

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Under Pressure

Have you ever seen the Exploding Watermelon Experiment? I wouldn't suggest you try it at home unless you're prepared to clean up afterwards, but you will find videos online if you are curious!

The experiment involves stretching hundreds of elastic bands to apply pressure to the watermelon as they contract and squeeze.

Pressure increases and you start to see the melon bulge around the elastic bands. Eventually the potential energy created will put enough force on the watermelon to force the top and bottom of the fruit apart in a messy explosion!

This week we have entered the season of Lent, when we spend 40 days reflecting and preparing ourselves for Easter, echoing the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness before the start of his public ministry. The Bible tells us that Jesus 'was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.' (Luke 4: 1-2) He was tired and hungry after fasting for 40 days and that was when the devil went to prey on his vulnerability and tried to tempt him.

Temptation is a pressure that we all experience and it can come in many guises. Sometimes temptation looks like wanting something we can't have, or giving in to bad habits, or choosing to cut corners, or tell lies instead of doing the right thing.

Just like when Jesus was vulnerable in the desert, temptation often comes at our weakest moments. The devil tricks and squeezes us into thinking that succumbing to pressure will make things better or our lives easier. The thing is, temptation may seem harmless at first, but it can sometimes lead to something more destructive. Like with the watermelon, when we allow that pressure to build and act on our weaknesses, we risk an explosion of consequences which risks not only damaging our own lives but also our relationships with others and with God.

Jesus faced intense pressure, but he always responded with strength and wisdom. When the devil tried to tempt him, Jesus didn't give in. Instead, he used God's Word to counter each temptation and didn't allow the devil's lies to dictate his choices. This season of Lent is an invitation for us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. As we reflect on his time in the wilderness, we are reminded that when we face temptations, we don't have to give in to the pressure. We have the word of God, the same truth that helped Jesus withstand temptation, to help us make the right choice.

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