

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 15TH-16TH // BOOK OF MATTHEW

TEMPTATIONS (MATT. 4:1-11)

CHARACTER IS ESSENTIAL FOR LEADING WELL

After the beautiful baptism scene of chapter 3, we move into the hardships of Jesus' ministry beginning with His temptation. God knows that being tested strengthens our morals and character, much like lifting weights with our muscles.

- **Temptation isn't a sin, and distorting that will lead us to be discouraged.**

CHARACTER IS ESSENTIAL FOR LEADING WELL

It is also worth noting that we have already noticed that walking with God has highs (baptism), lows (temptations and opposition), and hard work (fasting and praying).

- Our walk with God is similar. **There are great moments of victory, lonely dry seasons, and it takes work and determination to do what is right.**

SATAN KNEW THE BIBLE AND WHO JESUS WAS

There was no question of authenticity, Jesus had created Lucifer. Satan also knew the Word of God, but he distorted it by **taking it out of context.**

- **This is why we must not take the Bible out of context. When we do, it can be confused and even used for evil purposes.**

SATANIC TEMPTATIONS

Satan works in subtleties and manipulations (Gen. 3). The 3 main ways that Satan lures us into sin is by **lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride.**

- Basically, Satan says to us, **"Doesn't this look good? Why don't you try this? It will make you in charge and give you control."**

JESUS WAS PREPARED FOR TEMPTATION

Some may see Jesus' 40 day fast as a handicap, but it was actually a spiritual weapon that prepared Him for temptation.

- Jesus 1st temptation was about provision, or having enough to live. This is still how Satan tempts many of us; **to believe we can make it without God's help.**

THE 2ND TEMPTATION WAS TO ABUSE POWER

The 2nd temptation was for Jesus to be "showy" with His power and to test God by throwing Himself off the temple and commanding angels to save Him.

- This is one of the greatest downfalls of mankind. **We constantly seek and then abuse power,** even in religious circles.

TEMPTATION #3 WAS TO TAKE THE EASY PATH

Satan took Jesus to a "very high mountain" and oddly enough promised Him the kingdoms of the earth if He would worship him. The trick here was to get Jesus to avoid the sacrifice of the cross.

There could be no salvation without blood and sacrifice. Change never happens without sacrifice!

"THEN THE DEVIL LEFT HIM."

By Jesus quoting the Word and by His simple command for Satan to leave we see Who has the real power and authority.

- **We must spend time with God to overcome temptation, we must lean on the Word for strength, and we will have the power to command Satan to leave in Jesus' name.**

THE LIGHT SHINES (MATT. 4:12-17)

JOHN HAD GOTTEN ARRESTED

Though many turned their lives around because of John, the atmosphere in Jerusalem had become hostile towards him. The final straw was John calling out Herod the tetrarch for adultery.

- This was the passing of the baton to Jesus. Jesus moved to north Israel and would work His way down the country.

EVERYWHERE HAD BROKENNESS

Jesus moved up north because Jerusalem wasn't receptive to His message yet, but the north wasn't any better. The region of Galilee had been almost destroyed by pagan armies and was in deep spiritual darkness.

- The quote from Isaiah 9 shows **the desire of Christ to bring light to the darkest corners of humanity.**

JESUS DIDN'T TRAVEL FAR

Jesus' ministry would be mainly to the Jews and only cover an area about 200 miles in radius, but Matthew shows us the long-term global implications of His ministry.

- Israel was the starting point, but **the message of repentance that leads to salvation, reconciliation, and peace,** would be taught globally by His disciples.

UNLIKELY LEADERS (MATT. 4:18-22)

"...FOR THEY WERE FISHERMEN."

Jesus saw Peter and Andrew as they were fishing and called them to "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Peter, Andrew, James, and John were in a family business of fishing in Capernaum which was also the home of Matt and possibly Philip and Nathanael.

JESUS CHOOSES UNLIKELY LEADERS

The majority of the people Jesus called, and especially the 3 closest to Him (Peter, James, and John) were very average individuals. Matt alludes that these men instantly left their careers and families to follow Jesus, a Rabbi they barely knew. The reason they would take such a risk lies in understanding Jewish culture.

MOST WOULD HAVE JUMPED AT THE CHANCE

At age 5-10, Jewish children were educated in the Torah. If a student was exceptional, at age 11-15 they would study the Tanakh. If they weren't the elite, they would go into blue-collar work. The elite would go on to be mentored by a Rabbi from age 16-30.

- An average Jew would have instantly taken a Rabbi up on an offer to follow.

GOD WANTS TO USE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

Jesus had nothing against the wealthy or educated and He uses them as well in His ministry, but His use of the average, the failure, uneducated, and despised shows God's power to transform and empower. **The point is that God will use anyone willing to follow His call!**

THE FOUNDATION STONES OF HEAVEN (REV. 21)

The 12 disciples (Matthias in place of Judas) gave everything to follow Jesus and teach His Gospel and suffered greatly. God not only used them on earth, but their names are written on the foundations of our eternal home.

- **Not only does God use those willing to follow Him, but He rewards them for eternity.**

WORKING (MATT. 4:23-25)

JESUS TAKES HIS TEAM ON THE ROAD

For several months Jesus and the disciples travel "preaching the good news of the kingdom" in synagogues in Galilee (north) before they start to move south.

- Jesus went to synagogues because the people would have listened to a Rabbi (teacher).

JESUS' 1ST PRIORITY WAS THE MESSAGE

Though Jesus mentioned repentance, judgment, and even Hell, **His message was one of hope, light, forgiveness, and restoration.** Jesus came to proclaim that keeping the 10 C's were impossible, but **through Him we can be in right standing with God.**

JESUS CAME TO PROCLAIM, TEACH AND HEAL

- **Proclaiming** is the large net. This is the very simple but important message that is sent out to the masses in hopes that many people will come to *want to know* Jesus.
- **Teaching** is the maturation process. We first hear the truth, but being willing to learn Who God is from the scripture is a big indicator of where our faith is.

HEALING IS WHERE IT GETS A LITTLE COMPLICATED

Healing is the result of hearing the proclamation and responding to the teaching. **Healing comes in a variety of ways; spiritually, emotionally, relationally, mentally, and sometimes physically.**

- It can also happen in a variety of ways; instantly, over time, in groups, through doctors, diets, and counseling.

HEALING IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD

Jesus healed everything from small discomforts to raising the dead. He also cast out demons and healed people of mental illness.

- **We must be biblically balanced in our approach to healing. We must believe that God can heal all things and trust that in His infinite wisdom He chooses to do what is best.**

THE POINT WAS ALWAYS THE GOSPEL

We must understand that we're all going to die, and we're not promised longevity in this life. Death exists because sin exists. We must also understand that we will all be completely healed in the life to come. **Jesus healed on earth to bring awareness of an eternal kingdom that has no suffering.**

PROCLAMATION / TEACHING / HEALING

God is adamantly trying to get our attention and time. He is trying to warn us that our ways will lead to destruction and that through His Son, He has presented a better way to live. **God has invited all people who want to change.** If we will be **humble and teachable**, God will show us through His Word and by the power of His Spirit how to live. Jesus' teachings will help us live a fulfilling life that honors Him and others. Through His teachings we find **peace, love, contentment, and purpose.** Sickness and death will exist until Christ returns, **but if we will trust God and live according to His design, we will all begin to experience healing.** Though healing may not happen the way we want in this life, **we can rest assured that Jesus loves us, knows what's best, and will heal all believers in eternity.**