

BEGIN THINKING OF SUCH A PERSON

A sermon (the first in a series, Lord willing) on the Divine “Christosphere” (a word we are coining), or on operating “*in Christ*” as Christ operated “*in the Father*.”

Please glance at Hebrews 12:3—“*Consider Him Who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*” Another way to say this is, “*Be thinking of such a person...*” Let’s think about Jesus this morning. In fact, let’s begin to think about Jesus for the weeks to come, realizing that everything we learn about Him has some application for our own lives.

Do you guys remember me asking the theological question,

*“Was Jesus not able to sin, or
was Jesus able not to sin.”*

When I asked that question I also gave *my* answer, the answer I had been taught—“Jesus was not able to sin.” My main thought behind that answer was that Jesus is God, and God cannot sin, be tempted *by* sin or tempt anyone *to* sin.

IT SURE LOOKS LIKE A TEMPTATION!

The Bible says, “*Then (right after His baptism) Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.*” And most of us know about the three temptations, the temptation to turn stones into bread after He had fasted for 40 days; the temptation to make a grandstand display of His divine power by throwing Himself down from the highest point of the Temple; and the temptation to receive the kingdoms of the world from Satan, who owned those kingdoms by “right of conquest” in the Garden of Eden where Satan defeated Adam, the first human being for whom the Earth was created.

All Jesus had to do was by-pass the Cross and the plan of God to redeem mankind--and bow down to Satan; gain with no pain!

I was taught that the original word for “*tempted*” means to be *tested* more than it means to be tempted, the idea being to merely demonstrate that Jesus is truly God. You know, like parking two semi-trucks on a new small bridge to demonstrate that the bridge is strong enough to support any number of cars crossing it.

But, on the surface, the account of Jesus facing off against Satan certainly *looks like* a bonafide temptation, or three bonafide temptations.

Well, Jesus *is* God, and God cannot lie. God cannot sin in any way at all. God cannot fail. **But Jesus is also a man!** The Bible teaches that Jesus is the God-Man, that is, 100% God and 100% man. He is both—both God and man, and not some strange hybrid that is neither God nor man.

My answer for you that day when I said Jesus was not able to sin was too simplistic. His deity nature was not able to sin, but Jesus has two natures. **The Scriptures contrast His Deity and His humanity in many ways:**

- * He called the weary to Himself for rest, **yet** He was weary.
- * He healed all manner of sickness and soothed every pain, **yet** He was in agony.
- * He grew and became strong in spirit, **yet** He was eternal, all-wise and all-powerful.
- * He was born ignorant and was Self-limited (for instance, He did not say from His manger, "Mom, it's time to change My diaper again"), **yet** He was all-knowing.
- * He was made "*a little lower than the angels*" for a season, **yet** He said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."
- * He prayed, which is always human, **yet** He Himself answered prayer.
- * He slept in a boat due to exhaustion, **yet** He woke up, rebuked the storm and stilled the waters. "*What manner of man is this?*" the Apostles asked themselves. He is the "God-man."
- * As God He was present at both His starting point and His destination; as a man He had to walk to get from one point to the other.
- * "*Before Abraham was,*" He was, but He declares it hundreds of years later to some Jewish descendants of Abraham under the dominion of, then, modern Rome.

SO, I BELIEVE HIS DEITY WAS NOT ABLE TO SIN

But I now suspect that His humanity was **able not to sin** (*I do not say this dogmatically. I spoke dogmatically before and I may have been wrong. This is now the way I am leaning. As we move forward let's think about it together. An open question like this often causes us to be more studious*), but the idea that Jesus was **able not to sin**, or **able to not sin**, implies that Jesus **could have sinned**, that He could have failed, given up, thrown in the towel and called the whole Divine experiment off!

Jesus had said at some point, I'm not sure when, "*Here I am—it is written about Me in the Scroll—I have come to do Your will, O God.*"

If Jesus was able not to sin and, therefore, was able to sin, and then if He *had* sinned-- He would have failed to keep His agreement with the Father to do the Father's will. But as we all know, Jesus kept His word to the Father. His whole life on Earth from start to finish was impeccable. "**Impeccable**" is a fancy theological word which means **He experienced freedom from sin, from three categories of sin—**

1. Christ was free from **Adam's original sin** because God, not man, was His Father, and His mother was a virgin.
2. He was free of a **sin nature** because He was not born spiritually "*dead in trespasses and sins*" as we were born (Ephesians 2:5); Jesus was born both physically and spiritually alive! So, with *no original sin* and *no sin nature* the first two categories of sin were already eliminated from Jesus' life by the time He was born.
3. Freed from Adam's sin and the sin nature (spawned by Adam's sin and transmitted to all of the sons and daughters of men) He faced life having only to contend with avoiding **personal sins**. And to be our Savior He had to be the "*Lamb of God*" without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:8).

ONE THING WE KNOW, HE DID NOT SIN

If He sinned, even once, He would be disqualified to be a substitute sacrifice for Mankind—

ONLY SOMEONE NOT UNDER CONDEMNATION
CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF THE CONDEMNED

Hebrews 4:15 says, *“For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet without sin.”*

THEREFORE, HIS NAME IS EMMANUEL—

“God with us”: God Who goes through it with us. God Who went through it Himself, and knows how to get us through it and Who goes through it with us.”

The Second Person in the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, took on the nature of a man. He became a man—spirit, soul and body. He is still God, but He is also a man. He is now the God-Man! He is the only Member of the Trinity Who is also a member of the human race, and He is the only member of the human race who is also a Member of the Trinity. And He will forever be unique in this way.

