

Tempted Like as We Are

by J.R. Miller

Jesus Christ, our Savior and Friend, understands our struggles and temptations because He was tempted in all points like as we are, and He is able to provide us with true sympathy and help.

Scripture: Matthew 4:1, Hebrews 4:15

Topics: "Temptation", "Christ's Sympathy"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes that Jesus, our high priest, was tempted in every way as we are, yet remained sinless, demonstrating His understanding of human struggles. He illustrates that temptation is a universal experience, and through His own trials, Jesus not only proved His strength but also gained the ability to empathize with our weaknesses. Miller highlights that Christ's victory over temptation assures us of His power to help us in our own battles, as He is both powerful and sympathetic. The sermon reassures believers that Jesus understands our pain and offers true comfort and strength in times of need. Ultimately, Miller calls us to embrace Christ as our Savior, who is both a conqueror and a compassionate friend.

Transcript

"For we do not have a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

No human soul has ever escaped temptation. There have been fierce and terrific assaults, before which the noblest natures have quailed--and the bravest, strongest hearts have trembled. Earth's battlefields are not all marked out on the school-boy's maps. The stories of the world's great battles--are not all told in our history books. It was just after His baptism and His consecration to His work as the Messiah, that Jesus went to His temptation. An old writer says: "All the while our Savior stayed in His father's shop and meddled only with carpenter's tools, the devil troubled Him not; now that He is to enter more publicly upon His mediatorship, the tempter pierces His tender soul with many sorrows by solicitation to sin."

For forty days Jesus had been fasting. "If you are the Son of God," said the tempter, "command that these stones be made bread." There is no harm in eating, when one is hungry. There would seem to have been nothing wrong in Jesus turning a few stones into loaves of bread. "Man does not live by bread alone," said Jesus, "but by every Word of God." But it is a great deal more important that I shall obey God's commandments, than that I shall get bread to eat. My duty is to do God's will first, last, always; the matter of bread is secondary.

"Throw Yourself down," said the tempter, "from yonder lofty pinnacle into the crowded street, and let God keep You from being hurt. He has promised to give His angels charge over You." Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to do this? He said it would have been tempting God, claiming His promise in needless danger. When you rush into peril without the divine bidding, you can claim no shelter, no protection. You are tempting God.

Satan then gave Jesus a vision of universal power, all lands at His feet Greece, Rome, the great Orient, the broad West. "All this is yours--if you will worship me." Already there was in the soul of Jesus, another vision of universal power, all the world His kingdom; but it was spiritual power, and the way to it led by a cross. The tempter suggested power of this world, with pomp and splendor--and the cross avoided. But think of the price "Fall down and worship me."

Why was Jesus tempted of the devil? We are told that He was led; Mark says driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. It was not, therefore, an accident; it was part of His preparation. He came from Nazareth, after thirty years of quiet life, and was baptized, and thus set apart for His mission of redemption. But before He begins His work--He must be tried. Adam was tried, and he failed. The second Adam must be tried too, to prove that He is able to save men. If He had not been successful in His conflicts, how could He have delivered any others from the tempter's power?

We want for our soul's Master--one who fears no enemy, who trembles and quails before no power, who is matchless in His strength. We want one for our Savior--who never can be overcome. We are immortal. Not for today only--but through eternal years, we shall need a friendship that is not tender only--but also strong and secure. No earthly power meets this condition. The sweetest human love is but trembling weakness before the world's mighty forces. We cannot worship one who fears any foe. We cannot trust ourselves absolutely and forever, in the hands of one who is not stronger than the strongest.

Here, emerging from the wilderness, with the light of victory in His face, comes the Lord Christ. He has met the very concentration of all the world's evil--and has vanquished it. We need never be afraid to trust Him. There are no chains He cannot break. He is a tried Savior. In all our struggles and temptations, we may turn to Him for help and deliverance.

Jesus was tempted, too, that He might understand our experiences of temptation. "It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to support those who are tempted." These words assure us that the temptations of Christ were not mere empty forms, mere simulations of temptations--but intense realities. He suffered being tempted. It cost Him anguish to resist. He resisted unto blood.

