

Temptation & Control

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Luke 4:1-13

Before we read a single word of the wilderness, I want you to hear the prayer Jesus prayed for you.

The night before He went to the cross, Jesus prayed in **John 17:17** — *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."* That is the Father's will for your life. Not just that you would be saved, but that you would be set apart for the Father's redemptive mission, made holy, conformed to Christ, and the means is the Word.

But hear the order the rest of the New Testament gives us. The Spirit fills. The Spirit leads. The Word speaks. The will follows.

Most of us live this backward. We decide, then we ask the Spirit to bless our decision. Our will leads, and we hope the Spirit catches up. Scripture flips that. The Spirit goes first. The Word does the work. The will is not the engine — it is the caboose.

And here is what I want you to see for the next two weeks: **before Jesus ever prayed this prayer for us, He lived it Himself.** Filled with the Spirit. Led by the Spirit. Answering with the Word. Will surrendered to the Father. Luke 4 is John 17:17, embodied. The wilderness temptation in Luke 4 is the prayer made visible.

Back to the Beginning

The temptation does not begin in the wilderness. It begins at the Jordan. At our Lord's baptism, the Spirit comes down on Jesus like a dove. The Father speaks: *"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased"* (**Luke 3:22**). Father, Son, and Spirit — all three are there at the launch of His ministry.

Hold on to that word: **Son**. Because the very first thing the devil will say in the wilderness is, *"If you are the Son of God..."* (**Luke 4:3**). The temptation is not random. It targets the word the Father just spoke. It is yet another *"Did God really say..."* moment (**Genesis 3:1**), the serpent's first question, and now the devil's first move in the wilderness.

The First Surrender

But before we ever get to the wilderness, look at what Jesus is doing in the water.

He is being baptized.

Stop and feel that. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (**Luke 3:3**). And here is the sinless Son of God stepping down into that water with the rest of them. John knows it does not fit. In Matthew's account, he tries to stop Him — *"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* (**Matt 3:14**). And Jesus answers, *"Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* (**Matt 3:15**).

That is a Son of Man sentence. *"Let it be so."* Surrender. *"It is fitting for us."* Identification with sinners. *"To fulfill all righteousness."* Submission to the Father's plan.

He did not need to be baptized for Himself. He was baptized for *us* — stepping into the place of sinners before He ever stepped into the wilderness for sinners. ***Before He is tested, He is surrendered.*** Before the offers come, His answer is already given: *the Father's will, the Father's way.*

And it is *that* surrendered Son — wet from Jordan, anointed by the Spirit, blessed by the Father — whom the Spirit then drives into the wilderness.

The temptation is not a fresh test of an unsundered man. It is the enemy's attempt to reverse a surrender already made.

Why is the genealogy right here?

Then Luke does something strange. Right between the baptism and the temptation, he pauses to give us a genealogy (**Luke 3:23–38**). Matthew put his at the beginning. Luke saves his for here. **Why?**

Look where it ends. Not at Abraham. Not at David. Luke keeps going — back, and back, and back — until he writes these words: *"...the son of Adam, the son of God."* And the very next verse begins the temptation.

Luke is preaching with his pen. He is putting two sons of God side by side.

The first one was tested in a garden. He had everything. He fell. The second one is tested in a wilderness. He has nothing. He stands.

This is not just a strong man resisting temptation. This is the rerun of Eden — with the right Man this time. Paul calls Him the Last Adam (**1 Corinthians 15:45; Romans 5:14**). Where the first Adam said, *"I will be like God on my own terms,"* the Last Adam says, *"I am the Son on the Father's terms."*

This truth is the spine of this passage. Everything else — including our sanctification — is a branch off of it.

A Mystery We Glory In

Now I have to slow down, because the next two weeks will turn on this reality.

Jesus is one Person with two natures. Truly God. Truly man. He did not stop being God when He took on flesh. He did not pretend to be a man. He is, in one Person, the eternal Son of God and the true Son of Man (**John 1:14; Philippians 2:6–8; 1 Timothy 3:16**).

