptation and to resist the devil is in the spiritual tools that God has given to us. These are invincible weapons. It is the word of God and the Spirit of God. And that is what Jesus is operating in here. The word of God, the Spirit of God – those two always work together in tandem. Wherever the Spirit of God is at work, He is working through His word. And for the word to have powerful affect in our life, the Holy Spirit must be powerfully, dynamically at work within us.

And so in our lives we must be those who are constantly feeding upon the word of God. You feed your body every day food. You feed your body every day multiple times throughout the day. By way of parallel, so it should be with our soul. We should be feasting on the word of God every day of our lives, in fact, multiple times throughout the day. Psalm 19:10 says that "every word of God is sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb."

Listen, when we are in the word of God, it's not like taking bad medicine that just tastes awful that we have to take in order to get well. No, the word of God, it's almost like dessert. I mean, it is meat for our soul, but it is so sweet. Psalm 119:103, "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Jeremiah 15:16, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart."

Now listen, you will never be any happier in your entire life than when the word of God is filling and flooding your heart. You know that? You will never be filled with greater delight than when the word of God is making entrance into your life and you are feasting on it, you are eating it, you are chewing on it, you are swallowing it, you are digesting it, and it begins to permeate the entirety of your mind and your heart and every aspect of your

life. And so Jesus has repelled the devil, and so you and I must put up a firm resistance against temptation.

Well, this now leads to verse 5 and this now is new territory for us. We didn't make it past verse 4, last Lord's Day. But this is the second of the last three temptations, beginning in verse 5, and I want to call it, "The temptation to compromise His worship. The temptation to compromise His worship."

So, in verse 5 we read, "And he let Him up." Please note, it starts with "And," and that too indicates the rapid-fire with which the devil is coming at Him. It's almost like - I used to get in a batting cage and there would be baseballs coming at me, and they're coming, like, every three seconds, they're coming every four seconds. You've got to be ready to swing that bat. Well, that's the way these temptations are coming at the Lord Jesus Christ in staccato fashion.

Verse 5, "And he" - the devil - "led Him up." We know to where. In Matthew's account, Matthew 4:8, "up to the top of a high mountain." So Jesus has been in the base, or the valley, of this wilderness, so the devil assumes that he can gain the upper hand if we change location. And so the devil leads him up to the top of this very high mountain. I would assume that they actually walked up, that there's nothing miraculous going on here, that the devil helps Him scale up to the top of the mountain. And how interesting, in verse 1 it says He's led by the Spirit; now verse 5, He's being led by the devil. And it tells us it's not a sin to be led by the devil. Jesus is being led by the devil here. The sin would be to give in to the temptation. It's not a sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted and yet without sin.

And so, "The devil led Him up" - and we read - "and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." Now, there's two ways to understand that. Either the devil had supernatural powers and could cause all of the world empires to visually pass before the eyes of the Lord, or that as he stood on this mountain top and has a 360 panorama vista view, they represent all of the kingdoms of the world. And I take it to be the second of

those two, that the devil shows Him as far as the eye can see in every direction and everything that lies beyond that in a moment of time.

Verse 6, "And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.'" I think this is a legitimate offer. The devil is the ruler of this world. In John 12:31, John 14:30, John 16:11 is driving that nail into the board three times that the devil is "the ruler of this world." And in 2 Corinthians 4:4 he's called "the god of this world," small "g." And in Ephesians 2:2, he is "the prince of the power of the air."

And so a part of the curse, all this under the sovereignty of God, that the kingdoms of this world that once were given to Adam to be His steward and to oversee the entire planet, that when Adam sinned, he was cursed. And Eve was cursed, pain in childbearing. Adam was cursed, he would have to work by the sweat of his brow, and that all of the planet that was under the governance of Adam has now been passed over the Satan. And Satan has turned this world and much into a wilderness, and so he says, "I will give you all this domain," meaning the right to rule the world. And when he says "world," he's referring to this world's system that is anti-god and anti-Christ and anti-truth and anti-family. "I will give you all this domain and its glory," - all the power and the prestige that comes with it - "for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."

The day is coming at the end of this age when this offer will be made again and the devil will give the kingdoms of this world to a figure known as the Antichrist, and there will be one dominant man who will rise to power over a confederation of ten alliances and have global control of economy and food and resources. No, someone will take the devil up on this offer and be extraordinarily enabled to carry this off for a moment in time. But here he says, "Therefore," - verse 7, I mean, what an offer has just been made to the Lord - "I'll give it all to you, far as Your eye can see and beyond."

