



# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

## GOSPEL OF MATTHEW WEEK 3: MATTHEW 4:1-11

### Community Group Study Guide - Week of January 10

This week we continued our series in Matthew by looking at the well known passage of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. As Jesus began his ministry, the Holy Spirit drove him out into the wilderness to fast for 40 days. During those 40 days, Jesus was tempted by Satan to compromise his mission and turn away from the plan of salvation that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit had ordained. As we look at each of the temptations mentioned in Luke 4, we see that Satan was tempting Jesus to pursue satisfaction, success and significance apart from God. Satan also wanted Jesus to believe that he could attain all the glory, power, and authority of being the Messianic King, without going to the cross.

One thing we should notice while reading this passage is that Satan does not reveal himself as the cartoon devil, or hideous monster that our culture expects. Scripture tells us that he more often masquerades as an "angel of light." Sin wouldn't be tempting if it appeared overtly evil or repulsive, so Satan works in more crafty and insidious ways. While he delights in great evil, his temptations more often come subtly so that though one small compromise after another, he can not only lead us into sin, but lead us there believing that our sinful behavior is rational or even justified.

The irony of Satan's temptations is that Jesus ultimately found true satisfaction for each of them by being faithful to His Father and to the mission. Jesus found gratification in the presence and the pleasure of God, and remained faithfully obedient to the point of death on a cross. The result that we read in Philippians 2, is that God the Father, "highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Satan's promises of satisfaction, success, and significance were in fact hollow deceptions that he had no power to fulfill. God the Father, however, was faithful and true to His Son, even through death.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are, but that he never sinned or gave in to that temptation. Satan often tempts us in the same way he tempted Christ. He wants to draw us away from God by promising us great gratification, identity, and significance in other things. In overcoming Satan, sin, and death, Jesus showed us that Satan and his lies have been exposed and defeated. He also proved that we can trust God is always good, and that His promises never fail. Now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we too are able to say "yes" to God, and "no" to temptation when it comes our way.

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

To understand Satan's primary tactics for tempting us to sin.

#### Heart

To trust that God's promises are better than Satan's temptations.

#### Hands

To fight sin and the lies of the enemy by knowing, trusting, and obeying the truth of God's word.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### In-Person Worship Services

THIS Sunday, January 17 at  
9:30AM and 11:30AM.

**Please go to** <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> **to sign up to serve on the Mini Mo or Usher Team.**

**A Membership 101 session** will be held on **January 24** at **1:15PM**. Please email [admin@mosaicboston.com](mailto:admin@mosaicboston.com) if interested in attending.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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## Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. **Read verse 1.** Why is it significant that the text says that “the Spirit” is the one who led Jesus “into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil”? What would be a better translation for the word translated as “tempted” in the ESV Bible translation?
2. What does Scripture teach about the role of trials in the Christian life? How can Christians have hope while facing such trials?
3. How can tempting us while we’re physically weak or suffering cause us to question our identity as sons and daughters of God? What trials in your life have caused you to question your identity as a Christian? How did your faith help you persevere when faced with this trial?
4. Think of the similarities between the temptation of Christ and the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan often attempts to undermine our trust in God’s goodness in order to make sin more tempting to us. Why should we trust God’s goodness, even when Satan makes God’s plans or God’s commands seem burdensome, unfair, or unreasonable to us?
5. **In verses 5-7,** we see Satan tempting Jesus to exalt himself by cheating death, instead of waiting for the Father to exalt Him at the resurrection and ascension [after experiencing death on the cross]. What can we learn from Jesus’ refusal to give in to this temptation? How might this apply to us?
6. **Read verses 8-11.** What does Satan offer Jesus with this last proposition? What priority should the worship of God take in our lives, given that we are the created ones and God is creator? How are you trying to seek significance in your life outside of the commandments of God?
7. So much of temptation is about settling for instant and cheap gratification, instead of waiting for the costlier eternal gratification promised by God. Why is this important to keep in mind? Why do you think God made delayed gratification such a big part of the Christian life? How have you experienced that in your life?
8. Throughout all of this we see that Satan doesn’t present himself as a hideous beast, but as Scriptures says, he masquerades as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). How can knowing this help us be on guard in our fight against temptation and sin? What are some of half-truths and lies that Satan is telling in these verses that we should be aware of?
9. **Read Hebrews 4:12-13.** How does the word of God reveal the things on which we are placing too much value for our satisfaction and sense of significance in life? **Read Hebrews 4:14-16.** How can we find courage from this passage to fight sin and temptation? How can we find comfort from this passage when we fail to resist temptation?