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Sermon title **Looking at Temptation as a Test**

Luke 22-46

I'd like everybody to have one of those pieces of paper as we go into the message and the thoughts of today from the Lord. Would you open with me, however, to Luke chapter 22? We go here so often for the things that deal with the last Passover of the Lord and the establishing of the Lord's table. And so I know you remember that this is the section telling us of the things of that night.

Well, after he left the Passover meal with his disciples, you know, they went over to the Garden of Gethsemane that they might pray. And I want to take you to that section in

Luke 22:39, 40 "He went to the Mount of Olives. As he was accustomed. And his disciples also followed him. When he came to the place, there was a specific place they went to, they called it the garden. When he came to the place, he said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation."

I'm going to say a bit about temptation in just a minute.

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Then an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly. Then his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When he arose, when he rose up from prayer and had come to his disciples, he found them sleeping from sorrow. Then he said to them, why do you sleep? Rise and pray lest you enter into temptation." Luke 22:41-46

Now, this word temptation that he was speaking of really refers to the idea of a test. A test. The test is to see who you will go to for help. Maybe you're having a problem, maybe you need a solution, a supply for some need. And the question is, how are you going to meet that need? Where are you going to turn to meet that need? This is a test.

John 6:1-14

And to show you how that fits in the scripture, I want to take you to John chapter 6. John chapter 6, go there with me. Right at the beginning of the

chapter, verse 1. This is the occasion when Jesus feeds 5,000 people. You should be familiar with it, but let me review it with you. Because this bears on the idea of a test, of temptation. I want to show you how it works. "After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias." John gives both names, both the Hebrew name Galilee and the Roman name Tiberias.

"Then a great multitude followed him because they saw his signs which he performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near." John 6:2-4

By the way, that little reference to the Passover here by John helps us understand how many years Jesus' ministry was. And we can do that by seeing how many Passovers he celebrated or had passed during his ministry. This is, of course, early in the ministry. So the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. "Then Jesus lifted up his eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" John 6:5

Now John wants to explain why the Savior would ask that question. He is, after all, the Son of God, the Creator. And he asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" But this he said, "To test them." To test him, in this case, Philip. For he himself knew what he would do." John 6:6

So Jesus put this question out there as a test. Now, ordinarily, you wouldn't think of that as a temptation, but in the sense of what a temptation is, it's the same thing. It's a test. It's a test, that's what a temptation is. It's a test. So he put the question to Philip, "To test him." "Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them." John 6:7

Do you remember what a denarius represented? A denarius represented, denarii being the plural, a laboring man's full day's wage. So, two hundred days of labor wouldn't be enough to provide the bread for this multitude. You say, "Well, must have been a large crowd then, if two hundred days worth of bread."

What would today's wage be for somebody laboring? If you want ten dollars an hour, say he earns eighty dollars a man, maybe in a day, if you had two hundred of that, right, how much money would that be? Wouldn't that be about sixteen hundred dollars? About sixteen hundred dollars? Sixteen hundred dollars. Wouldn't that buy a lot of bread? Well, yeah, buy over a thousand loaves, wouldn't it? A thousand loaves weren't enough for the crowd. Why? Because there were five thousand men there. A fifth of a loaf per man, well, how about the women and the children? That's why scholars think there could have

been fifteen thousand individuals there. You want to break up a loaf of bread that many times? Think you're going to feed people that are really hungry? Each person would get one slice, maybe, maybe another half a slice. And I tell you, that's not enough to keep a laboring man fed. Well, it's not enough.

“One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There's a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now, there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, given thanks, he distributed them to the disciples and the disciples to those sitting down, and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So, when they were filled," John 6:8-12a

You get the point? There was plenty. Everybody was full. They had eaten all they cared to eat.

“He said to his disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost." Therefore, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten." John 6:12b-13

I guess he didn't have a whole lot of fish left over. They didn't want to put them in the same basket. I don't know, but they figured they'd get the barley loaves anyway.

“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly"(--now, here's a sad thing—) "the prophet who is to come into the world." John 6:14

The prophet. That's all they wanted to admit that he was. Israel had many, many prophets. Was that all he was? Prophets, by the way, well, look at Elijah, Elisha, Moses, had performed miracles at the hand of God, but he was far more, wasn't he? I want to look at this thing of the test. The test. The question was, would they look to their money? I mean, that's a test. You have a problem. You have this large, massive crowd. You need to feed them. How are you going to meet the test?

