

“The Temptation of Jesus – Part 1”
Mark 1:12-13
(Preached at Trinity, May 13, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we come to **Verses 12-13**, the Temptation of Christ. As we’ve seen, the Gospel of Mark moves at lightening speed. It almost leaves us breathless. It’s full of action as it moves from one scene to the other.
2. Last time we witnessed the baptism of Jesus. Once again, Mark simply states it as a matter of fact.
Mark 1:9 – “And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.”
 - A. We can surely imagine the terror of John. Here comes the One he is preparing the way for and Jesus asks John to baptize Him. He must have been stunned. Multitudes were coming confessing their sins and receiving the baptism of repentance and here comes Jesus! John is absolutely taken back.
 - B. In Mark’s Gospel we are simply given the fact of our Lord’s baptism. But in Matthew’s Gospel John’s words were swift and sure. Never!! He is spotless! I am vile! I need to be baptized of Him!
Matthew 3:14 – “But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”
3. Upon explanation John submitted
Matthew 3:15 – “And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.”
4. This event marks the beginning of our Lord’s ministry. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him validating Him and preparing Him for His great work as God’s Redeemer.
5. **Verse 12** also begins suddenly:
Mark 1:12 – “And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”
 - A. The text tells us the Holy Spirit “drove” Him. ἐκβάλλω – a strong word meaning to “cast out.” It is the word used in the Septuagint to describe Adam being driven out of the garden.
 - B. It was not an arbitrary action. The wilderness temptation was by Divine design. The same Spirit that descended upon Him was the same Spirit who was driving Him into the wilderness and the same Spirit who would cause Him to triumph over the temptation.
6. There was nothing arbitrary about any point of Jesus’ life. Everything was ordered with Divine purpose.
Even this temptation was by God’s design. It would further serve to strengthen Jesus and demonstrate His absolute holiness.
 - A. Our daily prayer must be for God to give us the power to overcome temptation.
 - B. Jesus taught us this in the model prayer
Matthew 6:13 – “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

7. The entire event in Mark's Gospel is described in these two verses. Once again, it will be necessary for us to go to a parallel passage to capture the fulness of the event – in this case **Matthew 4:1-11**
- I. The first thing we see is that Satan is a personal prince of evil
- A. His description
1. Mark refers to the tempter as Satan.
Matthew refers to him as the devil.
 - a. The word for Satan, Σατανᾶς, means “adversary.”
 - b. The word for devil is διάβολος – it refers to a slanderer or a false accuser
 - c. We see both descriptions of Satan in this temptation
He is both adversary and liar and slanderer.
 2. As our adversary Satan is the great tempter
Verse 13 – “tempted of Satan
Matthew referred to Satan as simply “The tempter”
Matthew 4:3 – “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”
In **1 Thes. 3:5** Satan is also referred to as the tempter
1 Thessalonians 3:5 – “For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”
 - a. He tempts us to abandon our trust in God
 - b. He tempts us to abandon our submission to God's authority
 - c. This is a continual assault. Satan uses many devices – even other men – OFTEN other men. He uses others to discourage us and cause us to end our labors.
Acts 5:27-29 – “And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them, ²⁸ Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. ²⁹ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”
Matthew 16:22-23 – “Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. ²³ But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”
 3. Ultimately, Satan is seeking to destroy the Kingdom of Christ by devouring His people
 - a. God has always had a holy people – Satan has always sought to destroy them.
 - b. This was Satan's design in Cain killing Able – to destroy God's holy people.
 - c. But God's purposes cannot fail. Eve then gives birth to Seth

Genesis 4:26 – “And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.”

- (1) This was a wonderful period when multitudes were captivated by God’s glory and worshipped Him in righteousness and truth.
- (2) Martin Luther wrote of this age:
 “This is the greatest glory of the primitive world, that it had so many good, wise, and holy men at the same time. We must not think that these are ordinary names of plain people; but, next to Christ and John the Baptist, they were the most outstanding heroes this world ever produced. And on the last day we shall behold and admire their grandeur”

d. Satan was still at work though and the holy line of Seth was not above his temptations and deceptions. They began to intermarry with the lineage of Cain.

Genesis 6:2 – “That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

e. Still God’s plan would not be defeated. In a world of evil He still maintained righteousness – this time through Noah.

f. God has always had His holy people. The great household of faith. The great lineage of the righteous – the greatest of which is Christ. And Satan has always sought to destroy them.

This is the story of **Revelation 12**

- On the other hand a dragon, a serpent red with the color of death and destruction – a powerful bloodthirsty and hideous monster.

A serpent with terrible power and royal authority

- On the other hand we have a woman clothed with majesty and glory. She is the church of God. Her greatest child of course is Christ – the first born of many brethren. The church waited with great expectation for the birth of Christ like a woman in travail waiting to give birth.

John 8:56 – “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.”

- The serpent sat ready to devour Christ but he failed – the deceiver was deceived.

This is at the heart of this wilderness temptation and ultimately the cross.

He sought to destroy Christ but this child was caught up to heaven to reign in infinite authority – **Verse 5**

- The woman is left behind and the dragon, infuriated and bloodthirsty, sets upon the woman in a rage. She is in the wilderness.

“For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal. The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, One little word shall fell him.”

II. Such has been the history of the world. Satan is working through his lies to devour God’s people but God is maintaining His holy seed.

A. Satan has always worked with great deceit – his nature is that of a liar

1. Rev. 12:9 - he deceives the whole world

Revelation 12:9 – “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

2. John 8:44 - he’s a liar

John 8:44 – “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

3. Eph. 6:11 - he works with all manner of trickery (μεθοδεία - deceit or trickery)

Ephesians 6:11 – “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

d. 2 Cor 11:13-15 - he deceives making his deceptions seem so right

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 – “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

B. He is cruel and relentless in his attack

He goes about as a roaring lion

1. He has no compassion, a brute beast, savage

2. His appetite is never satisfied, he never rests

3. He continually looks for ways to frustrate the kingdom

Paul declared that Satan hindered his work

1 Thessalonians 2:18 – “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

4. He works through many means:
 - Jesus said a man's foes may be those of his own household
 - It will often come in the form of religious people as he transforms himself into an angel of light
 - Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus' apostles
John 13:27 – “And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.”
 - Paul tells us the ultimate enemy
Ephesians 6:12 – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.”
- C. Our duty as we face this enemy
1. We must be sober - νηφω - to be self-controlled
1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”
 2. We must be vigilant
 The lost are blind and deceived but we are not ignorant of his devices, our eyes are wide open
 We must remain on a constant state of alert, watchfulness
 The enemy is always at the gate
 3. We must resist this enemy - James 4:7
James 4:7 – “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
1 Peter 5:8-9 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ⁹ Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”
 - - This is what we see being demonstrated by our Lord
 4. We must always be open to the possibility that Satan is using us
 - a. By causing division or strife
 (at home, at work, at church)
 - b. By being critical
 - c. By being filled with pride - a snare - 1 Tim. 3:6-7
1 Timothy 3:6-7 – “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Conclusion:

Next time we will look more closely at the temptation of Christ.