Verse 7, "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours. Just bow Your knee just one time. Just sing my praises just one time. Just give

me the glory just one time." The devil has always craved to be worshiped. He was Lucifer and he desired to exalt his throne above the throne of God or to raise himself above the throne of God, that he would become the object of worship in heaven from the angels. He's always craved to be worshiped, he wants to be like God. And then when he's cast down here on the earth, he is the power of darkness behind every cult and behind every false religion and behind every liberal church that denies the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and denies the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone. The devil is behind it all, receiving worship.

But this is the biggest catch of all, "to have the Son of God worship me, how that would inflict pain into the Father and drive a wedge between the Father and the Son. Just one act of worship and it will all be Yours." And you want to know how subtle this is? Obviously, it's blatantly wrong. "You shall have no other gods before Me." But God has already promised His Son that "I'll give You the whole world." Psalm 2:8, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance."

What this temptation is is to bypass the cross and to inherit all of the kingdoms of this world without having to go through the suffering of Calvary. It is to get out ahead of God and not wait on God's perfect timing. It is to divert Christ from the cross. "I'm giving you the offer right now. In fact, it's the will of God. It's the will of Your Father. Your Father wants to give You all the kingdoms of this world. I will give you all of the kingdoms of this world." You hear how subtle this is? "It's just You won't have to pay the price. You won't have to suffer on the cross. It's the easy way out. We can just close the deal right now. Just give me the glory and it's all Yours."

So the temptation – listen to this, it's going to sound so familiar – is that the end justifies the means. The end is the same: "You'll have the kingdoms of the world. Your Father wants to give You the kingdoms of the world. I want to give You the kingdoms of the world." The means will be two different paths: "You go Your Father's way and it will cost You Your life at the cross, the shedding of Your blood. You go my way, it's the path of least resistance. It's pragmatism. It's so much easier to do this way, and You can

have it now. You don't have to wait another three years, You can have it now."

And so the temptation is impatience. The temptation is, "You can do God's will Satan's way. What's wrong with that? It's the same will. It's the same outcome. It's just, I've got a short-track for you to accomplish this. He's got a long, arduous path. I don't know why. Go with me, we can wrap this up now."

So, verse 8, "Jesus answered him," – again, Jesus sees right through this smoke screen, He sees it for what it is, He sizes it up immediately – 'It is written,' – and again, his appeal is to the word of God, just like your appeal is to the word of God – 'it is written,' – and He now quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. And again I want to emphasize it's not just saying the words, you've got to believe the words, you've got to obey the words in order for this to thwart the devil. And so in verse 8, He quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 – "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only."""

Seems rather narrow, doesn't it? Yes, the exclusivity of worship given to God alone. Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before Me." Second Kings 17:35, "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down yourselves to them, nor serve them nor sacrifice to them." God is intolerant, God is intolerant of any other god and any other worship being directed in any other direction. He is jealous for His own glory.

And so you and I face temptations like this, as temptations to cut corners in order to get ahead in the world, to gain more of the world. It could be the temptation to shade the truth in a business deal. It could be the temptation to shade the truth on income tax. It could be the temptation to withhold, giving to the Lord by withholding giving to the local church. Whatever that temptation is it's not from God, James 1:13. No, it's from the devil.

There's a third and final temptation in verse 9, and we just can imagine how this is the devil's last gas attempt at the end of these forty days to bring down the Son of God. And so, verse 9, "And he led Him up to Jerusalem." "And." There's no time to catch a breath. There's no time to recalibrate. There's no time to regather yourself. No. When you're in the intensity of spiritual warfare, I mean, you're in a revolving door. And these are coming in fast succession.

And so, verse 9, "And he" - the devil - "led Him" - Jesus - "to Jerusalem." There's a subtlety about this as well. He keeps changing location hoping that a different turf or a different terrain will provide a new point of entrance into the soul of Jesus. He begins in the wilderness, we saw that in verse 3 and in verse 2. And then he goes to a high mountain, we just saw that in verses 5 and 6. And now he leads Him down from the mountain and into Jerusalem, the most religious city on the planet. It's the holy city, it's where the temple is. You're not going to be tempted in church, it'll be outside of church, it'll be outside of Jerusalem. And the place will be packed - the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes. This is Your moment. This is Your opportunity to present Yourself to the nation. And this plan that I've got, it will dazzle everyone, and they're all going to believe in You; trust me."