Illustrated in Life

Number one, are you going to say, "Well, let's see how much money we have." Or do you start considering going to your money as your-- well, let's call

them personal resources. It might be something beyond money. You're going to check out your personal resources. How much do you have that you could use to meet the need? Do people think that way? You bet. They're very quick to go to that solution to meet the test. But obviously it wasn't going to meet the test.

Well, then you could go to another level. Would they look around them and assess what the resources of everybody else was? If they didn't have the personal resources among themselves, how about everybody else? Still looking at resources. They find out that there is a little boy there who has five barley loaves and two small fish.

Now, some of you ladies, I want to reassure you, I'm of the opinion that the fish were cooked, okay, so that he was not being sent out by his mother to eat raw fish probably. All right. If they weren't cooked, they probably were dried or salted or something, you know, prepared in a way, but I would assume probably cooked and sent along. At any rate, they're going to check the resources of the people around them.

First your personal resources, then the resources around you. This was Jesus' test. Here's the need. How are you going to meet the need? And they come back with these two very logical, very common answers that human beings come up with all the time. Well, let's see what I have. Okay, not very much. Let's see what everybody else has. Let's check it out and see if that's going to meet the need. No, not enough.

Jesus did that for a very special reason. He was really asking, would they, when a problem arose, would they immediately look to him for the solution? Would they realize that they needed to look to him with full trust that he could supply any need that they had? Would they come to him and would they have such confidence that he could be their complete supplier of every need that they had? He wanted to teach them to do that.

So what did he do? He performed a miracle. What did the miracle teach? The miracle taught that they could come to him. They could come to him first. They could come to him with complete trust that he could meet the need. That he wasn't asking them, first of all, if they could meet the need. And he wasn't asking them, second of all, whether other people could meet the need. He was really asking them, and it was a test, and he knew what he would do, and he deliberately asked the question to put them to the test to see if they would come to him. He was the supply. He was the answer to the need. But would they come to him immediately because they had the need? And they saw in him the

supply. They might not know how it was going to come. They didn't know what he would do to meet the need, but that he was the one that they should come to and put their trust in.

That's what he taught them. How many times have you read this and not seen that? That the reason for the miracle was to teach them that he was the supply for every need. He was the complete supply. He was the one they should have come to first. It should have been an automatic answer. How are we going to feed these people? Well, Lord, you're the creator. You know, we trust in you. We don't have the means. We don't think they have the means, but we trust in you. You can do it. We trust you to be able to meet the need.

But they didn't say that. Before you're too harsh on the disciples, I want you to remember, maybe you too are prone to go down that road, trying to deal with life on your own, out of your own resources. And out of the resources that you kind of see others build up, or maybe you think, "Well, if I don't have enough, I know I'll go to the bank and borrow." That's the next answer, you know. Let's borrow. Let's draw upon others' resources. I'm not saying it's wrong to use your resources. I'm not saying it's wrong to borrow. I'm saying that isn't your first place to go. The one who can supply and can supply fully is the Lord.

And that's what he was teaching by that miracle. You know, when Satan tempts us, he's really testing us. He's putting a test out there. It's the same kind of test. He wants to see if we will lean on our own resources or whether we're going to take up something that the world supplies to meet the need. And he's going to try to suggest to you that you have a need. It may not even be a legitimate need. He might appeal to hunger, thirst, sexual needs, clothing, you know, basic things. He may appeal to those things and say, "Hey, you have a need here."

My wife--I'll just tell you, she's not in the meeting so I can say this-- my wife does not like to shop. She really does not like to shop. Walking around, looking at things in stores is really one of the chores of life she would just like to get rid of. And she does not like the fact that when I get into a store, I don't mind walking around all over the place and looking at everything. [laughter] It's not because I want to buy everything. It's just it's very interesting to me. I just want to see what's going on and what they've come up with lately. It's just fun to do. And she sees no fun in that. So I don't get to practice that when I'm with her. I have to kind of cut it short. But if I'm on my own, I can go in a place like Sam's and I can be in there for an hour just walking around, looking, and come out, not

buy anything. She just thinks that's just a big waste of an hour. But it's kind of interesting to me. I don't mind it. Yeah, flea markets, I'd be out there two hours looking around. But she wouldn't even go to those places if it wasn't for me.

