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Reflection on the Temptations of Jesus

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Life of Christ

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As I reflect on the temptation of Jesus found in the Gospels I am thankful for the many lessons that I have learned that help me to fight temptation in my own life. In fact, there are many takeaways from these small passages found in the Gospels. There are three main areas where we will pull lessons from as we explore this further. There are nuggets of wisdom that can be uncovered from the timing of the temptation of Jesus, the types of temptations that Jesus faced and lastly how Jesus responded to these temptations. As I have reflected on these three topics I have found strength for my journey as I witness Jesus overcome temptation in such a victorious way.

As I study the temptation of Jesus the first thing that strikes me is the timing of His temptation. It is significant to me that Jesus is tempted at a time when He is about to start his earthly ministry. Also it is very important to note that Jesus is tempted not before He has fasted for forty days but after He had fasted for forty days. As I think about this I don't think it is by accident that He is tempted at this time. First of all, we must understand that anytime we are about to have a big ministry opportunity where we are going to have an opportunity to further the kingdom of God that we will often experience a time of testing. The enemy does not want for us to be effective at making a difference for Jesus so before we are able to do something he wants to disqualify us. Jesus is about to embark on his earthly ministry and suddenly the enemy shows up to tempt Him? I don't think at all that this is an accident and He tries to use all of his best tricks and twists against Jesus. When I am entering a time when I feel that God is going

to use me in a powerful way I am not surprised if I experience attacks and temptations. Also as you disciple people who you feel could have a future in ministry prepare them for these attacks because what better time to knock them down before they ever get started. As I reflect on my life I was attacked heavily after I accepted the call to be a pastor. There was an attempt to disqualify me before I ever got started. We must be prepared as Jesus was for these attacks but in moments when we do drop the ball we have to be quick to get back up and remember that we are covered by the blood of Jesus.

The other part concerning the timing of Jesus temptation is the fact that it happened during a time when He was at the end of his forty day fast. This is significant because I would assume that at this point Jesus was tired and hungry. We as human beings are more susceptible to temptation when we are tired and hungry. While Jesus was all God and all man He was able to experience what we feel when we are tired and hungry. Sometimes our emotions as human beings get the best of us in these moments and we make decisions that we normally would not make if we were well rested and fed. I can imagine that Jesus was really hungry at this moment and if he was like some people we see in scripture like Esau or Samson he would have failed in this moment because their flesh was so much stronger than their spirit. Jesus teaches us to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh and not to let your flesh lead you. He kept his spirit stronger than His flesh by going out of His way to practice spiritual disciplines like prayer. He teaches us how to find strength for our spirit through the Word as he quoted the scriptures in the midst of His temptations.

In the next section I want to talk about what I learned from the specific things that Jesus was tempted with. It is interesting to note the parallel here as Jesus is the second Adam and He is able to handle His temptation moments victoriously unlike the first Adam. Jesus is first tempted as the enemy tells Him to make himself some bread out of stones, Then he tells Him to test God by jumping off the top of the temple to show that the angels will protect Him from even striking His foot on a stone, and lastly offering Him worldly kingdoms and treasures. According to our book we see that these are temptations that have a different focus. The first temptation is food at a time when Jesus was hungry and Jesus shows that obedience to God is always more important than fulfilling your flesh. As I said before, this is not something that we always see people doing in scripture, there are plenty of people that showed us what not to do by caring more about fulfilling the desires of their flesh than anything else. In the second area we learn that we should not test the Lord. We shouldn't just do something for example in this scenario jumping off a building just to prove that He will save us. In the last part Jesus is tempted to worship the enemy and in turn receive power and prestige. We learn that our goal in life should be all about honoring God not pursuing the place of prestige where you will be looked at as someone with power. Jesus shows us how to deal with all of these things but first I think its important to note that many of us deal with two of these temptations and many people who serve the Lord fall because of problems that stem from being lead by the flesh and because they are abusing their power or wanting power. I thought this was interesting because these are some of the things that still take people down this very day.

In the last part Jesus shows us how to deal with temptation. I like that Jesus doesn't work hard to try to overcome temptation. He doesn't muster up the strength at that moment to say no by clenching his teeth and focusing on the problem. He shows us in that moment how to say no by quoting scripture that pertains to that certain temptation. For every temptation he had a scripture at his fingertips that he could throw at the temptation. He was able to use the sword of the spirit well and this caused Him to be able to overcome these temptations quickly. I like that the enemy doesn't keep on trying after Jesus quotes a scripture but he just keeps on trying different things until ultimately after three tries he gives up. As I reflect on this I am reminded of the power of scripture, I am reminded of a dream I had when I was a young man where suddenly I was being frightened by the enemy. At that moment there was a small part of me that was scared but there was a larger part of me that felt empowered by the Holy Spirit and I boldly quoted a bible verse and the enemy took off running the other way as if he was terrified. This is what I thought of as I thought of Jesus quoting scriptures at each of these moments. There is power when we begin to speak out the Word of God boldly.

These were some of my reflections from the temptations of Christ. I feel more equipped because I was able to reflect and meditate on these verses. If there was an area that I could work on when it comes to temptation it is growing my spirit to be stronger than my flesh. I am easily influenced sometimes by my need for food, sleep, etc. It is important to get a good handle on this and according to these verses I can start by finding some verses to memorize.