So, verse 9, "And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple." How he got there, we're not told. He, no doubt, walked up some stairs which may have led to a ladder. I don't know. I've been to Geneva to John Calvin's church, and go up numerous stairwells to get to the rooftop, and I've come out and stood there. And from the top of Calvin's church you can see all of Geneva, as far as the eye can see, the largest lake in all of Europe, Lake Geneva. It's almost an intoxicating sight to just breathe it in and to look at all of this. You feel like you're on top of the world and that the world is in the palm of your hand almost.

Well, the devil is shrewd, and he leads Jesus up to the very pinnacle, the very apex of the temple, "And everyone can see You." And here's the plan: "And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God.'" Again, he starts off with a truth, with a theological truth. The devil knows the Bible, I hope

you understand that, he knows the Bible. And the devil is orthodox: "You are the Son of God." He's better than liberal preachers. He's better than a lot of professors in Bible colleges and seminaries. No, the devil knows exactly who the Lord Jesus Christ is. "Since You are the Son of God," and how appealing is that. building a bridge to Jesus. And any salesman knows that to close a deal, you begin with a common point of agreement. "I mean, we both agree on this. You are the Son of God; You know that, I know that. We've got common ground here," it's what he says.

Verse 9, "Throw Yourself down from here." The word "throw" is used of throwing a missile, throwing a spear. This isn't just "fall off the temple," this isn't "just jump off the temple." This is, "Hurdle Yourself down, let everyone see this. It's going to be spectacular. You're going to dazzle the crowds. They're going to be eating out of the palm of Your hand. Throw yourself down from here, for it is written," – and now the devil quotes the Bible, he quotes Psalm 91:11-12, 'He' – God – 'will command His angels.'"

Now, stop right there. Satan was one of those angels. He knows the angels. He knows their capacities. He knows how they can fly from the palaces of heaven and wing their flight down to the earth. He knows how they can soar through the air. He knows the cherubim have six wings and two with which to fly. Oh, he's very aware that these angels can just come swooping in and darting in in a moment. "He will command His angels concerning You to guard You. He'll protect You. He's going to send His angels, I know He will. I was one of them. They'll be here in a second. You just throw Yourself down."

Dou hear the hiss of the serpent in this? This is multifaceted. This is an attempt to bring about the premature death of Christ before He could ever go to the cross. This is the attempt to circumvent the will of God to prevent Jesus from going to the cross and to die upon the cross. This is inducing Jesus to commit suicide. And more than that, how spectacular this will be, in front of the whole city, not just any city, the holy city, Jerusalem, "and all Your adversaries will be right here – the Pharisees, the scribes, the Sadducees. And when these angels come swooping down and catch You like

a fly ball before You even hit the ground, everyone's going to believe. Everyone is just going to fall down before You and declare that You're the Messiah. Everyone is going to clap and applaud. This will play to the galleys. Just throw Yourself down right now."

And then in verse 11, "and," - and he reads the next verse in Psalm 91, now verse 12 - "on their hands," - on the angels' hands - "they will bear You up so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone. They're going to be there before You're there. They're going to catch You. They're going to prevent You from even touching a stone." That is so deductive in the ear of a preacher, of an evangelist, of an elder, a deacon, a teacher. "This is going to make your ministry. Go for it right now."

Jesus responds in verse 12 with spiritual insight and discernment. He will not fall for the trap. He will not bite the bait. Verse 12, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is said,' - now He doesn't say it is written. It is said actually takes it further: what is written is what is said. What is written is what is preached and is what is taught and what is proclaimed - 'it is said,' - and He now quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." In other words, "You shall not force the hand of God to bail you out of an unwise decision. You shall not act presumptuously, and you shall not act recklessly. You are forcing the hand of God." And again, it is to bring about the premature death of Christ before He could even go to the cross.

