

FOTS - Wk 8  
Faithfulness > Compromise  
10/3/21  
Luke 4

### Introduction

Tim. Pastor. **EQUIPPING WEEKEND.** **Luke 4:1-13.** Pray.

We are continuing tonight in our series on The Fruit of the Spirit in a Time of the Flesh. Looking at this battle going on between these two internal operating systems within us - The Holy Spirit, given to us at the moment of our conversion who is making us more like Jesus - and the flesh, this old way of doing life apart from God.

So we're looking at various parts of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in juxtaposition to the works of the flesh. Got 3 more to go. Tonight: **Faithfulness in a Time of Compromise.**

### Time of Compromise

Let's start by talking about **compromise.**

In his 2018 commencement address at Harvard University, author, politician, and philosopher Pete Davis started his speech with this:

**I am sure many of you have had this experience — it's late at night and you start browsing Netflix looking for something to watch. You scroll through different titles — you even read a few reviews — but you just can't commit to watching any given movie. Suddenly it's been 30 minutes and you're still stuck in Infinite Browsing Mode, so you just give up — you're too tired to watch anything now, so you cut your losses and fall asleep. I have come to believe that this is the defining characteristic of our generation: *Keeping our options open.* There's this philosopher, Zygmunt Bauman — he called it "liquid modernity" — we never want to commit to any one identity or place or community — so we remain, like liquid, in a state that can adapt to fit any future shape. Liquid modernity is Infinite Browsing Mode, but for everything in our lives.**

Liquid modernity. Infinite browsing mode. Keeping our options open.

**This is the face of compromise in our time.**

And here's why → The driving question that motivates us in our day to day life is this - **How do I get what I want?** I want what I want and I don't care what I have to do to get it. We build our lives and base our decisions on what maximizes the most personal happiness or personal welfare for ourselves, and we bounce or bail on our commitments or our promises or even our convictions whenever those get in the way of that - **because our ultimate conviction is the conviction of happiness.**

Which then of course leads to compromise:

- Why stick to a promise if it makes your life more difficult?
- Why commit to something that makes you feel sad or leads you to suffer?
- Why tell the truth if it's personally costly?
- Why stick with your job, or friends, or church, or spouse if your needs aren't being met and you're not being fulfilled?

This is going on everywhere in our society. This compromising to maximize our personal gain:

- It's the **politician** who flip flops on their positions month after month to chase more votes or move up the ladder.

- It's the **athlete** who takes performance enhancing drugs to keep their spot on the team or hit more home runs or run a faster mile.
- It's the **pastor** who is willing to shift on some of his theological convictions for the sake of more people in the seats or more money in the offering.
- It's the **employee** who shifts some numbers around to avoid a bad monthly evaluation or the **entrepreneur** who exaggerates just a little bit to investors to help raise more money.

And you can give one example after another after another. Our commitments in today's society are fluid and shiftable based upon what will maximize our happiness and pleasure and ease our discomfort.

**We live in a time of compromise.**

**And this pull or temptation to compromise is deeply true for those of us who are followers of Jesus....**

Our faith is countercultural. I don't just mean here and now in 2021 Charlotte. I mean any time or any place in history you would never be able to completely reconcile your discipleship to Jesus to everything within the cultural system in which you lived.

Why? Because we're called to be Citizens of God's Kingdom before we're citizens of any place here on earth - and that's always going to come with friction and always going to lead to a temptation to compromise.

**But I will say specifically here in our day and age, right now 2021 Charlotte, NC I do think there are two specific ways we are pulled to compromise.**

**Biblical (or theological) compromise.** There is massive pressure in our society right now, and only seems to be growing by the minute, to fold it on some core convictions of our Christian faith. The Church at large is now being pushed to question positions that the historic Christian Church has held for thousands of years - things like the historicity of Jesus. A bodily resurrection. Atonement for sins. Inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. Human sexuality. Necessity of commitment to a local church.

**Moral (or relational) compromise.** If theological compromise is us saying "I don't think the Bible actually says that or can be trusted", moral compromise is us saying "I know the Bible says that but I'm going to go against it." And we start compromising. We don't live in line with the Biblical call to holiness and faithfulness to God. Our lives start looking more American than Christian. Our budgets, our schedules, our homes and families, our careers and priorities start being shaped more by the world around us than by our discipleship to Jesus.

