

DAY 32

TEMPTATION



Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet he did not sin."

Trevor Hudson says, "We are 'attacked' human beings. Each day brings with it temptations and bad influences that try to undermine our relationship with God. These temptations take the form of thoughts that carry us away from the loving way of Christ."

I believe he is right.

YET, could it be that even with temptation – even with what feels scary or shameful or dark – Jesus is offering us an opportunity to connect with Him in a deeper way? An opportunity for greater dependency on Him, to experience more of His healing Light?

Our beautiful Hebrews verse today tells us that Jesus Himself was tempted in every way, just as we are. And I was thinking about this, about how it's so comforting when someone understands the battles we are facing, right? I'm thinking in particular of a community group that my husband and I have been a part of for several years now... we call our group, Special Families, and it's a small group of parents with kids who have disabilities or chronic illnesses... and this group is such a GIFT. Once a month, I know I will hear honest stories of struggle and joy. I will empathize because even if our exact details aren't the same, there are so many commonalities that I always find myself nodding as they share, and I share; we feel understood and NOT ALONE... I cry as they cry. I laugh as they laugh. In this community of shared experience and honesty, we will then battle for each other in prayer.

And could it be that this experience is just a small picture of what Jesus offers us right now? Because He gets our struggles, we can bring our whole selves to Him, right to His throne of grace, because not only does He understand, He is not even surprised! He experienced temptation too! See, at the very beginning of His public ministry – right after He is baptized by John the Baptist in Matthew 3 – and God the Father declares that Jesus is His dearly loved Son – right after that, it says that Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus is in the wilderness for a loooooong time, 40 days and 40 nights! He fasted and became very hungry, and at this point, the tempter comes to Him.

RC Sproul says that the temptations in this moment appeal to common motivations: physical drives, pride, and the desire for possessions. Not easy stuff to face. But Jesus overcame the enemy with the truth of the Word of God and in the strength of the Holy Spirit! He had just been fasting and praying and depending on nothing BUT God's power and presence for 40 days!!

Jesus overcame the enemy in this wilderness moment – He did not sin – and therefore, He alone has the power to help me overcome! Thank you, Lord!

Hebrews 2:18: "For because He himself suffered when tempted, He is able to help those are being tempted."

Daily Practice

Take ten minutes today to create your own "desert experience" - be alone with God and bring forward those temptations with which you are presently struggling. Receive the grace that God offers as you face your temptations.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.