

“Secret Battles”

...the grand entrance
(Luke 4:9-13)

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I. Introduction

A. Learning to climb with ropes

1. Crazy things I did in Southern California
2. Cliff where LABC student fell and died
3. The struggle to the top wasn't too bad
4. But, standing on the top
 - a. Won't stand near the edge
5. The common fear of heights

B. The Temple

1. Built on top of Mt. Zion

The top of the mountain was leveled out into a plateau, and on that plateau the whole area of the Temple buildings stood.

2. The Pinnacle of the Temple (Barkley, p. 68)

There was one corner at which Solomon's porch and the Royal porch met, and at that corner there was a sheer drop of 450 feet into the valley of the Kedron below.....

3. The morning trumpet

On the top of the roof of the Temple itself there was a stance where every morning a priest stood with a trumpet in his hands, waiting for the first flush of the dawn across the hills of Hebron. At the first dawn light he sounded the trumpet to tell all people that the hour of morning sacrifice had come.

4. The massive gates would be opened and people by the thousands would pour into the temple courtyard
5. The venue for the final temptation of Christ

II. Review

A. Led to the wilderness

1. After the baptism
2. The wilderness
3. Led by the Holy Spirit
4. Why he went

B. The Temptations

1. The first 40 days
2. The big three
 - a. Number One.....stones to bread
 - b. Number Two.....bow down and worship
 - * Matthew records them in a different order than Luke
 - c. Now, The Final Temptation

III. Text...Luke 4:9-13

A. Satan keeps on trying.....v.9-10

(9) The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point (the pinnacle) of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here.

1. He likes to wear us down.....v.9
2. "If (since) you're really trusting God to care for you, prove it by jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple. Have God catch you."
3. Satan even quoted Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12).....v.10

(10) For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; (11) they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

4. How false cults pick and choose verses from the Bible
5. But what was the temptation?
 - a. Tempted to do something other than the way God prescribed
 1. Jesus was to follow the Father’s plan
 - b. Tempted to do something ahead of God’s timing
 1. To avoid the agony of the Cross
 2. Not God’s way...not God’s timing
 - c. Tempted to put God to the test for personal gain
 - d. Tempted to incorrectly apply scripture for personal gain
 - e. An attempt to kill Jesus
 - f. Tempted to do something for personal glory
 1. I John 2:16

“For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world”
 2. The quest for glory....***“the pride of life”***
 3. NIV ***“the boasting of what he has and does”***
6. Satan was tempting Jesus to make a sensational entry
 - a. Their long sought-after Messiah....picture it
 1. With the silver trumpets blasting
 2. And thousands cheering wildly
 3. Escorted by an angelic honor guard
 - b. Edershiem

“Jesus stands on the watch-post where the white-robed priest has just blown the trumpet to assemble the people. Fast, the rosy morning, deepening into crimson, and edged with gold, is spreading over the land. In the Priest’s Court below Him the morning sacrifice has been offered. The massive Temple gates are slowly opening, and the blast of the priest’s silver trumpet is summoning Israel to begin a new day by appearing before their Lord. Now then let Him descend, Heaven-borne, into the midst of the priests and people. What shouts of acclamation would greet His appearance! What homage of worship would be His! The goal can at once be reached, and that at the head of believing Israel.”

c. Who of us wouldn’t enjoy the applause...ticker tape parade

7. But....that wasn’t God’s plan

8. Jesus responds with scripture (Dt. 6:16)

(12) Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (13) When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

9. Satan never gives up....he would wait for another opportunity

10. This was a temptation to seek and to enjoy the accolades of man

a. “Since you are the son of God....”

*pride

b. Wanting people to think highly of you

c. Thinking you deserve the best

11. Pride is a tough sin to break up

a. Often unseen by others

b. One of our toughest “Secret Battles”

c. Often accompanied by good works by good people

1. Good deeds are often the reason for the pride

2. People commend us for doing good

3. And we enjoy it!

12. The consequences of pride

- a. (Proverbs 29:23) *“A man’s pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor”*
- b. (Proverbs 11:2) *“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom”*
- c. (Proverbs 16:18) *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall”*

13. Why God hates pride

- a. It demeans the Grace of God

- 1. Ephesians 2:8-9

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God...(9) not by works, so that no one can boast.

- b. Not saved because we are good

- 1. Jumping to Catalina Island

- a. 26 miles from end of the pier
 - b. Some farther than others
 - c. But none come close

- 2. None of us come close to deserving salvation

- a. But through Jesus and what he did

- 3. It’s grace and grace alone

- a. All we bring is sin

B. God’s remedy for pride

1. Hosea 10:12— “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed (fallow) ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.”