And what's so dangerous about this pull in our flesh to compromise as well is that it often **starts small** and we may not even realize it.

It's the small compromise first of what we watch, what we think about, what we're willing to say. A little bit of bitterness here, a little bit of anger there, a little bit of lust over here. It always starts with small compromises. It doesn't just immediately go - I'm going to blow up my life - it's just a little bit at a time. Or one area of our lives at a time.

**Keller - "Who are you sleeping with?"**

And this is all of the flesh. Our flesh wants to live apart from God. Our flesh is constantly pulling us to rebellion against the ways of Jesus. Compromising a little bit here and a little bit there.

There's always this constant pull in the flesh to compromise....

## Fruit of Faithfulness

And yet the way of Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit is **faithfulness** — **fidelity, loyalty, trustworthiness. Following through on what you promised.**

As Christians we are called to be faithful first and foremost to **God**. This means our primary loyalty is to Him. We are invited, through Jesus, into a covenant relationship with God. Not a **contract, a covenant. A contract** is what you agree to with your landlord. If you uphold your end of the deal and pay your rent, they uphold their end and give you a place to live. That's a contract. A covenant is a relationship where both sides say - I'm going to uphold my end regardless. The clearest, albeit tainted by sin, view of this that we have in our world today is marriage - where both parties vow to one another through ups and downs, highs and lows. This is a **marriage covenant.**

This is the type of relationship God enters into with His people. In fact, one of the primary metaphors the Bible uses for God's relationship with His people (Exodus 19, Hosea 2, Eph 5) is that of a bride and groom. There's a marriage like fidelity and faithfulness between us and God. God always upholds this relationship, we don't. He always stays faithful, we don't.

But the invitation for the people of God is that God's continued faithfulness towards us would draw us towards faithfulness to Him. That's the type of faithfulness we are invited into here in this fruit of the Spirit. That our trust, hope, and love are placed on God and so we stay loyal to Him in the big and small, highs and lows, of life.

I think a really good phrase to sum this up is from the title of one of my all time favorite books by the late pastor Eugene Peterson. He calls our discipleship to Jesus - **A Long Obedience in the Same Direction.**

Here's what he says near the very beginning:

**"There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness."**

That's the essence of the fruit of faithfulness - we sign up for the long haul of obedience with Jesus heading more and more towards Him. We sign up for patient development of the fruit of the Spirit long after a 10-week sermon series is over. We sign up for the long, slow, tedious, painful path of discipleship to Jesus that takes time. A life of faithfulness marked by honesty, dependability, and loyalty to God that then works its way down into our other relationships and callings.

That's the vision for a life of discipleship and maturity that continually over time, and more and more, we learn to say "yes" to God, and "no" to the things of the world.

### Jesus + Faithfulness - Luke 4

We see this fruit of faithfulness clearly in a particular story from the life of Jesus. **Luke 4.**

As we examine this story in the life of Christ, here's what's going to happen - Jesus is baptized, He's going to be led into the desert by the Holy Spirit. He's going to fast for 40 days and then the devil is going to show up and is going to start tempting Jesus. He probably tempts him throughout the 40 days, but we have specific details about the three. And in the midst of those temptations Jesus is (spoiler alert) going to stay faithful to His heavenly Father.

**So I want to look together at these three temptations, and I want to show in particular the specific things the devil tempts Jesus to compromise for, and show how these play out in our lives.**

**1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.**

Here comes the devil, verse 3:

**3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” 4 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”**

Alright pause. Here’s the first temptation of compromise.

### **1) The devil tempts Jesus with provision**

Jesus is in a not so great physical state right here. Didn’t eat for 40 days. This isn’t magically easier because He’s Jesus. Remember - He was fully human. This guy is hungry. And the first temptation the devil gives is over provision. He questions Jesus’ identity - “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” Feed yourself. Make bread appear. If you really are who you say you are then why are you starving?

In other words - Satan tempted Jesus to use his power to satisfy his own desires rather than trusting in God to supply all that he needed.

Now, maybe our temptation to compromise isn’t turning stones into bread. Maybe that’s not our temptation → But we’re still tempted to compromise for provision aren’t we?