May we, with caution and humility, contemplate how wonderfully we have been positioned in Christ both now and forever. (Ephesians 2:6, 7)

HE HAS BECOME OUR KINSMAN REDEEMER—

OUR CHAMPION, OUR REPRESENTATIVE MAN IN THE GREAT ‘REMATCH’ BETWEEN THE LAST ADAM AND SATAN TO DECIDE THE FUTURE OF THIS WORLD AND OF ITS’ INHABITANTS.

But since He was (and is) a man, though in some ways more like Adam before The Fall than like us (and that is not inappropriate since it was Adam who lost the first match)—since He was a man, and *lived* like a man, and *hurt* like a man, and *grieved* like a man, and *died* like a man, *perhaps He was able to sin like a man—HOW, THEN, WAS HE ABLE TO NOT SIN LIKE A MAN?* If He used His Deity Nature to perform the healings and to do the miracles, proving that *“in Him dwelled all the fulness of the God-Head in bodily form,”* but since He did not draw upon the powers of His divinity to battle Satan and to resist sin, then what was it that gave Him the ability to, *as a man*, live above sin?

JESUS WAS ABLE TO NOT SIN BECAUSE HE OPERATED IN THE SPHERE OF THE FATHER

He was able NOT to sin because He lived, breathed and walked in the Power-Sphere of His Father in Heaven. He “walked in the light!” He could do all things through His Father

Who strengthened Him. He lived in total agreement with and in submission to the Father's will. His core virtue was humility which protected Him from presumption, arrogance, rebellion and sin. He had a, "*Not My will but Thine be done*" predisposition.

HE HAD THE MIND OF THE FATHER

He was indwelled, guided by, controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit Who was given to Him by the Father when He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Jesus had God the holy Spirit inside Him and God the Father encompassing Him on the outside.

He had an invisible support system. The Father "*worked into Him both to will and to do His good pleasure.*" He lived a life of total faith and dependence on the wisdom of the Father. He operated within the strategy, or "Game-Plan" of the Father, if you will. He chose freely to not operate independently of the Father.

Instead of "stinking thinking" like many people have, He had "Linking Thinking" and Ought Thought. He "yoke-fellowed" with the Father. He stayed within the Love Complex of the Father and refused to operate outside of it. He abided in the Father as a branch abides in the vine, and produces fruit.

Jesus explained His impeccable life and His success as a man a number of times:

"...understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father." John 10:38

'Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My Own. Rather, it is the Father living in Me Who is doing His work.' John 14:10

"...the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father..." John 6:57

"...the Father knows Me and I know the Father." John 10:15

"...I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love." John 15:10

Jesus prayed, "*Father...you are in Me and I am in You.*" John 17:21

SOMEONE HAS SAID IT BEAUTIFULLY:

"It took God to show us how to be a man."

JESUS' "JUST AS" DECLARATIONS

LET'S NOW UNDERSCORE THE APPLICATION OF THESE SCRIPTURES FOR US.

Some of the phrases I just quoted were parts of larger "**JUST AS**" DECLARATIONS spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ that pertain to us:

Luke 22:29: "*And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me.*"

John 6:57: "**Just as** the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me."

John 15:10: "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, **just as** I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love."

John 17:21: "...that all of them may be one, Father, **just as** you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Revelation 3:21: "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, **just as** I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne."

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Actively and consistently partnering with the Father in the Father's love and His loving provisions sustained Jesus and made Him the Winner over Satan, sin and failure!

CHRIST THEN TURNED AROUND AND OFFERED TO US WHAT GOD THE FATHER HAD OFFERED TO HIM

Since the weapons of Christ's warfare were the spiritual provisions and advantages that were resident "*in the Father*," that is, in the sphere of the Father, we could refer to it as "**The Father's Sphere**." We could now call what Jesus offers to us "*in Himself*" as "**The Christosphere**." This will be our own term. There may be a better way to designate it, but I can't think of anything more descriptive and Christ-centered than "Christosphere."

So, Jesus' method of operating was always within the "Father's Sphere," and our M.O. is in the Christosphere.

We, too, can be winners over Satan, sin and shame by operating in, abiding in remaining in, not operating outside of, but keeping our M.O. inside of, the Christosphere, the Sphere of Jesus' love and grace provisions.

Will we achieve sinless perfection in this life like He did?

No, we will not.

No, because there are some differences between us and Jesus, between His more *Adam-like* humanity and our humanity, still, His humanity, like ours, was yet unglorified humanity. But Jesus—our own Jesus Who understands us, and empathizes with us, and Who surrounds us with His love, has provided ways, **appropriated by our awareness of and faith in these truths**, in which He can make *us* winners!

Every spiritual advantage that God offered the humanity of Christ, Christ now offers to us—plus some additional aids, such as the privilege of our personal and private confession of sins we commit that place us, temporarily, outside of the Christosphere. 1 John 1:9 promises us that "*if we confess our sins (name them) He is faithful and just and He will*

forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And 1 John 1:7 refers to being inside the Christosphere—(and) if we walk in the light as He is in the light (because He IS the Christosphere), we have fellowship with one another, and the (residual power of) the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purifies us from all sin (placing us back “in the light” and back in fellowship with the Lord Jesus).”

He had the endwelling Spirit; we have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

He had prayer; we have prayer.

He had God’s Word; we have God’s Word.

He had specific promises; we have specific promises.

He had power over sin; we have power over sin.

He had principles that worked; we have principles that work.

He had a total awareness of what He had going for Him “in” the Father; we can have a similar awareness of what we have going for us “in” the Son—in the Son and in the Father.

We have much to say about our life “in” Christ. There are details about the Christosphere, and information on the sequence of a Biblical “buffet” of ingredients for growing in grace within the Christosphere, and teachings about gaining momentum within the Divine Provision that we are calling the “Christosphere” from spiritual infancy to sharing the happiness of God!

If you are interested be here and study with us in the weeks to come.