

Matthew is writing to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah and true King.

In **chapter 1**, he gives Jesus' genealogy to prove He is the Son of Abraham and the Son of David — the fulfillment of God's promises.

In **chapter 2**, Matthew shows how Jesus' early life fulfills prophecy:

- -born in Bethlehem
- -protected from Herod
- -called out of Egypt
- -raised in Nazareth.

By the time we reach chapter 3, Matthew wants us to see this clearly:

The King has arrived, the prophecies have lined up, and Jesus is stepping into His mission.

If you have your Bible, turn with me to **Matthew 3:13–17**.

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Right here we see this beautiful moment:

- Jesus steps into the water in obedience. Jesus wasn't being baptized because He had sins to repent of.
He was being baptized to **perfectly obey the Father** in every way.

Jesus was baptized to publicly submit to the Father's mission and identify with the people He came to save.

- The Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove.
- And the Father speaks identity over Him:
“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Before Jesus performs a miracle, before He preaches a sermon, before He faces the wilderness... the Father says, *“You are mine. You are loved. I am pleased with You.”*

Hold on to that, because in the very next chapter Satan will attack *that very identity* in the wilderness. And in the same way, before we talk about the war in our minds, we’ve got to start with this truth:

God speaks identity, love, and delight over His children... and the enemy will always try to attack it.

Throughout the Bible we see where the heroes of the faith battle wars in their minds.

The prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 19 was being hunted for his life. He was isolated and lonely and was feeling the weight of his situation.

He cries out to God saying:

1 Kings 19:4 – *“And he asked that he might die, saying, ‘It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.’”*

He was begging God to take his life. But God provides, meets him in his weakness, restores him, and he goes on to be one of the most famous prophets.

King David says in **Psalms 13**:

1 *How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?*
2 *How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

The New Testament references our minds and our hearts over 160 times.

This is not just a **biblical issue; it’s also a cultural issue.**

We face this battle today.

Depression, eating disorders, relational challenges, addictions, and even some forms of anxiety... it all comes from a negative pattern of thinking.

I believe the Lord is wanting us to focus our time thinking about our **brain**, about our **minds** this morning

You say, “*Why?*”

I think this is an area of our lives where the enemy has a foothold on us.

Now I’m no doctor. I’m no counselor. I have no degrees in this area.

But I have just walked through this situation in my life. It was something that had not happened overnight, but little by little the enemy eventually won the battle.

I had lost all my confidence. I had believed lies in my head. And honestly, I was ready to quit ministry and find another job.

See, the enemy is crafty. He is good at what he does.

Maybe you have experienced the lies he likes to whisper:

- *My spouse does not love me.*
- *You’re a burden to everyone.*
- *You can’t trust people.*
- *You will never break free from this issue you find yourself in.*
- *God doesn’t love you nor does He hear your prayers.*

And I hope my experience can help someone else who may be struggling as well.

The big idea for this morning is this:

Most of life’s battles are won or lost in the mind.

Two questions to tackle:

- 1. How does Satan attack our minds?**
- 2. How does Jesus help us win the war in our minds?**

We just read **Matthew 3:13–17** — Jesus’ baptism.

Jesus is baptized. The Father is pleased with His Son and the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove. It is this crazy moment where our God is all together in this moment: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

It is a mountaintop experience of **identity** and **affirmation**:

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

And immediately, that same **beloved Son** is sent into the wilderness where He is tempted.

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The Spirit didn't lead Jesus into sin — He led Him into victory. And just like Jesus, sometimes God allows wilderness seasons not to break us, but to build us.

That's how it works for us too, isn't it?

- God speaks truth over us.
- Then the enemy comes right after that truth, trying to twist it, question it, and attack it.

Matthew 4:2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

This is one of those verses you just read over and don't hold on to the weight of.

Jesus was being sustained or being fueled by prayer—this back-and-forth conversation with the Father.

And we are going to see how our enemy plays dirty. He didn't come after Jesus when **He was well rested, well fed, but when He was tired and hungry.**

Think about this... This is Jesus. The Son of God.

I would assume if I was the devil this is my moment to take Jesus out! He is weak!

Matthew 4:3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

Notice what that tells me: the best weapon the enemy has is **lies and deception**.

He questions Jesus' identity here...

“IF you are the Son of God...”

Remember what the Father just said in Matthew 3:

“This is my **beloved Son...**”

The Father says, “*You are my beloved Son.*”

The enemy says, “*If you are the Son...*”

The same thing happens to you:

- God says, “*You are my child.*” The enemy whispers, “*Are you really saved?*”
- God says, “*You are forgiven.*” The enemy whispers, “*You’re still dirty.*”
- God says, “*You are loved.*” The enemy whispers, “*You’re a burden.*”

Something we need to understand is that **our lives are always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts.** What we think shapes who we are.

What you think about yourself is who you will become.

Satan knew Jesus had to be hungry, so Satan told Him to turn stones into bread.

Satan—as he did with Adam and Eve—was trying to get Jesus to do something that wasn’t part of God’s plan for His life. (*That’s also what Satan does with you.*)

The enemy tries to come at us one lie at a time until you are a prisoner of deception.

How does Jesus respond?

