

Dealing with Temptation

Matthew 4:1-11

March 21, 2021, Kevin Laser

Good morning, I hope the sermon finds you doing well and enjoying the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we begin our time together, I invite you to open your Bibles to Matthew chapter four, where we are going to be looking at the account of Jesus, when He was in the wilderness and experienced the temptations by Satan. The Scriptures that we're going to focus on this morning are going to sanctify us, and they're going to draw our attention to the experience of temptation that Jesus faced while in the wilderness. My prayer is that for this message that each of us becomes more like Jesus, and that we are molded more into His image.

When Jesus came to earth, He put aside His heavenly glory. And He took on the fullness of humanity. It's a mystery as to how He did that, and yet the Bible is so clear about this. He took on flesh, although He was fully the Son of God deity, He was fully human. This was the appointed Messiah that everyone was anticipating, and yet most would end up questioning and doubting, who this was. God, in His perfect plan, appointed that Jesus, though, would be led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan himself. God determined that for 40 days, Jesus would undergo temptation directly from Satan, and in His humanity the Son of God, being Jesus would experience the fullness of temptation, so that He would know exactly what it was like for us to be tempted. He could relate to us in the area of being tempted, in which we face regularly. The only aspect of His temptation that He didn't experience like us, is from the position of having a sin nature. In other words, He didn't have a sin nature, a tendency or a start position of sinfulness like you and I tend to have. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God establishes who Jesus is. He is the anointed Messiah. But the question is, what kind of a Messiah is He? He is the Son of God from heaven. And if so, if He is the Son of God, how would He deal with temptation? Could He resist temptation? If He was truly the Son of God could he overcome a long stretch of direct and cunning temptation from Satan, the master tempter? Would He be able to resist every single temptation that Satan hurled at Him? And how did He deal with temptation? These are some of the questions that we're going to look at this morning, as we study from Matthew chapter four.

I invite you again to open up to Matthew 4:1-11. And we're going to read about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. Matthew chapter four, beginning of verse one.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE,

BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’ Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. 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, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’” Jesus said to him, “ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS WRITTEN, “YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.”” Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things I will give to You, if You fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

You'll notice at the beginning of this passage here that it says that Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. This was not some random experience where Jesus happened to be walking in the wilderness on an afternoon. This was not that He was looking for something or He's a little bit lost. This was God the Holy Spirit divinely leading Jesus into the desert as an appointment to meet with Satan, for temptation. This is a part of God's plan for Jesus to be able to show us and demonstrate how we are to be responding to temptation when we are tempted. In Luke, it says that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. He was fully controlled by the Spirit. His mindset was under the control of the Holy Spirit. He was being guided by the Holy Spirit. He was submitting to the Holy Spirit. You see, with Jesus, He was operating in the power and the strength and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for all of the days of His human life. And this is the same word “being full,” as in John 1:14, where it says, “Jesus is full of grace and truth.” Jesus was saturated and permeated with the Holy Spirit; He was filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit in everything that He did. He yielded to the Holy Spirit in all things, always doing the Father's will. And He was led now by the Spirit, to come into the wilderness and to be there fasting for 40 days. He was going to be tested and He was going to be proven to be sinless, and able to overcome every single temptation that He ever faced. He entered, in a sense, the waters of temptation where for a season, He experienced temptation He would never ever experience again.

And yet, we need to consider this setting. This was a wilderness setting. It was rugged, it was barren, it had no pastures. It had cliffs and different parts. It had all sorts of dangers, it had boulders on the hills, it had deep ravines and it had very little to no shelter at all for Jesus. It was not just a stretched, parched flat land, but it was very rugged. And Jesus being utterly weak, while fasting, He was prone to the danger of falling, of tripping, of the danger of wild animals. This was the most rugged land in all of Israel. And here Jesus was being led by the Holy Spirit, all alone with no companionship for comfort, or encouragement. And while in the desert, Jesus is regularly confronted by Satan, who tries in many ways to tempt Him.

