

**SLIDE Children's Moment**

March 9, 2014

**Theme:** Temptation

**Object:** Variety of Goodies on a Plate

**Scripture:** "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." (Matthew 4:1 NASB)

Have you ever eaten in a restaurant where, after you have finished your dinner, the waiter came to your table carrying a tray filled with tempting desserts? They look so good! **SLIDE** The tray is filled with all kinds of cake, pie, and pastries. Even though you aren't hungry, you are tempted to eat dessert because they look so good.

We all face temptation. What is temptation? **SLIDE** Temptation is our wanting to do something, which we know we should not do. For example, you have been told to clean your room, but your favorite program is on television. It is easy to convince yourself that you will have time to clean your room after your show is over. You are tempted to disobey your parents and you are tempted by the TV.

Do you think that Jesus ever faced temptation? The Bible tells us that Jesus **SLIDE** "was tempted in every way, just as we are - yet He did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15) This morning I want to talk to you about a time when Jesus was tempted and what He did to overcome that temptation.

After Jesus was baptized, He went out into the desert to pray. He stayed there a long time – **SLIDE** 40 days, and got very hungry. He had not eaten anything because He was trying to listen to God His Father and do what God told Him to do. I'm sure that His tummy must have been rumbling from hunger!

Suddenly, the devil came along and said to Jesus, "There is no reason for you to be

hungry. If you are the Son of God, you could take one of these stones and turn it into bread." Jesus was hungry, it must have been tempting, but He did not listen to the devil. He knew that the devil was trying to get Him to do something wrong. Instead, Jesus answered the devil with Scripture. He said, "It is written: **SLIDE** 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Next, the devil took Jesus to the holy city up to the highest part of the temple. "If You are the Son of God, jump off of here and God will send His angels to save You." Jesus knew that it was wrong to test God, so He answered the devil saying, **SLIDE** "It is also written in the scriptures: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed Jesus the entire world below. "All of this can be Yours. I will give it to You if You will bow down and worship me." Jesus answered, **SLIDE** "Go away from me Satan! It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

Three times the devil tempted Jesus and tried to get Him to sin. Did Jesus sin? NO! Jesus did the right thing each time. He remembered what the Scriptures said and it helped Him to resist the devil's temptation.

Sometimes you and I may be tempted to do the wrong thing. It will help us to do what Jesus did and call on the Scripture to help us resist temptation! Let's pray and thank God for giving us the Bible to help us live the way He wants us to live.

Our Father, we are thankful for your Holy Word. Help us to study and learn what it teaches so that we will be able to resist the temptation to do wrong that we face each day. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

**Slide Who is Jesus?**

The time and the timing of life events are important. For Jesus they were not only important but had lasting effect beyond time and history – they were eternal. Last week we examined John chapter 7 verses 1 to 9 that dealt with the difference between God's and man's time and timing. This morning we will examine God's timing and who Jesus is and is not - as we study verses 10 to 13.

The timing of chapter seven is the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles or Booths. We observed last week that Jesus' brothers did not understand who Jesus was and what His mission on earth was. Remember the second half of verse 4 says **"If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."** It shows Jesus' brothers' unbelief. Nothing Jesus had done up to this time had changed the hard hearts of His brothers. In fact it would take Jesus' death and resurrection to finally show His brothers that He was the Son of God. The word **"If"** in verse 4 foreshadows the mocking unbelief that Jesus would face on the cross as we find in Matthew chapter 27 and is similar to Satan's mocking challenge in the same gospel of Matthew found in chapter 4 during Christ's temptation. Verse 5 makes clear the state of mind of Jesus' brothers, **"For not even His brothers were believing in Him."** Today unbelievers still mock Jesus in their unbelief - denying who Jesus is. **Blank**

In verse 6 it is written, **"So Jesus said to them, 'My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune.'"** At the time of Jesus the Jewish culture was one where daily life centered on and was concerned with what might bring shame or honor. Both of these were strong motivators of Jewish life. Jesus had lost some of His standing among the Jews in Galilee with the exodus of so many people. Does this mean He

brought shame on Himself, His brothers and His followers? Did they believe that if Jesus became famous that they could ride on His coat tails and reap the benefit of fame and money for themselves? Whatever the reasoning of James, Joseph, Simon and Jude (*Judas*) was, we know from verse 5, “not even His brothers were believing in Him (*Jesus*).”

