

**Sermon Series: Christ at the Crossroads—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—2/13/2005**

**Title: “Christ at the Crossroads of Temptation”**

**Text: Matthew 4: 1-11**

**Intro.: *Illus.: Largest blackout in history started small***

**Theme:** Every day we stand at the crossroad leading to God’s will and way and that which leads away; in Christ, we have not only the forgiveness for when we fail but also the empowerment to win the battle and to choose the path of life

***The many flavors but the common thread of every temptation***

- Satan preys and plays in the areas of our weaknesses
- 2. When we go from mountain top to valley floor (**Print and read Matthew 4: 1**)
  1. Jesus just came from the Father’s affirmation (*my beloved son; listen to him*) to Satan’s slander (*if you are...*)
  2. Devil (*tempter/slanderer/accuser*) comes to tear down God and us with the lie
- 3. When we are physically exhausted (**Print and read Matt. 4: 2-3a**)
  1. Jesus physically taxed by a 40 day and night hike and fast in a desert
  2. **Ills.: The Edge of Exhaustion and Danger**
- 4. When we are physically threatened (**Print and read Matthew 4: 3**)
  1. Jesus is tempted to put self-preservation above the Father’s purpose
  2. Recognizing “*flight and fight*” vulnerabilities (child rearing, work pressures, illness, relationship difficulties, etc.)
- 5. When we need someone else’s attention/affection (**Print and read Matthew 4: 5-6**)
  1. Satan muses: A grand-stand power display of his power would have been a great way to kick off a ministry
  2. Not understanding *who we are* and *whose we are* traps us into making poor choices to fill that aching need
- 6. When we feel a shortfall in our resources to get today’s task done (**Print and read Matthew 4: 8-9**)
  1. Jesus was up against a religious and political culture indifferent or even hostile to his mission
  2. When we start trusting in what we can assemble to get through today is when Satan has us out on thin ice
- Who are you listening to?
- 7. Satan, the Liar
  - a. Much of today’s pop-psychology is laced and riddled with Satan’s propaganda and pandering to sinful nature
  - b. *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8: 44*
- 8. The Good Shepherd, redeemer
  1. Jesus consistently countered Satan’s ploy with “*It is written . . .*” (**Print and read Matt 4: 4, 7, 10**)
    1. Don’t think that Satan will take this lying down — he also know who to twist the Word (**Print vs. 6**)
    2. **Ills.: Insidious identity theft — twisted the right questions for the wrong purpose**
  2. *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. John 20: 27*

***The victory which is yours in Jesus***

- Do not be alarmed — ***Expect it!***

9. The story of Jesus' temptation is given so that we would not give up hope – *been there, done that, can help*
10. Spiritually grasp the situation in which you stand
11. *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 1 Peter 5:8-9*
- Do not be clever — **Reject it!**
12. Jesus did not dabble or traffic in the gray areas of temptation
13. *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Rom. 6:12-13*
14. *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Gal 3: 27*
- Do not be resigned — **Defeat it!**
15. To not concede to Satan's guilt when you fall (*There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Rom 8: 1*)
16. Don't be afraid to tell Satan and his "agents" to get lost (**Print and read Matt. 4: 10**)
17. Wait on the Father, who sees your need, to fill your need (**Print and read Matt. 4: 11**)

### **Largest Blackout in history started small**

One sagging electrical line near Cleveland, Ohio, connected with a tree branch at 3:32 p.m. on August 14, 2003, beginning a chain of events which led to the largest blackout in American history. According to the most comprehensive study yet, the failure of this single transmission line caused a utility company in southern Ohio to overload and seal itself off from the now infamous power grid. To the north, this created a huge need for power, and Cleveland began sucking an unsustainable amount of electricity from Michigan and Ontario<sup>1</sup> knocking out more transmission lines and generating plants. When the need for more power reached New York, power plants there sealed themselves from the grid in order to protect their own systems. This, however, created a new problem when New York, ironically, had too much electricity and overloaded its own system. The result: history's largest shutdown. Similarly, seemingly small actions and choices can end with devastating personal consequences. Sin often starts with one small choice, but the end result is ruined families, ruined churches, ruined lives. **Citation: Robert Daneker, Jr., Allentown, PA; source: James Glanz and Andrew C. Revkin, "Experts Retrace a String of Mishaps Before Blackout," The New York Times (8-23-03**

## **The Edge of Exhaustion and Danger**

In *Into Thin Air*, Jon Krakauer tells of his harrowing experience climbing Mt. Everest. On May 10, 1996, Krakauer made it to the top. He paused only for a few minutes before heading down, his muscles exhausted, his limbs frozen, and his brain oxygen-deprived. As he descended, some clouds drifted up and enveloped him. Soon, thunder, lightning, and a snow storm threatened to disorient him, but he was close enough to base camp number 4 to get to the sheltering tents before the full force of the storm hit. Four climbers arrived at the summit shortly before Jon and did not have time to get to the camp before darkness. The storm caused them to lose their way. Exhausted and lost, they simply lay down to wait out the night. When they awoke in the morning, they found they had lain down just one step from the 4,000 foot precipice of the South Wall. They had slept the night on the edge of a cliff in the middle of a snowstorm. Our culture can disorient us with the winds of relativism and the darkness of unbelief. Many people are unaware that they sleep on the edge of disaster. The light of the gospel reveals our position and points the way to safety. **Citation: Jeffrey Arthurs, Portland, Oregon**

### **Matthew 4:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. <sup>3</sup>And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." <sup>4</sup>But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' "

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.' " <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; <sup>9</sup>and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.' " <sup>11</sup>Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.[NASB]