Satan does that. He tries to suggest to you, "Hey, by the way, in this area of your life, you have a certain need. Let me put some pictures up in front of you or let me show you a little video over here or let me demonstrate it. Let me show you something on a billboard or in a newspaper and kind of convince you that you have a need." The natural world kind of helps Satan out at times.

For instance, about cars. The natural world is that these things are man-made and they're going to rust and break down, right? So that kind of helps him out because they put these brand-new shiny ones up in front of you and the natural thinking is, "Well, you know, this one I have has a few problems." And if you've had it more than a few years, then it has a lot of problems. And if you've had it a number of years, it has a number of problems. And so there's a test there. "Well, how are you going to meet this need?"

It can be of anything in your life. Satan does that to us, and the question is, "Who are you going to lean on? Who are you going to look to? How are you going to have that need met if it's a legitimate need in the will of God?" Do you dig into your pockets first? Do you check the resources around you? Or do you immediately just have you come to the place in your Christian life that the first thing you do is you go to the Lord Jesus? I'll tell you, if you go to the Lord Jesus about your needs, there are a lot of things you wouldn't dare bring up to the Lord.

A lot of things that Satan puts in your way that you think, "Maybe I need that," and you think, "Well, can I ask the Lord for that?" And you say, "No, no way. I have to forget that idea and go on." [laughs] He wouldn't have me do that. I've come to that position about certain things that-- well, I call them desserts. I can actually walk by a window with chocolaty things with cherries on them and fluff on it and all kinds of goo. It doesn't really do a whole lot for me. I don't have a problem with that stuff. I can come to a meal and bypass the dessert time without any problem.

Now, that wasn't always the case with me, and I do eat those things from time to time, but they don't have much power for me anymore. And part of it is I thought, "Could I legitimately talk to the Lord about this thing and enjoy it?" If I've already eaten more than I should, I don't even want to talk to the Lord about the dessert. Forget it. I'm done. Can I bring it to the Lord? Can I look to him for

his supply? Is that the natural response? It should be, trusting him to supply our every need.

I want you to take your paper, if you've got one of those pieces of paper I gave you, and it's over time. I can't do it now. What happened here? I think Steve must have talked too long or something. Okay, I'm going to do this next time, but what I want to do with you, I want to take your paper, and I'm going to have you just go to the subject of prayer and talk with you about the need to go to the Lord, what prayer is all about for us, and to just write down for yourself what things prayer is supposed to be involved in. What I was going to have you do in a few of these things is just kind of have you personally list for yourself-- well, I chose the number three-- three things in this category, three in this and three in this, that you see the Lord has done.

Where is the answered prayer? Where is he supplied? What has he done for you? I just thought it would be a good exercise to go through, and I think it's valuable enough that I'd like to come back to it and have you do it. So if you don't bring your paper back with you next time, I'll give you another piece of paper. You won't get away with that. It's for you. It's not for me to collect and see what you wrote.

It's just for you to be reminded that the Lord is there, and you do have needs, and the question is, have you gone to him first? Have you let him supply? Have you seen it? Have you given thanks? Are you quick to go to him? Is he really your resource? Are you looking to yourself and to the world around you? If you are, Satan will get you, he'll trick you, he will tempt you. His tests are called temptations, because that means he wants you to go in a way that is not the will of God.

Or have you really looked to the Lord first for his supply? Well, I apologize, but we'll get to this. We'll do this, okay? Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you for the lessons that the Lord Jesus has shown us in his lifetime here, and the great lessons he's taught to the disciples and through the Scriptures, Lord, to us. Oh, this one, Lord, that we might learn that prayer is there for us to have touch with you, and to come to you. You told us in everything to pray, and Lord, I take that literally, that you want us to come to you first about everything, not to rely on ourselves first, and not to rely on others first, but to look to you, according to your promises,

according to your faithfulness. Lord, you live in us, and you know our needs, and you are the perfect supplier. Help us learn to be people of prayer, in Jesus' name, amen.