In verses 8 and 9 Jesus tells His brothers to, <sup>8</sup> “Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come.’ <sup>9</sup> Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.” How tragic is this behavior of Jesus’ brothers. They leave to travel to Jerusalem and this reveals the condition of their hearts. They left Christ for the celebration of the Feast! They preferred a religious festival, its social time and its ritual over fellowship with the Messiah sent by God. The same God who gave the Jews the festivals and who now gave them the Christ as the fulfillment of the festivals was being reduced to ritual instead of relationship. How often we witness the same thing today. The latest fad of Christianity of being messianic is in truth zeal for religious performances and of ceremonies, and how little heart these rituals and ceremonies have for Christ Himself and the salvation He and He alone offers. Jesus offers salvation not by works, but by faith – faith in Him as the Christ. Following this first paragraph of chapter seven is the second that deals with who Jesus is thought to be and who He really is.

Jesus’ brothers have gone to Jerusalem by first going east and then south to avoid Samara. In verse 10 Apostle John tells us “But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. Jesus choose to stay back and go later to Jerusalem privately in order to not draw attention for the time was not yet for confrontation with the Jewish leaders. Since the Feast of Booths was ready to begin or had just started when Jesus set out for Jerusalem the roads would be relatively deserted. There are also indications that Jesus traveled south

through Samara, which few Jews were willing to do. If you will turn in your bibles to Luke chapter 9 beginning in verse 51 - I will begin reading there. Many Bible scholars believe this passage of scripture refers to when Jesus was traveling with His 12 disciples to the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. **Slide**<sup>51</sup> “When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;<sup>52</sup> and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.<sup>53</sup> But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51-53<sub>NASB</sub>) The Samaritans knew Jesus and His disciples were traveling towards Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths and this would not have sat well with the Samaritans. There was strong tension between the Jews and the Samaritans whom the Jews considered to be low class half-breeds and the Samaritans did not have the Temple to worship in. Neither had great love for the other. **Slide**<sup>54</sup> When His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ **Slide**<sup>55</sup> But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, ‘You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; <sup>56</sup> for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’] And they went on to another village.” (Luke 9:54-56<sub>NASB</sub>) At this point Christ’s ministry is over two years old and verse 51 saying, **Slide** “When the days were approaching for His ascension” would bring this trip of Jesus and His disciples into the right general time frame for His travel to the Feast of Booths. **Blank** His travel to Jerusalem would have taken less time than His brothers because of His more direct route. By taking the road through Samara Jesus would certainly have avoided any unnecessary public attention from the Jews although He and His disciples, John and James, may have caused quite a stir in Samara. We know that by the time Jesus arrived in Jerusalem the feast of Booths had already started by what we read in verses 11 and 12 of John chapter 7, “So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and

were saying, 'Where is He?' There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, 'He is a good man'; others were saying, 'No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.'" The Jews referred to in verse 11 are not the people of the crowds referred to in verse 12. The Jews seeking Jesus were the Jewish leadership that wanted Him dead. However, the Jewish leaders were not the only ones discussing this Jesus during the feast. "There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him." What was the nature of the grumbling going on with the masses of people? Well, the examples the Apostle John gives are; first, Jesus "is a good man" and secondly, Jesus "leads the people astray." The crowds were asking then the same question that is being asked today, **Slide** "Who is Jesus Christ?" But verse 13 tells us, "Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews." The people did not fear Jesus, even though they should have had feared and respected Him as the Messiah. However, they did fear the Jewish leaders who were but mortal men. Yet, the people were asking among themselves, "Who is Jesus?"

Who is Jesus Christ - is the question that each generation must ask and answer. Let me ask have you, each of you, have you faced this question and answered it soundly in your heart and mind? If you have - then you have put this question to rest one way or the other. But if you have not, well then, you may not know why you call yourselves Christian. I believe there are only three possible answers to this question – Who is Jesus? No matter how people answer - their answers can be distilled down into three possibilities.

