



“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Luke 4:13 "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left him until an opportune time."

From our verse we learn that the temptations were finished, but the devil wasn't. He hadn't given up yet. There was no white flag being waved. He'd be back. He'd come in the form of Peter, who rebuked Jesus. He'd come in the form of Pharisees, who tested, twisted and turned everything Jesus said, upside down and inside out. He'd come in the form of shouts from the crowd at the Calvary who dared Him to come off the cross. The devil tried. He tried hard. Jesus was tempted as we are, yet without sin.

There are some things we ought to see from this:

First, the devil isn't finished with you, either. As long as there is breath in your body and you are walking on the Lord's side of things, the devil is after you. Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts." Light years ago, I was invited to speak at a church. They told me to bring a lesson that I liked. I did. It was a sermon on "fleeing youthful lusts." The youngest guy in the congregation was in his mid 60s. But there are also middle age lusts. And, there are lusts for senior citizens. The type and nature of the lusts may change, but what doesn't change is that the devil is still after you. He has chased us all of our lives. There have been days when it seems that he won, but there are many more days when we know that he hasn't.

All of this tells us that there is no coasting along as Christians. We must keep our guard up and be alert. We must put on that full armor of God. The arrows of Satan fly across the skyway, but with the help of God we will make it safely through.

(OVER)

Second, some things in life seem to repeat and come back around. It's looking more and more like this pandemic is firing up again. The first time around, most churches were caught off guard. We hurriedly put things together, cancelled things and limped along as best as we could. Now, we know. Now, if the storm clouds darken again, we ought to be better prepared. Shame on us if we get caught off guard again. Be talking. Be planning. Be stock piling. Be ready. Let's do things better this time, if there is a second wave. Better communication among the shepherds. Better communication between the shepherds and the flock. Better use of social media. Better ways to stay connected and better ways to teach.

Third, Satan is looking for an "opportune time." Phillips states this as: "the next opportunity." Just when is a good time for Satan? Have you thought about that? Have you heard a sermon on that? Anger, Paul told the Ephesians, gives the devil an opportunity. When we are mad, we typically don't think. We let our emotions get the best of us. We say things that we shouldn't. We make decisions that are not thought out well. Opportunity. Opportunity for us to sin. Opportunity for us to put our light of influence out. Opportunity to join the devil in doing wrong.

When did Satan first tempt Jesus? In the wilderness, when Jesus was alone, tired and hungry. Opportunity. The devil knows when you are alone. The devil knows when you are stressed. The devil knows when you are tired. Those times are golden moments for Satan. Away from your church family—an opportunity. Out of town— an opportunity.

If we can learn about opportunities, then we can go a long way in protecting ourselves from Satan. Learn to step up your game when you are in those moments. I hate snakes. I hate snakes with a passion. And, I know, some will tell me that snakes kill mice and that they are good. So will a cat. While I was out of town recently, my wife was pulling weeds at the back of our place near the woods. She saw a snake. A big one. A copperhead. She found a neighbor and he took care of it. It didn't go to Heaven, either. Now, when I'm back there, I'm looking very carefully. My mind is attentive to the area. We must be the same when we are in those moments of Satan's opportunities.

Fourth, Satan left Jesus for a period. That is good to know. There are moments when Satan won't be hounding you. There are times he leaves, especially if you resist. James promises that Satan will flee. Not for good. Not forever. But for a moment. And, it is then that you catch your breath. It is then that you take spiritual inventory. It is then that you rest, pray and get ready for the next round. Not every waking moment of every day is an attack from Satan. It's not that way. I especially find comfort during worship. Worship can seem like a spiritual oasis. We need that.

You and I also have opportune times. Times to invite. Times to have a conversation. Times to do good. Those opportunities often do not come at a good time for us. But we can make adjustments. We can work things out.

The devil left...but he was certainly coming back.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