But what do we know about Satan? Well, we know that he's the tempter, we know that he's the enemy. Everything in him is against everything in God. He is the adversary. He's against God and all that God is

for. You can say that he's an arch enemy of God on all points. It says in Isaiah chapter 14:12, that he, being Satan, was high and mighty, that he was a high and mighty creature created in such a way that he had a lot that he could be proud of. And he was filled with pride, and he was cast out of heaven for the fact that he sinned because of his pride. He wanted to be worshipped and he thought that he himself was worthy of being worshipped. He thought too highly of himself. His heart's desire was to usurp God's throne, and to be the one who was worshipped. He wanted to be the one that was worshipped. He wanted to be the Holy One, the one that was like no other. Pride was his downfall because of his great wisdom and power that he thought rivaled God Himself.

Well, what other words does the Bible use to describe Satan? It uses several words. It says, first of all, that Satan is a liar; nothing that he says can be trusted. It says that he's a murderer; his heart is filled and overflowing with constant hatred. It says that he's a dragon, conniving, and cunning and always malicious. It says that he's a snake, crafty, like we saw in the Garden of Eden, always ready to deceive. It says that he is an accuser; quick to point out our sins, even when God has already forgiven us of our sins. It says that he's the evil one; the intentions of his are always wicked, and always filled with evil. It says that he is the god of this world, that he rules this world. He rules the evil system, rather, in this world. It says that he is a roaring lion seeking for whomever he can destroy, always looking for someone to devour. It says that he is a tempter, always looking for ways to ensnare us and trap us and deceive us. It also says that he is a thief, ready to steal, kill and destroy our faith, our hope and our love. And it also says that he blinds the eyes of the unbelievers.

You see, Satan's ultimate plan is to thwart God's plan of redemption. He tempts Jesus here in hopes of thwarting or derailing God's plan to redeem mankind. Satan works against God's plan of redemption from all sorts of angles. If you could get Jesus to operate outside of being filled with the Holy Spirit, he would destroy the unity of the Trinity and prevent Jesus from being the Redeemer. If he could get Jesus to doubt the Father's love for Him, that would be disastrous, and it would derail the plan of redemption. If you could get Jesus to circumvent the Father's plan, it would have broken the faithfulness, the trust, and the love between the Father and the Son, anything to drive a wedge between Jesus and the Father. Satan's goal was to split or create a rift in the perfect union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What better way to stop the plan of redemption and usurp the throne than by dividing the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Of course, we know that never could have truly ever have happened. The faithfulness and the love and the trust between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, it's unchangeable; it's unalterable, nothing can cause either the Son or the Father or the Holy Spirit to act unfaithfully, unlovingly or independently of each other, for we know that Jesus said that He and the Father are one and absolutely nothing can separate them.

While fasting for 40 days, Jesus, though, was tempted, often. Temptation was ongoing, and it was relentless. In all likelihood, it was not isolated and limited to the three temptations that we're going to look at today. From every possible angle, Satan was personally tempting Jesus. Similar to letting Job suffer and prove his faithfulness and righteousness, Jesus here proved his Kingship and His

righteousness by overcoming and resisting every single temptation that Satan hurled at Him. It says in Luke 4:1-2, it says, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil." You see, it wasn't three isolated temptations, but it was ongoing temptation for 40 days, all while in the desert. Consider the fact that Jesus had no food, His strength was diminishing, and His body was being worn down. He had no friends to support Him or to encourage Him. And He had no comforts of home. He had nothing except being filled with the Spirit and His understanding of the Old Testament. He had nothing but the clothes on his back. Strength, though, was coming from praying to the Father, who was guiding and sustaining Him by the Holy Spirit.

You see, Jesus was incredibly weak at this point. In His humanity, He had no reserves, and He was drained of all strength and all resources. His weakness was deeper than any weakness that we would probably ever find ourselves in. You see, while at His weakest, Satan came on the strongest.