We will explore these three possible answers, but before we do first there is an answer that is absolutely **Slide** an impossible answer of who Jesus is, and yet, many give this as their answer to the question – Who is Jesus? Some of the people in the crowd said, **Slide** "He is a good man." There are several reasons why this cannot be

true. First, Jesus' teachings are egocentric. Jesus often taught about God in His teachings and when He did, He always taught of the special relationship between God the Father and Himself. Jesus even used a special word for Yahweh, God of the Jews, He referred to God as "abba" implying God was His father, Jesus' daddy. No Jewish scribe or Pharisee or historian up to this time had ever, ever referred to God as "abba" and to do so would have been considered to be irreverent at the very least or even blasphemous. Jesus taught because of this special relationship that He had with God - He and He alone would accomplish the bringing back of people into fellowship with God and God would then be their "abba" as well. Jesus accomplished exactly this by what He did on the cross for those chosen by God. If one doubts Jesus egocentric attitude about the relationship between He and God; the Gospel According to John shows that Jesus used the name "I AM" for Himself and this is the very name of God in heaven. In Exodus Moses is having a conversation with God, which in and of it self is absolutely amazing. Moses is getting ready to head down to Egypt and is concerned about how the Jewish people will receive him. We take up the this conversation in verse 13 of Exodus chapter 3, **Slide** "Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." Now they may say to me, 'What is His name? What shall I say to them?" **Slide** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" The "I AMs" in the Gospel According to John teach that Jesus is the sole way that sinful men and women can find a right relationship once again with God and enjoy Him for eternity. Apostle John clearly demonstrates that Jesus is God incarnate. **Blank**

Secondly, if one examines the teachings of Jesus it will reveal that Jesus considered the Scriptures that the Jews processed, that we now call the Old Testament, were written mainly about Him. Do you remember what Jesus said two chapters earlier in

our study of John? **Slide** “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.” (John 5:46 NASB) And in a few weeks our study of John chapter 8 will reveal that Jesus said, **Slide** “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56 NASB) The Old Testament was all about Jesus the Messiah sent by God, the reason for His coming, His ministry, death, resurrection and salvation for the chosen.

Thirdly, Jesus stated many times that He was able to forgive sins and this is something only God can do. No mere man could have done all that Jesus did. No man was able to forgive sins no matter how good that man was. C. S. Lewis wrote of Jesus saying, **Slide** “Unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic.” Just one of many examples of Jesus forgiving sins is found in Mark, **Slide** “Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’” (Mark 2:5 NASB) This is either God speaking or a deranged person, not just a “good man” as the people were saying among themselves in verse 12 of John 7.

Scriptures also records that Jesus called Himself God. Remember Jesus was talking with the Jewish leaders who thought that they were saved because they were physically descended from Abraham. Jesus tells these leaders that this is simply not true. They react by saying, **Slide** “‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ **Slide** Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’” (John 8:57-58 NASB) Jesus is saying that He existed before Abraham, that He was with God from before the very beginning and He is God, the great “I AM.” The Jewish leaders picked up stones to kill Jesus – they were so hard in their hearts that they wanted to kill God. **Blank**

The choice is yours, as it is with every person; you must decide **Slide** “Who is Jesus?” He certainly is not a “good man” that is impossible. He is not just a prophet or



teacher. We know He cannot be a “good man”, but there are other possibilities. C. S. Lewis wrote, **Slide** “You must make a choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” So lets quickly look at these other possibilities that Mr. Lewis speaks of. **Blank**