Power is not enough in Him, whom your soul craves to have for Savior, Helper, Friend. Power alone is cold. He may be the All-conqueror. It may be that He has vanquished every energy of evil, and bound the strong one in his own house. He may be resistless in His might, and you may be secure in the shelter of His strength. But your heart craves tenderness. You must have sympathy. The one to whom you will turn as your Lord and Master, must be able to enter into all the experiences of your life. This, too, we have in Jesus Christ. He is not only God, with all power; He is also man, with all human feelings, affections, emotions, sympathies. Having been tempted in all points like as we are--He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

There is a picture which represents an angel standing by the empty cross of our Savior. It is in the evening, after the crucifixion. The body has been taken down and laid to rest in the grave. The crowd has

dispersed. Desolation and loneliness reign about the place. There stands the angel, touching with his fingers the sharp points of the thorns in the crown which Jesus had worn. The artist's thought is that the angel looked with wonder and awe on the sufferings of Christ. He could not understand them, for angels have never suffered, and hence there is nothing in the angel nature or experience to interpret suffering. He is trying to understand what pain is--and he cannot understand the mystery.

There are people among our friends who come and stand beside us in our sorrow or suffering, and yet understand nothing of what we are experiencing. Their hearts are tender, and their love is deep and strong; but they have never suffered, and therefore there is nothing in them to interpret to them what is going on in us. Then there comes another friend, and in his face and eye--we catch at once, the revealing of sympathy. He understands what is passing in our soul. He enters into our experience. Every struggle or pain in our heart--finds an answering chord in his. He has suffered himself, and his nature has thus been prepared for sympathy.

Wonderful is this power of sympathy. Wonderful is the help that passes from the sympathetic heart, to other lives. It is this which gives to certain great preachers their power to help others by their words; those who listen to them hear the heartbeat in their sermons, and feel instinctively that they understand what they are saying, because they have experienced it. It is this which makes certain books welcome to the weary, the sorrowing, and the struggling; their pages breathe sympathy in every line. You can understand in others, only what you have learned for yourself in your own living. If you have not suffered being tempted, there is nothing in you to interpret to your heart, what I am suffering while passing through my struggles and conflicts. But if you have fought the battles yourself, you understand what is going on in me, when I am fighting them.

These are hints of what Christ brought from the wilderness, in the way of preparation for His great work of priestly help. Nor are we to suppose that it was only in the wilderness, that He learned life's lessons. All His years were filled with human experiences: childhood's, young manhood's, the poor man's, the working-man's; the experiences of ingratitude, of weak friendship, of false friendship, of unkind treatment, of rejection, of bitter sorrow, of death, of lying in the grave. So He stands today in the midst of the world of struggling humanity; and there is nothing in any heart's cry--which He does not understand. It matters not what your peculiar experience may be--in Him your soul finds the answering chord.

It is this which makes Jesus Christ such a real friend to those who come to Him. They are sure always of perfect sympathy. He knows how hard it is for us to be holy, true, and patient, for He has passed through life before us. He knows how the world tempts the young man who is ambitious to succeed. He knows how the temptation to be dishonest tries the soul of the man who is hungry. He knows all the temptations that come to us--and looks upon us in loving sympathy as we endure them. Men seem cold and indifferent as they hurry along in their diverse ways, casting no thought upon us in our heart-hunger, in our longing, in our need; but there is One who is never indifferent. He hears the splash of every tear that falls in secret. His heart is touched with every feeling of pain or pleasure, of hope or fear, of joy or sorrow--which sweeps through our heart.

Yet sympathy is not all of the blessing. There are those who sympathize--but give no help. Their feeling is only a feeble echo of ours. They sit down beside us in our sorrow, and their hearts beat with ours--but there is no uplift in their tenderness. They put no new strength into our heart, no new courage or cheer. But Christ sympathizes--and then helps. He has learned life's ways, and He guides us in them. He carried the world's sorrows, and when we are in sorrow He can give us true comfort. He knows what comes out of

sorrow sweetly borne, and He can strengthen us to endure.

One of the beautiful legends of Brittany, tells of a town called Is, which long since was swallowed up by the sea. The fishermen relate strange things of this legendary city. They say that sometimes the tops of the church-spires may be seen in the hollow of the waves, when the storms rage wildly, and that during a calm the music of the buried bells is heard ringing out in sweetest notes.

It is only a legend. But in the world's great sea there are countless lives that have been buried some in sin's floods, some in sorrow's depths. As we listen, we hear the bells ringing down in the dark waters. Some ring plaintively the cry of pain, suffering, and despair. Some ring yearningly the longings, desires, and aspirations of human souls for a better life.

There is One who hears all this music, all these notes of pain and longing. The Lord Jesus Christ hears every human heart's cry, whatever its tone. It is but little that the best human love can do; but here is One who knows all, who loves better than He knows, who is able to help and to save unto the uttermost. Who would not take this all-conquering, all-sympathizing, all-helping Christ into his life as Savior, Master, and Friend?

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