

The Secret of Gaining God's Approval

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of facing temptation with the same attitude as Jesus to gain God's approval and live a transformed life.

Scripture: Philippians 2:5, Hebrews 2:10, Hebrews 2:17

Topics: "Overcoming Temptation", "Faithfulness to God"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that Jesus, as our High Priest, faced every temptation we encounter, providing us with the encouragement to overcome our struggles. He illustrates how Jesus lived a life of integrity and humility, even in the face of everyday temptations, and highlights that true approval from God comes from faithfulness in our daily lives rather than seeking fame or miracles. Poonen encourages believers to adopt the same attitude as Christ, prioritizing obedience to God over personal desires, and assures that anyone can be an overcomer regardless of their circumstances.

Transcript

It is written in Hebrews 2:17 "Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"... Jesus has undergone the pressure of every temptation that we can ever face. This is what gives us great encouragement in the moments when we are tempted - that we too can overcome. This is the hope that Satan seeks to rob us of, by trying to hide from us this glorious truth that Christ came in our flesh and was tempted exactly as we are.

As a carpenter in Nazareth, Jesus must have faced the temptations that all who engage in any form of business face. But He would never deceive anyone to whom He sold anything. He would never demand too much for any article and He would never compromise on any point of righteousness, whatever the cost (or loss) to Him may have been. He was not in competition with the other carpenters in Nazareth. He only worked to earn His living. Thus, through buying and selling and the handling of money (as a carpenter), Jesus faced all the temptations that we face in the area of money. And He overcame.

Jesus lived in submission to imperfect foster-parents for so many years. This must have exposed Him to various forms of inward temptations (in the realm of attitudes); and yet He never sinned. Joseph and Mary were still under the old covenant, and so they certainly did not have victory over sin. They must have raised their voices and argued with each other, just like all married couples who don't have victory do. Jesus, on the other hand, was living in perfect victory. Yet He never despised them. If He had, He would have sinned. He respected them, even though He was far purer than them. There we see the beauty of

His humility. Thus we see, that far from living an uneventful life during those thirty years in Nazareth, Jesus was in the midst of a conflict against temptation all the time - a conflict that increased in intensity as each year went by - for the Father had to take the Captain of our salvation through the entire range of temptations possible to human beings, before He could become our Saviour and our High Priest.

God's Word says, "It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the Author of their salvation through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10). There were still a few temptations (such as the ones that come through nation-wide fame etc.) that Jesus would face in the last three and a half years of His earthly life. But the common temptations that we all face at home and in our place of work, He had encountered and overcome in the first thirty years. And the Father gave Jesus His certificate of approval at His baptism.

If only our eyes were opened to see the basis on which God gives us His approval, it would revolutionize our lives totally. No longer would any of us covet a worldwide ministry but rather faithfulness in the moments of temptation in daily life. We would stop admiring physical miracles and start admiring transformed lives. Thus our minds would be renewed to have our priorities right.

What a tremendous encouragement this is, to know that God's greatest rewards and His highest commendations are reserved for those who face temptation with the same attitude that Jesus faced it - that is: "I would rather die than commit a sin or disobey My Father at even one point." This is the meaning of the exhortation in Philippians 2:5-8, which says, "Have this attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus...Who became obedient even to the point of death." Thus all of us have the same opportunity to be overcomers and to be among the called, chosen and faithful, irrespective of our gift or our ministry, and irrespective of our sex or our age.

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