**We don’t trust God’s provision, we don’t trust His loving care with our needs or desires, so we compromise....**

- I don’t trust God to provide the belonging or value that I need so I have to compromise and date that person I know I shouldn’t.
- I don’t trust God to provide true rest in Jesus so I have to compromise and be lazy towards my kids or apathetic towards my spouse.
- I don’t trust God to provide for me financially so I have to cut some corners at work and make it look like I’m doing better than I am.

**Citizens.** I feel this pull all of the time in regards to this church. Church planting and pastoring is a weighty task. And God has been overwhelmingly and abundantly kind to our church so far in its short history. And yet I can doubt God’s provision and I can doubt His kindness. And I can begin to believe that Jesus in Matthew 18 doesn’t actually say - “I will build my church” - and I can begin to believe that what he actually meant to say was - “Tim will build my church”. I can doubt God’s **providence**, and His **will**, and His **timing** to do what He wants to do or not do in and through this church family.

And I can begin to be tempted towards compromise:

- I can’t say that thing too strongly in the sermon because folks will leave.
- I can’t tell this person they’re off and in sin and call them back to repentance because they’ll leave.
- Maybe if we just shifted a little bit here, or maybe if I worked a little more over there and compromised on the home front or on my own walk with Jesus - then the church will take that step it needs to take.

And this is true particularly in the lows. It’s easier for me to be faithful in the highs, it’s harder to be faithful in the lows. In the times of pressure and suffering. It becomes like “treat yo self” type compromises you know? Making excuses that my tough situation at that moment justifies my compromise.

And my doubt of God’s provision pulls me towards compromise rather than faithfully doing the work God has laid out before me trusting His hand along the way.

The devil tempts Jesus in a moment of pressure and suffering - 40 days without food in the desert - give in, provide for yourself - Jesus points Him back to Scripture - “Man shall not live by bread alone.” We don’t have to compromise, we can be faithful because God supplies all of our needs in Christ Jesus.

**5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 6 and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. 7 If**

you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” 8 And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”

## 2) The devil tempts Jesus with power

Satan attempts to offer to Jesus without the cross and suffering, what God the Father has promised through the cross and suffering. Satan says to Jesus - “I’ll give you rule and reign over the whole world, if you will worship me.” And yet in the Kingdom of God the way up is down. Jesus knows the way to ruling and reigning is through his suffering, sacrifice, death, and resurrection.

It’s a temptation to compromise for **power**? Now again, no one is probably tempting us with reigning over all the kingdoms of the world - but the pull to compromise to reign over our individual kingdoms is just as strong. We are tempted towards the same thing. We are pulled to compromise on our discipleship to Jesus for power as well.

**Politics.** I think one of the clearest examples of this right now - compromising by Christians for power is in the area of politics. Can we talk about this? That ok? Before you get mad at me, this is true on both sides of the political spectrum. Christians on the right and the left can both be accused of compromising Biblical truth for the sake of political power.

- On one side we’re guilty of compromising on moral standards of elected officials or we hand over our gospel witness for the sake of who we want to win elections. So you have folks sinfully and shamefully using force to take over the capitol building, “in the name of Jesus.” It’s off.
- But also on the other side we compromise on historical doctrines the church has held for thousands of years on things like sexuality, identity, and the sanctity of life so we’re not cancelled or blasted.

And that’s the large scale way we do this, but we do this in our day to day life as well. We compromise on our discipleship to Jesus for power, for control.

We have bought into the American lie of always upward and to the right. My life should consistently get more comfortable, more powerful, more successful, and I’m going to do whatever it takes to make that happen. We dismiss Jesus’ call to downward mobility. We dismiss the call of Christ to come and die. To come and lay down our moving forward and getting ahead for the sake of God’s Kingdom.

9 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ 11 and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” 12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

## 3) The devil tempts Jesus with protection

The devil starts thinking he’s slick. Jesus has been quoting Scripture to push back against satan’s schemes, but now satan starts quoting Scripture too, albeit horribly. He uses some promises of God from the Scriptures to try to get Jesus to test His Father. But Jesus doesn’t give in. He’s not going to do this. He knows He has the full protection of God the Father, that nothing happens outside of the Father’s will, and He knows the purposes and plans laid out before Him to go to the cross.