First, Jesus’ egocentric teachings and claim of a special relationship with God in heaven and that He was indeed God in the flesh, that as the Messiah His teachings are not the teachings of a “good man.” If Jesus is not God then He was indeed a madman. Was Jesus a megalomaniac, like Napoleon or Hitler? Was Jesus crazy? Well let me ask you, did Jesus act or behave as a crazy person? When one reads and studies the New Testament writings you cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus was brilliant, caring of others and the most sane man to have ever lived. Jesus was never at lost for the right answer, never surprised and never rattled without knowing what course to take. So, the titles of “crazy” or “megalomaniac” just does not fit Jesus. You know to think of it - there is another reason Jesus could not have been crazy. It is how people responded to Jesus. Men and women followed Him and believed Him. The disciples laid down their lives for Him even after He was gone. People either loved Jesus as the Son of God or they hated Him as does the evil one under whose influence they live and they wanted Him dead – interestingly some things do not change with time. A. W. Pink said it this way, **Slide** “Whenever God’s truth is faithfully proclaimed, opposition will be encountered and strife stirred up. The fault is not in God’s truth, but in human nature. As the sun shines on the swamp it will call forth malaria: but the fault is not in the sun, but in the ground. The very same rays call forth fertility from the grainfields. **Slide** So the truth of God will yield spiritual

fruit from a believing heart, but from the carnal mind it will evoke endless cavil and blasphemy. Some thought Christ a good man; others regarded Him as a deceiver: sufficient for the disciple to be as His Master.” **Blank** Is Jesus your Master?

The second possibility would be that Jesus was a deceiver. After all, the Mormons believe Jesus and Lucifer are brothers and we know what Satan is. John writes in the second half of verse 12 in our study passage, “others were saying, ‘No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.’” So was Jesus merely trying to convince people He was the Messiah because of His ego? We have certainly seen those down through history that have made claims of being God or the Christ and they have been exposed as fakes. If Jesus was a deceiver, He is the best who has ever lived. Intellectual giants among men have been trying to disprove Jesus as the Christ for over 2000 years and have not been able to succeed. At the time of Christ all the other countries believed in multiple gods. Greece believed in gods having children by mortal women and these children were demi-gods or half gods. The Jews were the only people in the ancient world who had a strict belief in one God, the only God. At the time of Jesus the Jewish people were ridiculed by Rome for their belief in one God. Yet they hung onto their belief in one God – they were stubborn people. Jesus got a lot of people to believe that there is only one God and He is that God in the form of the Son of God. The one God of the Jews presented Himself to His people in three ways: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. If Jesus was a deceiver He was also the worst deceiver for the people He failed to deceive killed Him. As believers we should not court danger. On the other hand, when the Word of God plainly bids us to follow a certain line of conduct, to believe in a certain way, we are to do so, no matter what the consequences.

Jesus taught God is holy and that all people, even the Jews, could not have a relationship with God because they were sinners. He taught that He was the solution

and answer to this problem and He was the only answer. If Jesus is not the Christ then He did deceive thousands of people and condemned generations of people, millions of people, to eternal hell. Again, when one studies the scriptures and looks at history prior to Jesus and since the time of His death one does not see a deceiver, but someone who sacrificed all because of His love for God the Father and His love for a lost world.

This leaves us with but one possibility – Jesus is who He said He was – He is God. I believe with all my heart that Jesus is the Christ – How about you? To be called Christian then one should face the question of “Who is Jesus?” head on. Consider the evidence – no one should believe in Jesus without evidence. The evidence is not only in the scriptures, but it is found in history, the history of the world and in the lives of believers – how the Holy Spirit changes people. There is no room, at the foot of the Cross for those who are lukewarm and undecided. You need to be all-in or out. Look what the lukewarm churches that call themselves “Christian” have done in our own society, how they have reduced God to something lesser than He really is.

A. W. Pink wrote, **Slide** “Mark what a strange variety of opinions there were concerning Christ even at the beginning! In the light of this passage the differences and divergencies of religious beliefs today ought not to surprise us.” Jesus is clear and to the point when He says in Revelation 3:16, **Slide** “So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.” What is the alternative to being lukewarm? The alternative is found throughout the scriptures. Moses wrote of it in Deuteronomy chapter 6, Matthew wrote of it in chapter 22, Mark wrote of it in chapter 13 and Luke wrote of it in chapter 10. You must believe Jesus is God, **Slide** “AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27) A true believer - believes in

Jesus as their Lord and Savior and is fully committed to live for Christ. As Apostle Paul the Beloved wrote with full belief, **Slide** “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” My beloved brothers and sisters is this how you are living your life? I know that to live for Christ is the greatest adventure of all.