Jesus responded with the word of God, just like you and I need to respond with the word of God. This should be a go-to verse many times for us, because sometimes we make decisions, as it were, that forced the hand of God. It could be that you are ready to jump into making a large purchase, maybe buying a house that you know you cannot afford, but you assume, "Well, God will take care of it and God will provide and God will this or that," when, in fact, you're forcing the hand of God to step in where wisdom would say no. It could be that you jump into a marriage, like jumping off of the pinnacle of the temple, without seeking godly counsel and expect now to force the hand of God to make this somehow work. "No, you shall not put the Lord your God to a foolish test."

So, Jesus, the champion, has withstood every blow that the devil could assault Him with. And for us, we see our Savior and our Lord, He's still standing as the smoke is clearing from the battlefield, and He's standing triumphant. And so this leads us to verse 13, number three, "The withdrawal made."

So, verse 13, "When the devil had finished every temptation," - That word "every" has a warehouse of temptations in it. Every temptation, everything that the diabolical mind of the devil could conjure up to throw at the Lord Jesus Christ. When he had emptied his arsenal and there are no more bullets left, there are no more arrows to fire - "he left Him" - he withdrew, he retreated - "until." Do you see the word "until"? "Until." He's not gone permanently, he has simply withdrawn in order to reload. He has simply retreated in order to gather up some more temptations to come back against the Lord Jesus Christ.

But notice, "He left Him until" - last three words - "and opportune time." Those last two words, "opportune time," bear me commenting. It's one word in the original Greek that Luke wrote this with. And you just need to know there are two words in the New Testament in Greek that are used for time. One is *chronos*, and you hear English words "chronology," you hear "chronometer," which is a word for a watch. And *chronos* time is - today is Sunday, February whatever, at 11:51 and 31 seconds. I can read it there, my little friend, the clock. That's *chronos* time. That's not the word that's used here. It doesn't matter if this is Wednesday, Tuesday, Friday. It doesn't matter if it was morning or afternoon. That's not the point.

The other word is *kairos*, and *kairos* means a strategic moment within *chronos* time, that you will never recover again just like it is. For example, those of you who are fathers and mothers, that child will never be three years old again. You've got to capture this moment because it's a fleeting, passing moment. Or it's like walking into a store and they say, "We're having a sale," but it's over in an hour. And it's just a parentheses within time where you have an opportunity to do something that you will not be able to do outside of the parentheses, okay. That's the word that's used here.

This is a strategic moment where if the devil was ever to have an advantage, it is right now, for several reasons. It began with Jesus in the wilderness by Himself. No one's looking, observing the choices that are being made. He's weary. He's tired. He's hungry. He's just come from the River Jordan and He's been anointed with the Spirit, and it's a high watermark. And if there's ever a time when your guard would be down, it would be immediately after something great just happened in your life.

And He's also about to begin His public ministry that will take Him for the next three years all the way to the cross. And so you're very much eager and looking ahead, sometimes past the present moment, to what lies ahead. So this is an opportune time, has been an opportune time for the devil. And he couldn't invade into the private space of our Lord to seduce Him to sin, so he now withdraws to reload until the next opportune time, to set the ambush, to be right around the corner, to be standing in the shadows and to seize a moment against the devil.

You and I need to be aware that there is this ebb and flow, this ebb and flow in spiritual warfare, and that there are times when we are unusually vulnerable to the attack of Satan, and there are other times when he's retreating only to come back. It's like the ocean – it comes in, it goes out; it comes in, and it goes out. And that is what is taking place with the devil here.

Now, as I bring this to a conclusion, I need to ask you a question: Was Jesus able not to sin or was He not able to sin? Was He able not to sin or was He not able to sin? This question has challenged theologians down through the centuries, and there are basically two camps, even within reformed circles. And in this camp are those who say in order for the temptation to be real, it had to be that He was able to sin and chose not to sin, but He could have sinned. And stalwart theologians are in this camp: my mentor R. C. Sproul; Charles Hodge, one of the giants of Princeton in the 19th century.

Here, Jesus is not able the sin,. This is called the peccability of Christ, if you want a fancy word. This is the impeccability of Christ. And over here is John MacArthur, so it has to be right. Over here is John MacArthur and S. Lewis Johnson and many luminaries. So which is it? Or is it a combination, that in His deity He was not able to sin, and in His humanity He was able to sin, but did not sin?

