

Reflections on Spiritual Warfare from the Gospel of Luke

Read Luke 4: 1-13.

1. What does the text say was the reason Jesus went into the wilderness to confront Satan?
2. Why would the Holy Spirit lead Jesus to confront Satan at the beginning of his earthly public ministry?
3. Satan aims his temptations directly at Jesus' identity when he invites him to worship Satan. How does Jesus answer each of the attacks of Jesus' identity as "the Son of God"?
4. The Father has told Jesus "You are my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22) Satan is trying to destroy Christ's identity to ruin everything that follows. How does a loss of our gospel identity lead us to temptation?
5. Dr. Bob Smart speaks of "Central Condemning Thoughts" or "Core Lies" that deceive our hearts and lead us away from "the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3) Look over some of these from his book "Embracing your Identity in Christ" as well as some added. Identify your Central Condemning Thought or Core Lie that feels so true about you but is not from God.
 1. I am corrupt, evil, or defective.
 2. I am unworthy of being loved.
 3. I am unknown and personally insignificant.
 4. I am without support and guidance.
 5. I am a victim and controlled by others.
 6. I deserve to be respected and listened to.
 7. I know better than others what is the best.
 8. I don't need others help.
 9. I have all I need to be happy and fulfilled.

When are you most vulnerable to believe Satan's lie about your false identity?

What foolish strategies have you come up with to prove you are better than this condemning thought?

Paul exhorts the Christian to "take every thought captive to the obedience to Christ. (2 Cor. 10: 4-5) **Write out a prayer** of repentance and faith that addresses your CCT or Core Lie and write out the corresponding gospel truth that God declares is true about you in Jesus Christ.

For Further Study

Read Luke 10: 18-19 and Luke 11: 20-22.

What is the connection between Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4: 1-13) and the disciples' power of demons when they were sent out to minister (Luke 10) and Jesus' explanation of his power using the language of "Binding the Strong Man?" (Luke 11)

Luke 11:21-22 says that Jesus has "disarmed" Satan's power. Satan's strategies include **deceit** (accusing us that we do not belong to God that would lead to despair or pride) and **temptation** (appealing to our desires to disobey God and deny his promises to us.)

Describe a recent incident where you were attacked by Satan's accusations or tempted to disobey God's commands?

How do we fight Satan's strategies? Not in our own strength. Martin Luther once compared Satan to a chained dog and said that our defense was to believe the gospel in prayer. He encouraged believers to glance at Satan's lie and gaze at Christ's promises. In the hymn, A Mighty Fortress he says, "One little word (Christ's love for us on the cross) shall fail him (the devil.)

Read 1 Peter 5: 8-9 "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."

How do we pray the gospel back against our condemning doubts or our creeping temptations?

Other references to Satan in the Gospel of Luke

Luke 22:3 The text says that Satan entered Judas and he went to the chief priests to discuss how he might betray Jesus. Judas was obviously not regenerate, and was under the control of Satan, as we are told that Judas was a devil (John 6: 70)

Luke 22:31 Jesus tells Peter, one who was regenerate, that Satan asked permission to sift him like wheat, but Jesus says he prayed for Peter, and though he would fail the test, he is invited back, forgiven, and assigned the task to strengthen his brothers when they are tempted by Satan.

Conclusion: Unbelievers can be tormented and possessed by demonic spirits. At conversion, the Holy Spirit enters a believer and our destiny belongs to Christ. Even as believers we can still be oppressed and tormented by evil spirits. The Bible teaches that the world, the flesh and the devil are the enemies of our soul and we need the gospel of Christ's love, forgiveness, strength and protection to overcome the power of Satan's lies.

God's holiness speaks to our mind and heart that our only hope is found in Christ's death on the cross for our justification. **God's love** testifies to us that we are now adopted into God's family and belong to him. **God's Spirit** has been sent into our heart to assure us that he will help us to believe the gospel and obey God's commands.

Further Study on Spiritual Warfare.

Ephesians 6: 1-20

1 Corinthians 15: 20-28

Romans 16: 20

Revelation 12

Revelation 20

From Dr. Doug Kelly on the binding of Satan... Revelation 20: 1-3 says that a mighty angel from God binds the Devil for a thousand years. Specifically, verse 3 relates that he is bound from deceiving the nations during this period. Something happens to Satan's ability to keep the nations of earth blinded from seeing who God is, and what his gospel means for them. As a result of Christ's finished work in dying on the cross, in rising from the dead, in ascending to the Father, and in being crowned on the throne of glory, Satan lost his power to deceive the untold millions of pagans, whom he formerly kept blinded to God's saving truth.