- 2. They were a proud people

- a. Thought they were better than others
 - b. Hosea addressed their pride as sin
 - c. He used the illustration of “fallow ground”
3. They were also a nation of farmers
- a. They knew what “fallow ground” was
 - b. *“Fallow ground is ground which has once been tilled, but which now lies waste, and needs to be broken up before it is suited to receive rain or grain.”*
 - c. It had grown hard
 - d. Seeds would not take root in it
 - e. It needed to be broken
 - f. It needed to be plowed
4. They needed a revival

C. The need for regular revival

- 1. Revivals start among believers
 - a. When proud hearts get broken
 - b. *“Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord. And he will lift you up, higher and higher”*
- 2. Gypsy Lee on how to start a revival
 - a. First draw a circle around yourself—
 - b. Then pray that God will start the revival within the circle
- 3. Revival and those of us raised in church
 - a. The joy of your salvation has grown cold
 - b. Your heart has grown less sensitive
 - c. Just going through the motions

4. When the rain falls on unplowed soil
 - a. The ground grows harder
 1. Flash floods in the desert
 2. The “crust” on the surface
 - b. My preaching is like rain
 1. Is it bouncing off of a proud heart?
 2. Causing the ground to grow harder
 3. Seeds bouncing off the hard soil
 - c. It is time to stop resisting and let the Holy Spirit plow your fallow heart

III. How to break up a fallow heart

A. Plow deep

1. Do an honest self-examination
 - a. Do you struggle with pride?
2. Is your life characterized by
 - a. Needing to tell people what you’ve accomplished
 1. ...or who you know
 - b. Comparing yourself with others
 1. ...and figuring you’re okay because you’re not as bad as them
 - c. A desire to be recognized for what you do
 1. “Doctor” Koole
 - d. Secretly thinking God chose you because you were better than others
 - e. Viewing the destitute of the world and thinking it’s because they didn’t work as hard as you
 - f. Fake humility

- g. The loss of “the joy of your salvation?”
 - a. Has your heart grown hard?
 - b. When was the last time you were broken?
 - c. How long since you wept over a brother or sister headed for hell?

3. Sin is paid-in-full for the believer

4. But unconfessed sin will cost the believer dearly

- a. The loss of fellowship with Christ
- b. The loss of impact
- c. The joy of salvation
- d. The loss of fruit
- e. The loss of spiritual tenderness
- f. The loss of purity
- g. The loss of passion
- h. The reality of grieving God

5. How to examine yourself (Charles Finney)

Self-examination consists of looking at your life, in considering your actions, in calling up the past, and learning its true character. Look back over your past history. Take up your individual sins one by one, and look at them. I do not mean that you should just cast a glance at your past life, and see that it has been full of sins, and then go to God and make a sort of general confession and ask for pardon. That is not the way.

You must take them up one by one. It will be a good thing to take a pen and paper as you go over them, and write them down as they occur to you. Go over them as carefully as a merchant goes over his books and as often as a sin comes before your memory, add it to the list.

General confessions of sin will never do. Your sins were committed *one by one* and as far as you can come at them, they ought to be reviewed and repented of one by one.

6. Pride is one of the secret sins that include...

a. A failure to love God

1. The greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-30)
2. The greatest commandment—the greatest sin!

b. Failure to love others as yourself

1. The second greatest commandment?

Mark 12:31—“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

2. The quest for the heart of Christ

- a. We are the body of Christ
- b. How people can see Christ today

3. Jesus—the friend of sinners

- a. They are the mission field—not the enemy
- b. “Let this heart so be in you”

c. Bitter spirit

1. Toward somebody that hurt you deeply
2. Why revival tarries

d. A lustful mind

1. Your search for pleasure

e. Hypocrisy

1. You try to appear humble
2. You aren't what you appear to be
3. If others could see inside your mind

- f. Anger
- g. Fear
- h. A lack of trust

7. The church is a dangerous place for the proud

- a. Have sat through hundreds of sermons
 - 1. Have resisted the pull of the Holy Spirit
 - 2. He doesn't draw you much any more
- b. The Word will harden you...

1. "The rain and snow on an old fallow field makes the turf thicker and the clods stronger."

B. Plow often

- 1. Daily examination
- 2. "Keeping short tabs"
- 3. Ask Him to point out your secret sins

C. Plow thoroughly

- 1. What appear to be small and insignificant
- 2. Prepare like you were getting ready to be judged
- 3. If you knew that tomorrow you would die and face God
 - a. Keone's dad
- 4. Charles Finney

In breaking up your fallow ground, you must remove every obstruction. Things may be left that you may think little things, and you may wonder why you do not feel as you wish to spiritually, when the reason is that your proud and carnal mind has covered up something which God required you to confess and remove.

Break up all the ground and turn it over. Do not balk it, as the farmers say. Do not turn aside for little difficulties. Drive the plow right through them, beam deep, and turn the ground all up so that it may all be mellow and soft and fit to receive the seed and bear fruit a hundred fold.

When you have gone over your whole history in this way, thoroughly, if you will then go over the ground the second time, and give your solemn and fixed attention to it, you will find that the things you have put down will suggest other things of which you have been guilty connected with them or near them.

Then go over it a third time and you will recollect other things connected with these.

Unless you do take up your sins in this way and consider them in detail, one by one, you can form no idea of the amount of your sins. You should go over it as thoroughly and as carefully and as solemnly as you would if you were preparing yourself for the judgment!

D. Plow now!

1. Those who will do it...later
2. If you put it off...the ground grows harder

Go now! Don't put it off. That will only make the matter worse. Confess to God those sins that have been committed against God, and to man those sins that have been committed against man. Don't think of getting off by going round the stumbling blocks. Take them out of the way.

IV. Summary

A. The high cost of a hard heart

1. A loss of effectiveness
2. A loss of joy
3. A loss of health

B. Preparing for Communion next week

1. I Corinthians 11: 27-29

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. (28) A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and

drinks of the cup. (29) For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30) That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (31) But if ye judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. (32) When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned by the world."

2. *"Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee"*