Well, I believe in the impeccability of Christ, that He was not able to sin. He doesn't have to be able to sin in order for the temptation to be real, any more than an army that cannot be defeated cannot be attacked. An army that cannot be defeated can still be attacked and it's still a real attack, it's just never going to succeed. And I want to give you just two verses. John 5:19, these are the words of Christ Himself. John 5:19, "The Son can do nothing of Himself."

Now, you know the difference between "can" and "may"? "May" is a word of permission, "can" is a word of ability. "The Son can do nothing of Himself," - He doesn't have the ability to do something that is independent of the Father - "unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

Well, we know without question the Father cannot sin. He doesn't have a sin nature, even a sinless human nature. He is all God, He's all deity, He's all divine. In fact, in Hebrews 6:18 it says, "It is impossible for God to lie." It's impossible for God to sin. And if the Son can only do what He sees in the Father, which is what Jesus says, then it is impossible for Jesus to sin because it's impossible for the Father to sin.

And in John 14:30, as Jesus the night before He is to be crucified, He's in the upper room with His disciples, and He says, "The ruler of the world is coming," - He's referring to Judas coming, with the devil impelling Judas to come make the arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, which will be taking place shortly - "and he, the ruler of this world, has nothing in Me. There's no beachhead he can establish in Me. There's no place of entrance or access that he has into Me."

And if the answer to this is that the deity of Christ is impeccable and the humanity of Christ is peccable, then perhaps this illustration will help you. You take a piece of string – and I hand it to Kevin here. Kevin's strong. He could just pop that string and break it. But if I take this same string and then take a metal chain and weave the string through the chain and I hand it to Kevin and I say, "Break the string," he can't break the string because it's interwoven and interconnected with the metal chain. And so the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is distinct from His deity, yet the two are in one person: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, why is this important, and why would I bring this up at the end of the message? Because if Jesus could have failed 2,000 years ago, He could fail today. I need to know that He is an impeccable Savior, that it is impossible for Him to falter or fail, such that now as I commit my life to Him, it is impossible for Him to lose me, it is impossible for Him not to save me throughout this life and throughout the life to come. I am secure because Jesus Christ is an impeccable Savior. He cannot falter. He cannot fail.

And so He came out of this arena, yes, bloodied and battered, but triumphant and victorious. And so you have a triumphant Savior in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is victorious. "Greater is He who's in you than he who's in the world." And you can never lose your salvation. And everything He does in your life is perfect, He doesn't need a second chance to get it right. He didn't make a miscalculation at some point in answering one of your prayers and so He now needs a redo in order to finally get it right. No, He got it right the first time because He's incapable of error. He's incapable of misjudgment. He is incapable of falling for any of the devil's schemes.

So when we look at this temptation account, what we are seeing is that He was tested to the nth degree and He could not fall. And as we will trace the rest of His life in the gospel of Luke, we are tracing the steps of the captain of the Lord of hosts, of the victor over sin and over Satan and over death. He is the Almighty. And He is your Savior, He is my Savior. And if you've never put your faith in your trust in Him, how could you hear this and not want to know Him and to commit your life to Him? You've been a failure,

He's never failed. You've made mistakes, He's never made a mistake. You have sinned, He has never sinned. Why would you trust yourself? It makes no sense. It's illogical. In fact it's stupid, totally stupid. But sin will make you stupid.

Come to Christ. He will receive you. He will take you in. He will gather you in. It will glorify Him for you to come to Him. He's the friend of sinners and tax collectors. He's come not for the righteous, He's come for the unrighteous. You qualify. He's a physician who's come not for those who are well, He's come for those who are sick. Just tell Him how sick you are, how sick you are in your sin. The disease of sin is killing you. He will come to your rescue, and He will restore your life and make it everything that the Father intended it to be. He will give you life, eternal life, and you will have it abundantly. It's the greatest offer that could ever be extended to you.

Maybe you've heard this before again and again, and maybe you just push it back and push it back and push it back. Don't push it back today. May today be the day you act on the gospel of Jesus Christ. May today be the greatest day of your life. May today be your wedding day when you come into right relationship with Christ and become the bride of Christ, and He your husbandman. So, don't leave here today without Christ. I will see you next week, as we're going to continue to go through Luke chapter 4.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for today for this account of Christ and to be able to study His life. It thrills our hearts to be able to see what He did and what He said and where He went. We just want to know everything about Him, and we want to be like Him. So give us the truth that we need to know, as You've done today and in the weeks and months and years ahead, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The closing benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."