Let's look at each temptation, and let's understand what's going on. The first temptation is a lust to the flesh. Here's where Satan appeals to his hunger. He says in verse three, he says, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." You see, on the surface, it seems like Satan is questioning Jesus's deity, with the word "if." "If you are the Son of God." And perhaps he is, and yet that word "if" could also be translated "since". So there's a sense in which this could say, "Since you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." In essence, "Since you are the Son of God, the one from heaven, who is God and possesses all the powers of deity, do a miracle and change these stones into bread. Use your divine abilities to do this miracle; provide for your basic need needs, just by saying, 'turn into bread'." But what is this temptation truly about? Well, it appeals to his physical hunger obviously, it's natural and normal to hunger and to be thirsty. There's no sin in eating food. Nothing was wrong with eating bread or giving his body nourishment. As much as Jesus was hungry and desperate for some food, eating food would not have been the sin. The true temptation rather was to get Jesus to change the stone into bread outside of the will of the Father. It was the Father's will for Jesus to be fasting and praying, not to use His divine powers to satisfy His hunger. He was led to fast and pray, not eat and be fulfilled. Often Satan tempts us with something that is not a sin in itself, but rather how we get what He's tempting us with.

To understand the significance of this temptation, we need to understand that when the Son of God left heaven, He took on flesh, as Paul says, and He emptied Himself. He set aside the use of several divine attributes and His prerogatives. He humbled himself in His humiliation of becoming a man. It says in Philippians 2:6-7, "Who (speaking of Jesus) although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God, a thing to be grasped. But He emptied Himself taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men." What does it mean that He emptied himself, and he didn't consider equality with God, something to be grasped? Well, Jesus set aside His ability to do what He wants and to exercise His divine powers at His own will. He put on hold His abilities so that He would live with all of the limitations of the human just like you and I. Jesus became, like one of us with the same limitations

that we have. He would only do what the Father says, in His humanity, and then only by the power of the Holy Spirit. You see, He temporarily set aside the use of several of His divine attributes, so that He could understand and experience the fullness of living from our perspective with our weakness.

This divine appointment of being tempted, was a major part of God's redemption. Now note, although Jesus emptied Himself of the right to exercise His divine attributes, He didn't empty himself of His deity. He still remained 100% God, and He operated like He commands us to live. He lived like He wants us to live, by the power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. If He was going to die in our place, He had to become like us. If He was going to live a perfect life, for us to follow after, He had to undergo temptations to show us how to overcome temptations. You see, the arrangement was that Jesus being the Son of God, came down from heaven, and He went to lay aside many of His divine attributes while in His humanity, and He would live like us being fully dependent on the Holy Spirit for all of His needs. It was humiliating that He who created everything would now be dependent for everything. He committed to live with the limitations of being fully human, having the same limitations that you and I have in so many ways. He was dependent as a baby, He needed to be fed. He was dependent in terms of He had to learn how to walk. He learned with all the bumps and bruises, He had to learn how to be safe around fire. He had to learn how to be safe with animals. He had to learn life skills, including how to use tools for an occupation. He had to learn to take care of cuts and bruises and injuries. And physically, He was fully dependent on food and drink. You see, He gave up his heavenly glory, and His independent authority to do as He pleases. He completely submitted himself to the will of the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He gave up his divine prerogatives. He humbled Himself and He laid aside his right to exercise those.

When the Son of God became incarnate, he took every aspect of humanity except our sinful nature. Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He had no sinful nature. The temptation to make bread out of stone was to do something outside of the will of the Father. And this temptation was to get the bread aside from the Father commanding for Him to do that by the Holy Spirit. And it was for Him to do this in a miraculous way, which the Father did not want Him to do. It was a subtle temptation, because you see, eating food wasn't the sin. Needing food isn't sinful. The temptation rather focused on how and when Jesus would get the food that He needed. Yet Jesus submitted Himself fully to the Father's will.

Satan's temptation to Jesus went like this. "God isn't caring for You. Look at how hungry You are, You have nothing to eat, He hasn't given You what You need. You've got power to change the situation and create bread out of these rocks. You can do a miracle. It would be so simple, it would be so easy. Why not just do it? What's the harm in doing a miracle? It's only food, you can do it." At all points, though, you see, Jesus was tempted just like you and I. And there's not a temptation that He faced that isn't like what we have faced. And no one can say that Jesus doesn't know what it's like to be tempted. Jesus responds by saying this. He says, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" And here he is quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3.

