

# Are You Good Enough for Temptation?

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**Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church**

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

One of the things that my grandfather used to say with a smile, *"Good enough for government work."* Now, I have to tell you that he worked for the government, and during his working career, he never appreciated when someone performed at a mediocre or cursory level. His preference was to do the job right the first time rather than waiting to do it right the second time. So when my grandfather said, *"Good enough for government work,"* to him it meant that the job was done to the best of his ability. While I wasn't there when he died several years ago, I have a feeling that if he reflected on his life at the end, he most likely would have said, *"Good enough for government work."*

What about you? If you were to look back at your life, what would you say? Remembering your successes and some of the mistakes you made along the way because of temptation. You might not say *"Good enough for government work."* But you might say to yourself, *"good enough"* and leave it at that. But someone with higher standards might say, *"No, that's simply not good enough."* And you know who would say that to you? God. Because at the end of our lives, we will stand before Him and we will be judged. *"Good enough"* simply will not work because His standard is perfection. And when it comes to keeping His Law, we might need some, if not a lot, of help.

This is why Jesus came. While we think of Jesus' death on the cross as our substitute, we often forget that He also came to be our substitute in life as well. Instead of trying to live a perfect life attempting to please God, whose standards you will never meet. You can trust Jesus, who came and pleased God perfectly for you. Jesus is your Savior not only by dying on the cross for you but also for living a perfect life on your

behalf. Thank goodness, because this is also true even when it comes to temptation.

This morning we heard about the time after Jesus' baptism when He was led by the Holy Spirit out into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Verse 2 says that **"...After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."** This was not any kind of intermittent fasting either. After that long, Jesus must have been weak, in pain, and not feeling very well. Still, He trusted the Father that everything would work out.

This is when the devil says to Him, **"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."** (v.3) Tempting Jesus not to fast anymore as a man, it was almost as if the devil wanted Jesus not to trust in His Heavenly Father to take care of Him and to use His power to do His own thing by turning stones into loaves of bread. The devil does this to us when he tempts us to think that we can disobey God and do our own thing, especially when we might be "suffering." We say to ourselves; God will understand. But Jesus replies by saying, **"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**(v.4) Because He based His life on every word that came from God and continues to trust in God the Father for you.

Then the devil took Jesus to the top of the temple and encouraged Jesus to jump. This time, in order to question Jesus' trust of Scripture, the devil quotes some verses from Psalm 91, saying **"For he will command his angels concerning you...On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."** (v.6) The devil does this to us when he encourages us not to worry about our health, our family, or those around us. It's as if the devils said to you: Why not live recklessly? God will take care of you. But Jesus said to the devil, **"Again, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"**(v.7) In doing so, once again, Jesus trusts in the Word of God.

Finally, the devil took Jesus up a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and said, **"All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."**(v.9) He tempts Jesus not to sacrifice Himself on the cross for us. Instead, Jesus could worship him, implying that he owned everything as if he was God. And yet, the devil tempts us

by trying to get us to worship anything other than God. Instead of trying to live as God intended, the devil tries to get us to think that happiness can come to us by living our lives for ourselves, disrespecting authority, being immoral, gossiping about other people, and worshipping money. But Jesus says, ***“Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.’”***(v.10) And the devil left Jesus because Jesus was not going to fall for that temptation. He will only bow down and serve His Heavenly Father, even if it means sacrificing His life, shedding His blood, and dying a terrible death on the cross.

Many people believe that today’s reading will make us “good enough” to be able to win when dealing with temptation. If we can try to use logic, our feelings, or follow what others do, we will fall to temptation. On our own, we will never be “good enough” even for “government work.” Temptation will come our way, but it is only when we rely on the Word of God that we can resist these temptations. The Word of God is very powerful. The writer to the Hebrews says, ***“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*** (Heb. 4:12)

But the real reason that Jesus was led out to the desert in order to be tempted was to defeat temptation perfectly. Being “good enough” is not enough to meet God’s standards. So, if you look back over your life and realize that you have fallen to temptation, remember too that Jesus stood in your place, and defeated temptation for you. In Him, God accepts you for Jesus’ sake because of what He has done for you through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This is Good News for you, the community in which we live, and for the world around us.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Service Notes: Are You Good Enough for Temptation?

1. Jesus came to be our substitute:
  - a. to suffer and die on the cross.
  - b. to live a perfect life.
  - c. to rise from the dead.
  - d. to be our prophet, priest, and king.
  - e. all of the above
  
2. The Law sets standards that
  - a. we cannot meet even if we work at them.
  - b. we can meet if we work at them.
  - c. we can meet if we just think more about them.
  - d. all of the above.
  
3. Temptation is
  - a. something that only affects Christians.
  - b. something that Jesus overcame perfectly.
  - c. something we can ignore if you don't believe there is a devil.
  - d. something that is best dealt with using logic, intuition, or by watching others.
  
4. Jesus overcame each temptation in the desert by
  - a. saying that ***"man does not live by bread alone..."***
  - b. saying that ***"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."***
  - c. saying that ***"You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve."***
  - d. knowing and using the Word of God appropriately.
  - e. all of the above.
  
5. The Good News is that
  - a. Jesus teaches us how to overcome temptation.
  - b. Jesus is our substitute in temptation.
  - c. Jesus is more than "Good Enough" for me.
  - d. Jesus is my Savior.
  - e. all of the above.