Paul calls this *"the mystery of godliness."* Not a puzzle to solve. A glory to adore.

Three careful statements, and then we move:

One. As God, Jesus never set aside His divine nature or power. He could not. God cannot stop being God. The Son who *"upholds the universe by the word of his power"* (**Hebrews 1:3**) was upholding it from the manger, from the wilderness, and from the cross.

Two. As man, Jesus took a real human nature — a real human will, real hunger, real weariness, real dependence on the Father and the Spirit. He did not fake any of it. Even temptation (**Hebrews 4:15**)

Three. What He laid aside was not His deity. It was the *independent use* of His divine power for His own benefit. He chose to live His earthly life as a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led man — the True Israel, the Last Adam, the obedient Son. *"Though he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant"* (Philippians 2:6–7).

In plain words: **He never stopped being God.** **He never used being God as a shortcut.**

Why this matters for the temptation

If Jesus walked into the wilderness as God in a costume, the temptation is theater. But that is not what is happening. The same Son who surrendered at the Jordan now surrenders in the wilderness — really hungry, really tired, really tempted (**Hebrews 2:18; 4:15**).

He answers as a man. By the Word. In the power of the Spirit. For us.

Three things this passage will show us

Luke 4:1–2: *"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil."*

One sentence. Three things to watch over our two weeks. And notice — they line up with the order I gave you at the beginning. Spirit filling, then Spirit leading, then Christ being set apart for the Father's mission (**John 17:18–19**).

1. Jesus is the perfect picture of a man filled with the Spirit. Hear me carefully. His filling was unique — the Spirit rested on Him *"without measure"* (**John 3:34**) to qualify Him as the Messiah. Our filling is not the same as His. **We are not little Christs.** But what we see in Him is what a Spirit-filled life looks like — and it does not look like power and platform. It looks like dependence.

2. Jesus is the perfect picture of a man led by the Spirit. And notice where the Spirit leads Him. Not to comfort. *Into* the wilderness. *Into* hunger. *Into* the fight. We need to feel the weight of that, because we usually assume Spirit-leading means an easier road.

3. Jesus is the perfect picture of a man set apart for the Father's mission. When I say *sanctified*, I do not mean Jesus had sin to clean up. He was holy from the womb (**Luke 1:35**). I mean what He meant in John 17:19 — *"for their sake I sanctify myself."* Set apart. Consecrated. Aimed at the Father's redemptive mission, anointed by the Spirit for the work (**Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1**).

And listen — His filling qualified Him as Messiah. Our filling flows from union with Him. He obeyed for us before He modeled obedience to us. But the same Spirit who filled and led the Son now indwells us, applies the Word to us, and conforms us to the Son who already obeyed in our place. We do not climb the wilderness. We are united to the One who walked it.

One last thing...

Everything we will say about Jesus as our *example* is true. But it is not enough.

If we walk out of here in two weeks with nothing more than "*be like Jesus in the wilderness*," we have missed the gospel — and I have handed you a burden you cannot carry. Adam was your federal head, and he failed. You have failed in him, and you have failed on your own. You will not out-wilderness Jesus on your best day.

He is also your **substitute**. He stood where Adam fell. He stood where Israel fell. He stood where you and I fall every week.

So we do not come to this passage trying to climb up to Jesus. We come to look up *at* Jesus — and rest.

And then — filled with His Spirit, led by His Word, conformed to His will — we walk into Tuesday morning.

Not fighting for victory. Fighting from it.

Next week, the offers come.

The temptation of our Lord in a direct encounter with Satan occurred immediately after His baptism. At His baptism by John the Baptist, the Holy Ghost, Luke tells us, descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him. The Father then spoke blessing upon the Son, "*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*"

Immediately following this event, Luke records the lineage of Jesus. He starts with Joseph, his legal guardian, Mary's husband, the Lord's stepfather, and works his way all the way back to the Garden of Eden and Adam, whom he records as the son of God (**Luke 3:38**)

It seems out of place for Luke to place the genealogy of Jesus between two events in the Lord's life rather than earlier, with the events of His conception and birth. Why did Luke do this? Perhaps it was to add emphasis to the beginning of the Lord's ministry on earth. The emphasis being that Jesus was the second, last Adam. (**Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Romans 5:14**). He was truly God and truly man.