To understand, in Deuteronomy eight, what's happening, here is a little bit of context. We have to understand that Israel had just spent 40 years wandering in the desert because of their disobedience and their unbelief. They were miraculously freed from Egypt and instructed to take possession of the Promised Land. However, they didn't believe that they could get rid of the inhabitants of the land. Their lack of belief in God's Word, and promises, in fact, brought punishment from God. And they wandered in the desert for 40 years. However, while wandering and complaining God graciously and miraculously gave them manna from heaven. Every time he provided manna for them, it ultimately came from God's Word. Every time the manna appeared, it was because God said, "Let there be manna". It was His word to create manna that they were depending on, and God was sustaining them with this manna; but ultimately, their life was dependent on every word that God said. So what were they depending on? The bread, or every word that proceeded from the mouth of God? Well, ultimately, it was the word of God. Without God speaking the manna into existence, there would be no bread to sustain them. They were an utter dependence upon God for food. Here's a people who were disobedient, they were grumbling and complaining; and God graciously does this miracle of creating manna for them. Hundreds, probably thousands of times. And yet, Jesus here in response to the temptation cuts to the quick. Jesus reminds Satan that ultimately, we are not sustained by our physical food, but we live and we have our being by the will of the Father. It's God who sustains us by His word, ultimately. In Deuteronomy 8:3 look at what Moses tells the Israelites, he says this, "He humbled you, and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these 40 years." Jesus points out here, the root of the temptation, which is doing something outside of God's word. Stepping outside of God's command and His will, that was the temptation. And Jesus is true food wasn't the physical food that his body was crying for, but rather it's doing the will of the Father.

Jesus said in John 3:3-4, "My food is to do the Will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.

Well, how does this apply to you and me? Well, our ability to survive isn't ultimately dependent on what we have, such as food, shelter, water, clothing. Our ability to live is ultimately dependent on God and His Word, just like Jesus. Israel was depending on the Word of God to create and provide manna each day and the Word of God is what they needed more than the food itself. Jesus trusted the Father while being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast for 40 days constantly [being tempted] by Satan. Jesus' trust in the Father's love and provision was unshakable, even when Jesus had no shelter from heat, or from the cold, from comfort, when He had no food when He had no companionship when He had no safety from the wild animals for this long stretch of 40 days. On a physical level, He practically had nothing except the clothes that He was wearing. And yet, if He exercised His divine power, He would not be depending upon the word of the Father to sustain him. He would be acting outside of the Father's will, and Satan wanted to create a separation between the Father and the Son. And that would have been a cosmic sin within the Triune Godhead. We know that couldn't have happened, but that's what Satan was aiming for. "For a house itself for a house divided against itself could not stand." Matthew 12:25. In

essence, this temptation that Jesus faced wasn't that different from what Eve faced in the Garden of Eden, Satan tempted her to doubt God's goodness. And he said to Eve, in Genesis 3:4, "You surely will not die. For God knows that in the day that you eat from it, your eyes are going to be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Satan here implies that, that God is withholding something good from Eve. And in the same way, He's implying the same to Jesus. In a sense, Satan is saying this, 'The Father isn't good. He's not providing for you. The Father isn't showing you love. Look at the situation you're in here. He's failing, and you can get what you want if you do things your own way; you've got the power, just use it. If the Father did miracles to provide for the rebellious Israel, why can't you? The Son of God, do miracles to provide for your basic needs, do things your own way, be independent of the Father, look at your circumstances. Following the Father's Will, as the Spirit leads, it's not going well for you here. Things are better for you if you do things your own way. You don't need the Word of the Father on this, trust me.'" is what Satan's saying. But Jesus proving Himself to be righteous and sinless, He remained faithful and obedient.

Temptation number two is the pride of life. In chapter four, verse five, it says,

Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and he 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, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" And Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Satan here took Him to the temple in Jerusalem, to a place of worship. And he took Him to the high roof on the temple overlooking the Kedron Valley, likely several hundred feet down off of a cliff at the edge. And Jesus used scripture earlier here to rebuke the temptation earlier. And so Satan here thinks he's a little bit smart. And he now quote scripture, "Okay Jesus, You got to follow scripture here? Let me quote some Scripture for you here. And this is what I say. So he takes it though, and he twists it to mean something completely different. He quotes scripture from Psalm 91, which is a beautiful psalm of trusting God, through and in all trials. Satan here now is cunning. And now he dresses the temptation in Scripture. He attaches it to God's Word his temptation, he does and he manipulates God's word, to try to say something that doesn't mean. Satan distorts God's words, and he tempts Jesus to presume upon God's protection and safety in response to doing something foolish. "Okay, if you trust the Father to protect You and provide for You, why don't You jump off this high point of the temple, and let's see Him rescue You. He has said that He's going to send His angels to protect You so that You won't strike Your foot against the stone. And He promises that He would do that. Show Your trust. You trust Him, right? Let's see the Father's love for you. This could be spectacular."