Matthew 4:4 *But he answered, “It is written,*

‘Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Jesus stands strong and does not relent and quotes **Deuteronomy 8:3.**

Jesus says “It is written”

Paul talks about the war we will be fighting in **Ephesians 6**, and he talks about the armor that we are to be putting on:

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

13 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*
14 *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*
15 *and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.*
16 *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;*
17 *and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...*

This is the **offensive weapon** we have.

The **Word** is the weapon that we use when the enemy wants to lie to us.

Satan realized his first plan failed, so he attacked Jesus from a different angle. *(That is also exactly what Satan does with you. Same method, new try.)*

Matthew 4:5 *Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple*

Matthew 4:6 *and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,*
'He will command his angels concerning you,'
And On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone."

The devil took Jesus to the highest point of the temple in Jerusalem and dared Him to throw Himself off. Satan decided that two can play this game, so he quoted **Psalms 91**.

Yes, Satan knows the Bible too.

He wanted to tempt Jesus to prove He was truly God's Son by trying to force God to show evidence of His love and care.

Matthew 4:7 *Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*, quoting **Deuteronomy 6:16**.

That didn't work either, so Satan tried a different way of burrowing his way into Jesus' thinking. *(Again, that is exactly what Satan does with you.)*

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

Matthew 4:9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

He brought Jesus to a tall mountain, showed Him the kingdoms of the world, and offered to give it all to Him if Jesus would just bow down and worship him.

Jesus' mission was to come to earth and redeem mankind—a broken people who disobeyed Him—back to Himself. Satan is trying to get Him off the mission.

Skip the cross, Jesus!

Don't worry about the mocking, blood, beating, nails, death... you worship me and none of that has to happen.

Out of obedience to the Father and love for us...

Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

He quoted **Deuteronomy 6:13**.

Jesus wins the battle. We have a Savior and King who has experienced the same attacks we have and has succeeded and won.

Hebrews 4:14–16

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Shouldn't we take the same approach that Jesus did?

Three times, in three separate instances and temptations, Jesus exposed Satan's lie and engaged the truth of God's Word that He had been memorizing since He was a young Jewish boy.

Jesus' clear example, detailed for us in Matthew 4 (and rooted in the identity given in Matthew 3), is why it is essential that we know the Bible.

As followers of Christ, we prioritize reading the Bible, listening to Bible teaching, joining Bible studies, and getting God's Word into our hearts so we can wield the sword against the lies of the enemy.

So the first question is:

1. How does Satan attack our minds?

Lies and deception.

The second question is:

2. How does Jesus help us win the war in our minds?

Three very practical takeaways:

1. Bring Your Battle to Light

1 Peter 2:9 – *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

Bring your battle from darkness to light.

For many, the battle that we have is something that someone has done to you. You didn't choose it. You didn't deserve it. There may be trauma and hurt.

Satan uses these moments and allows us to believe these lies:
That you can't do anything for God, you're not good enough.

So bring it to the light. Share it with someone.

In Jesus we are not slaves to sin. His love casts out fear. There is healing and freedom available when things are cast into the light.

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power (dunamis – same root as “dynamite”) to destroy strongholds.

5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

Share it with a friend, a counselor, or a pastor, so that they can love and pray and walk you through it and so you know you’re not fighting alone.

2. Change Your Mind

Romans 12:2 – *“Do not be conformed to this world,[a] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

How do we think differently?

Similar to getting physically fit, you can’t go from the couch to the Ironman marathon in 1 day. It takes time and effort and consistency.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, a neuroscientist, talks about how if you pray for 12 minutes a day for 8 weeks—fixing your mind on Jesus and thinking less about the negative and more about the goodness of God—it will change your brain chemistry so much it would show up on a brain scan.

So science provides evidence for what **Philippians 4:6–8** says:

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Fix your thoughts on Jesus.
Not the news. Not social media.

(Bridget and myself Memorizing Scripture)

Americans spend about 7 hours a day on screen time. If we would just take away from the screen time and spend time with Jesus, our minds and lives would change. Be planted in a community that speaks life into you.

3. Replace Lies with Truth

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

take every thought captive to obey Christ...

Here's what this looks like practically:

Lie: *I will never be loved.*

Truth – Ephesians 3:17–19

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

God loves you.

Lie: *God can never use me.*

Truth – Ephesians 2:10

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Truth – Ephesians 3:20

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us...

Lie: *"The devil is too strong, the battle is too hard, I can't face this and win."*

Truth – Romans 8:31–39

31 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be[a] against us?*

32 *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

33 *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

34 *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?*

36 *As it is written,*

*"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

38 *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,*

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Jesus you are loved, adopted, freed, renewed, accepted, empowered.

And because of Matthew 3 and 4 we can say:

- The One who fought the war in the wilderness...
- The One who stood firm on the Word...
- The One the Father called "My beloved Son"...

He has already won the war.

We just need to trust Him to win the battle in our minds.

So this morning:

- **Bring your battle to light.**

- **Change your mind by fixing it on Jesus.**
- **Replace the lies with the truth of God's Word.**

And remember what the Father said over Jesus at His baptism:

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

If you are in Christ, that's the voice you preach to your mind:

“In Jesus, I am loved. I am His. He is pleased with me because of Christ.”