This is a mystery (**1 Timothy 3:16**) and is difficult to reconcile: Jesus, the Son of God, took upon Himself the form of a servant and carried out the Father's will under the control of the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not exercise His own will, nor did He depend on His own power. He lived life as a man.

He who created all things had the appearance of weakness, humility, and helplessness. He submitted Himself to the control and leadership of the Holy Spirit. (**Philippians 2:6-8**)

In Luke 4:1-2, we see two aspects of our Lord living out His life under the fullness and leadership of the Spirit. I want to show you several things from Scripture. One, Jesus is our example of being filled with the Spirit. Two, He is our example of being led by the Spirit. Three He is our example of being Sanctified by the Spirit.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit was in control. What is full? Full is an adjective that means complete in extent or degree, and in every particular (every crevice is filled). Maximum capacity. Full load.

I. Jesus, Our Example of Being Filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1).

II. Used in the Positive

- Full of Grace & Truth - **John 1:14**, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- Full of the Spirit & Wisdom - **Acts 6:3**, *Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.*
- Full of the Spirit & Faith - **Acts 6:5**, *they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,...* Of Barnabas, **Acts 11:24**, *For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.*
- Full of Grace & Power – **Acts 6:8**, *And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.*
- Full of the Spirit - **Acts 7:55**, *But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*

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- Full of good works & acts of charity - **Acts 9:36**, *Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.*

Used in the Negative

- Full of disease - **Luke 5:12**, *While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy."*
- Full of deceit & villainy - **Acts 13:10**, *And said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"*
- Full of rage - **Acts 19:28**, *When they heard this they were enraged...*

Used in the Positive with Jesus as an example.

- Jesus was filled with the Spirit and spoke the words of God. (**John 3:34**, *For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.*)
- Jesus did nothing on His own authority (**John 8:28**, *So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.)*
- Jesus seeks not His own will (**John 5:30**, *"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.)*

Jesus "led by the Spirit."

- **Mark 1:12**, *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. (ekballō – to drive out)*
- **Luke 4:1**, *and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness*

To be "led" by the Spirit is not a casual or random thing. It is intentional. It is not mystical, it is purposeful. The intent is for a Christian (and our Lord as our example in Luke 4, Son of Man), the Spirit of God is to guide and lead us. It means to so influence others as to cause them to follow a recommended course of action. In fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7, Jesus was *"like a lamb that is led to the slaughter."*

The Comparisons

- Son of Man or the "second Adam" – Jesus is tempted by Satan in the wilderness and is victorious. Whereas the first Adam was tempted in a paradise of a Garden and was defeated.

The first Adam was tested in a garden overflowing with food and failed. The last Adam is tested in a wilderness with no food and prevails. Where Adam said, "I will be like God on my own terms," Jesus says, "I am the Son on the Father's terms."

- Greater Israel – He was led to be tempted in the wilderness, as Israel was, for 40 days. He was victorious. Israel spent 40 years. (Moses Deut 9:9,18, Elijah: 1 Kings 19:8)

Jesus answers every temptation with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6–8 — the exact section rehearsing Israel's forty-year wilderness failure. Israel grumbled over bread (Deut 8). Israel flirted with other gods (Deut 6:13). Israel tested the Lord at Massah (Deut 6:16). Jesus, as True Israel, walks the same wilderness for forty days and obeys where the nation disobeyed for forty years.

III. Temptation 1 – Provision (Luke 4:3-4)

- A.
- B.
- C.

IV. Temptation 2 – Power (Luke 4:5-8)

- A.
- B.
- C.

V. Temptation 3 – Purpose (Luke 4:9-12)

- A.
- B.
- C.

VI. The Real Temptation to All Temptation

- A. Be the Son without submitting to the Father.
 - 1. Bread: Provision without the Father's providing
 - 2. Kingdoms: Inheritance without the Father's path.
 - 3. False Faith: Purpose without the Father's timing