But there is still the pull and temptation towards protection. And this is true for our compromising as well. We are tempted to compromise for our own self-protection.

**Mission.** I see this a lot in our fear of sharing our faith. We’ll share parts of the gospel, or talk around the gospel, and not say anything about the gospel to non believers around us, largely out of self protection → I don’t want them to think I’m weird, I don’t want them to not want to hang out with me anymore or be my friend anymore, I don’t want to be offensive. We compromise on the call to share the gospel, to be a witness because of our own self protection.

We are tempted in our flesh, day in and day out, week in and week out, to compromise for: Provision, Power, and Protection

### God's Spirit + God's Word

And we are called to become more like Jesus and step into this fruit of faithfulness. To not compromise. To not “just give a little leeway”. We are called to take sin seriously. To take God's Word seriously. To remain steadfast.

**How? How do we do this? Jesus gives us the pattern in Luke 4.**

**Two ways:**

#### **THE SPIRIT**

**Vs. 1 - “full of the Holy Spirit...”** and vs 14...

Jesus keeps in step with the Spirit. This is the call for us in Galatians 5, remember week 1 - **Gal 5:16 - But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**

We keep in step with the Spirit. We don't fight our battles against compromise alone. It's not Tim vs. Flesh. It's Spirit vs. Flesh. We seek God's power through His Spirit on our behalf. We learn to walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit who helps provide a way out from the temptation to compromise.

#### **THE WORD**

Look at Jesus' response to each temptation:

- Vs 4 - “it is written....”
- Vs 8 - “it is written....”
- Vs 12 - “it is said....”

Jesus uses God's Word to fight off temptation. He is the true and better Adam. Adam who is enticed by the great liar, the devil → “Did God actually say?”, and he gives into temptation, eats the fruit, and sin enters the world. But Jesus is the true and better Adam. He knows what God has said and not said. He is not enticed by the lies and schemes of the enemy. He knows what God has declared.

A key battle point in our fight against compromise and sin is that we must know what God has said in His Word. This is what the Psalmist says in **Psalm 119:19 - I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.**

We get in God's Word. We memorize the truths of Scripture so when we're tempted to compromise - theologically or morally we fall back on - no, this is what God says. I know it. I've read it. I've studied it. I've memorized it. I trust Him and I trust it. I'm going to live what it says and believe what it says.

The Spirit and the Word.

### Pastoral Word

Can I just give us from my heart a pastoral word of encouragement (I know I'm going long today but I want to talk about it): **Do not grow weary in the small choices of faithfulness.**

I have this sense right now in our church of a spirit of weariness. Of just being tired with the day in and day out grind of the Christian life. And this is by no means an indictment or me wanting to come at you. I'm with you in this feeling too. (ANT - walking through mud).

For so many of us the past couple of years have been difficult seasons of transition and change:

- New churches, new cities, new babies, new marriages, new friendships, new jobs, new life stages.
- For others of us, there's been nothing new, and that's wearisome.

And the pull towards weariness gets us to compromise - not in the big stuff - I'm not worried about the big stuff for like 95% of us. It's the small stuff of compromise. It's the small acts of faithfulness that our weariness makes us start phoning it in on.

It's the:

- Loving our spouse
- Reading the Bible
- Showing up to group
- Investing in Christian friendships
- Guarding our hearts
- Doing good work in the city

Small stuff of faithfulness that our weariness and our enemy makes us think - you know what, no big deal. I can skimp a little bit here and a little bit there, and we miss the reality, as has been famously said by many people - "Character (faithfulness) is not made in the crisis, it's revealed. It's made in the small moments of life."

Paul just a few verses after the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 6:7-10 says this:

**7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

Sow to the spirit in the little acts of faithfulness - and you will reap the reward of godliness.

**Corrie and Casper ten Boom.** There's an incredible story of this from church history. Some of you may have heard of Corrie ten Boom. She wrote a memoir of her life called *The Hiding Place* where she talks about her life as a Dutch Christian during the German occupation of Holland in World War 2. She and her family were imprisoned and sent to concentration camps for hiding and saving Jews from the Nazis. The whole thing is a really beautiful picture of ordinary Christians trusting and obeying Jesus in the midst of utter chaos.

