

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 15TH-16TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS (MATTHEW 4:1-11)

The Spirit that descended on Jesus now led Him into the wilderness to be tempted (vs. 1).

- God is not the one who tempts (James 1:13), but God sometimes allows temptations in order to refine us and display His faithfulness (1 Pet. 1:6-7).
- Such was the temptation of Jesus- it was a demonstration of His power and divinity even in the face of Satan himself!

We need to know that there is an unseen spiritual world and there is a spiritual war.

- Our enemy in this spiritual war, Satan, is formidable (1 Pet. 5:8) and he's dead set on destroying the kingdom of Christ and the children of God.
- **The stakes in this spiritual war are eternal and the scope of this war is universal.**
- Our involvement in this spiritual war is personal- there is a specific way it is being fought in your own life.

The first Adam, met Satan and lost- and plunged humanity into sin and death (Gen. 3).

- Israel (also called God's son, Exod. 4) was tempted and tested in the desert for 40 years after they were "baptized" in the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2).
- Israel lost the battle against temptation as well- they complained, doubted God's goodness, and failed to trust Him to provide.

But now we see the "Last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) and the solitary Son of God warding off temptation and defeating Satan.

- Satan tempts Jesus with the same kind of temptations he used against Adam & Israel, and the same kinds he uses against us.
- **Jesus wards off the temptation through the same things that you and I have access to- the Word of God, our true identity, and the Holy Spirit.**

TEMPTATION #1- SELF-GRATIFICATION (VS. 3-4)

After 40 days of fasting, Jesus was hungry—so Satan's temptation was for Jesus to turn stones into bread to prove He's the son of God.

- He was saying to Jesus, "If God is your Father, why are you hungry? You desire food, and your Father doesn't apparently care! Satisfy your desires NOW."
- It's a suggestion that God is withholding good.

We have physical desires that are legitimate, but Satan often tempts us to meet those legitimate desires using illegitimate, sinful means.

- **Desire for food**= gluttony; **desire for sex**= pornography or adultery; **desire for rest**= laziness & complacency.
- Jesus quotes Det. 8:3 as a way of reminding Satan that life is derived not just from our physical desires being satisfied, but from God's Word.

TEMPTATION #2- TESTING GOD (VS. 5-7)

The next temptation is more subtle, and Satan ups the ante by even quoting Scripture (vs. 6).

- Satan tempted Jesus to jump off the "pinnacle of the temple" as a way of demanding proof that God would still be faithful to Him.
- But to do so would be a clear example of a lack of trust in God, and a way of trying to force God's hand to make the Father serve the son.

Satan often tempts us to question God's presence and manipulate God's promises.

- We're tempted to doubt His love for us when something goes wrong & to ask for signs that He's still with us even when He's shown us His faithfulness time and time again!
- But Jesus responds- "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deut. 6:16).

TEMPTATION #3- SELF-EXALTATION (VS. 8-10)

In verses 8-9 Jesus is taken up to a high mountain, either a physical mountain or in a vision, and he's shown all of the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

- Satan then tells Jesus that all of these things can be His if He would just worship him.
- Satan is the "prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31), and he is the influencer behind the mentalities of this world.

Jesus already knew that all authority would be given to Him, but the road ahead leading to that authority was filled with suffering, sorrow, and death.

- Satan still tempts us this same way- even though we're promised a Kingdom, he offers us the things of this world- but at a great cost.
- Jesus rebukes Satan with a knockout punch (vs. 10).

Jesus refused to exchange the ultimate reward of the Kingdom from the Father for the immediate rewards from the Devil.

- This is ultimately our same strategy to defeat temptation- setting our eyes on the higher rewards, not immediate gratification.
- After Jesus rebuked the devil, he fled, and ministering angels came and served Jesus (vs. 11).

A GREAT LIGHT (MATTHEW 4:12-17)

When Jesus heard that "John had been arrested", he withdrew into Galilee and went to live in Capernaum (vs. 12-13).

- Other Gospel accounts tell us that John had been imprisoned on account of publicly rebuking Herod Antipas over his sin, specifically over Herod taking his brother's wife.
- Jesus's choice of Capernaum in Galilee was significant.

Verses 15-16 quote Isaiah 9:1-2- it states that this region would "see a great light".

- Now, as Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee, His light shines on their spiritual darkness.
- "Galilee of the Gentiles" was a common name because it bordered on the Gentile nations.

Although Jesus's ministry would be mainly to Jews, Matthew makes it clear that the ultimate plan of salvation is for all nations!

- Jesus begins His ministry preaching almost the exact same message as John- "repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (vs. 17).
- The Kingdom is at hand because its King is, and the potential for its full realization is too.

FOLLOW ME (MATTHEW 4:18-22)

As Jesus walks by the sea of Galilee, he sees Simon (Peter) and Andrew "casting a net".

- While many of us picture fishermen in the Bible as poor laborers, most of them would actually have made a decent income.
- Simon Peter and Andrew had developed their family business enough to where they now owned their own boat (Luke 5:3).

Peter and Andrew were probably living fairly normal lives- Peter was married (Matt. 8:14) and most likely had a couple of kids.

- These men Jesus called weren't especially rich, educated, or religious- they were normal Jews living normal Jewish lives.
- Jesus's instruction to "follow me" was a departure from what was considered normal.

1st century Jewish men at that time would have been identified primarily by their occupations, their fathers, their political positions, or by where they were from.

- Jesus was calling them away from every identity their culture would assign them.
- It was a radical, counter-cultural call to leave behind all of the things that defined them.

"Follow me" was an invitation to imitate the life of Christ in all things.

- It was much more than a calling to a new religion or belief system- it was a calling to a new identity grounded in a relationship with a new Leader.
- It meant, "live with me and learn by watching me", "own my priorities & values", "learn to care about what I care about", & "follow my example by doing what I've come to do".

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "follow me, and make yourselves fishers of men."

- Jesus promised these men that if they surrendered to Him fully, that would initiate a process of growth in their lives that would change them into something far better.
- **But the condition necessary to begin this process was obedience to His command.**

The response of the disciples to Jesus was leaving behind all they knew (vs. 20, 22)

- Their faith in Jesus was shown as they left their careers, their families, their values, and their cultural scripts behind to follow His lead.
- They didn't try to redesign His teachings- they understood "follow me".

TEACHING, PROCLAIMING, & HEALING (MATTHEW 4:23-25)

After Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James, and John to be His disciples, they traveled throughout the region of Galilee (vs. 23).

- Jesus "taught in the synagogues"- meaning He explained & taught the Torah in either a village assembly or a building built specifically for worship.
- Jesus "proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom"- He preached publicly.

Jesus "healed every disease and every affliction among the people"- there was no illness that was too difficult for Him to heal!

- Vs. 24 illustrates the breadth of His healing ministry- He healed "lesser" or curable diseases, but He also healed those considered incurable.
- Not only that, He also delivered those "oppressed by demons"- Jesus displayed His absolute authority over the kingdom of darkness.

The result of this ministry tour in Galilee was that His fame spread (vs. 24), and "great crowds" from all over the country came out to follow Him (vs. 25).

- These large crowds "followed Him", but not in the same way as the disciples.
- As we'll see later, the commitment of the crowds was at times sporadic and temporary- **some of them were there to know Jesus as Messiah, but some were just there for miracles.**

TWO KINGDOMS.

"The kingdoms of this world and their glory." (vs. 8) "The Kingdom of heaven." (vs. 17)

This life is about choosing which one of these kingdoms will have your primary allegiance.