In the book, Corrie talks a lot about how ordinary and awesome her dad was. Describes how every morning before any of them went to work, her dad would gather them at the breakfast table and read a chapter of the Bible. It's funny how Corrie talks about it because it's exactly how you'd imagine it. Some days they had deep conversations about amazing insights from the scripture. And she says some days it lead to no conversation at all. "Alright, let's get to work." But Casper just modeled for his kids "we believe that God's Word is changing us whether we get anything out of it in the moment or not." And the more they read God's Word, the more they read about Jesus' care for the broken and lonely. The more they read about Him healing the sick. The more they read about Him welcoming in the broken and the foreigner and giving His life up for sinners like them.

And so when the first Jew came to their door seeking shelter, the response was automatic. Without even knowing it they'd been preparing for a long time. Casper ten Boom's watch shop became known as the place to go get help. Whether it was

financial help, emotional help, the town just knew that the ten Boom's lived like Jesus. This was the normal rhythm of their lives when the Gestapo moved in and the bombs started falling in Holland. So inviting in Jews and gypsies and any seeking shelter was the most natural thing in the world.

When the family was eventually caught sheltering and aiding Jews, they were rounded up and taken to the concentration camps. And a member of the Gestapo said to Corrie's dad, "Sir you're very old and I'd like to send you home. All you have to do is promise me you will stop hiding Jews in your house." And her dad looked back at the soldier and said, "Sir if you send me home today, I will open my door to the first person who knocks tomorrow." He was so trained by the teachings and life of Jesus, so enamored with helping his neighbor, that there was no way he was gonna stop.

Just about everybody I know wants to be that kind of person - courageous, faithful. Willing to stand up to the evil empire to live and love like Jesus... but we're just not as quick to realize the connection between becoming that kind of person and the practices of faithfulness that allow it.

Casper ten Boom didn't magically become a courageous hero who looked like Jesus when the war started. His heroic courage was the end result of a lifetime of mornings spent around a table with the bible open. Faithfulness is built in the small moments, and revealed in the crisis.

What are you building in the small moments? A life of faithfulness and fidelity to Jesus? Or a little compromise here, and a little compromise there.

### The Gospel

We follow the example of Jesus and we learn to be faithful day in and day out.

**Now, we could end there.** And that would be true, and that would be helpful. We head into this week ready to keep in step with the Spirit and get into God's Word to fight against compromise. Good. True. Helpful.

***But it gets even better....***

**Because Jesus doesn't just give us a pattern to follow, He gives us a perfectly faithful person to believe in.**

Jesus stays faithful. He says no to temptation. That is good news because we do not stay faithful.

Church, I can plead with us to not compromise, to stay faithful to God - and that is a good and necessary call - but I'm well aware of my inability to stay faithful to Christ. I'm well aware that I'll have stuff to confess at Community Group on Tuesday night about my compromises and my lack of faithfulness to Jesus in the next day and a half.

And so I need more than a good example of how to fight temptation from Jesus. I need more than a pattern, I need a person. I need a Savior. I need Jesus to be perfectly faithful on my behalf. And He was.

**And that's why the gospel is good news:**

- Because Jesus' said no to these temptations, and every temptation He faced - He could be the perfect spotless sacrifice required on the cross.
- Because Jesus remains faithful, He could be the perfect substitute for faithless people.
- Because Jesus is righteous, He can take our sin and give us His righteousness.

Because of the faithful life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - when God sees us, those of us who have put our faith and hope and trust in Christ - He sees not our inability, not our fickle hearts, not our compromising lives, not our inability to stay true to God - but Jesus' faithfulness on our behalf.



And here's the shocking part - the requirement to receive Christ's faithfulness, is that we must admit and embrace our faithlessness. The way to receive Christ's sacrifice is to acknowledge - I am faithless. I cannot remain faithful to God. I cannot see this through. I need Jesus.

And we in our faithlessness, fall back on the faithfulness of Christ.

And then the call comes.... **Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.**

God is faithful - that is the good news for us yesterday, today, and forever - God is faithful. So we respond to His faithful love with the fruit of faithfulness. Trying, failing, and by the power of the Spirit trying again.

### Cultivating Faithfulness

Grace + Grit.

Pray.

Response:

- Communion
- Prayer
- Worship