Well Satan here is appealing to the pride of life. The pride of life is thinking that we can do what we want. When we think that we found a loophole, maybe in God's commands or His instructions, when we

justify our sin and our actions, that's the pride of life. Jesus' response is simple, it's direct, and it's God's word. He said, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" Again, Jesus cuts to the quick. On the other hand, yes, what you say is true. You quoted Scripture, Satan. It is the word of God. It's His word, but your understanding of that passage is wrong. Your understanding is misunderstood. You've missed the truth from that passage. You're only presenting one side of things, and you're twisting the meaning of it. Jesus says also, "It is written." You see, every time Jesus was tempted, He went back to the Old Testament, He went back to the Word of God. We've got the Old Testament, we've got the New Testament, and every single time He was tempted in this account here, He says, "It is written." Jesus went to the Bible to resist sin. It was His guide that He followed. You see, when tempted, He responded with the simple truth of the Bible. Even when Scripture was twisted, He knew the truth of Scripture so well, that He responded with the simple direct truth.

Satan though is a master of twisting God's Word, focusing on one truth at the expense of another. He presents half twisted or distorted meanings of God's truth. Jesus though, studied the Old Testament so well that He quickly discerned the twisting of that truth, which was a lie. Every time Jesus responds to Satan, He quotes Scripture. He simply directs him to the truth, and nothing but the truth. Right from His boyhood, Jesus spent time with God in the temple, learning and filling His mind with the truth from the Old Testament. Growing up, He sought to know the truth, and He pursued God through the Old Testament. You see, God's word is like a sword that penetrates the heart, it cuts to the quick.

Let's get personal for a minute here. Let's examine our lives for a moment. What does the pride of life look like today, though, for you and me? How are we tempted toward the pride of life? Consider these ways. "God has said, He'll forgive all of our sins. We just have to confess to Him. Hey, that means I can still sin. I just got to confess to God." But you see, this presumes upon His forgiveness. It is also the pride of thinking, "I can direct my destiny, and God's going to bless me. I'm the one in charge of my life, I can make my own decisions. I don't need God to help me." And that presumes upon His blessings. It's the pride of believing that we can act against His command, and things are still going to work out. it presumes upon God's grace and His protection. It's the pride of thinking that our sins won't find us out. "I'm good enough to hide my sins." It presumes that Luke 12:2-3 isn't true, and this is what it says. "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light. And what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the house tops." It's the pride of thinking that we can do things our own way and not get in trouble for it because God is love, and He's simply going to rescue us because now we are His child. It presumes that we won't reap what we sow.

The pride of life takes His word and tries to give other meanings to it. It's taking His word and saying that it means something other than what God actually intended. It twists it. It distorts it, it bends it, it manipulates it, it isolates it. It obsesses with one side of the truth, at the cost of other truths that balance things out, all the while believing that we have a new deeper revelation from God that now everyone

needs to know. And that becomes our new gospel. That becomes our soapbox. It's the pride of our own wisdom, thinking that God has revealed something special to me.

You see, Jesus summed it up like this. It's the pride of putting the Lord your God to the test. It presumes that we are wiser, and we can do things our own way, testing Him to prove His word. It's acting foolishly. We think we can put God in a corner sometimes and force His hand. Satan is working here, though from every angle to prevent Jesus from redeeming His people. He wanted to put God on a corner of having to save Jesus for doing something foolish. Or maybe Jesus would just die on the rocks, and that would be the end of the salvation plan.

Satan doesn't give up here though. He takes Jesus to a high mountain and he presents Him a different lust. And with this is the third temptation, which is the lust of the flesh. Satan takes them to this high mountain and Matthew 4:8 it says here

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, "YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

In Matthew, it says that Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And yet in Luke it says this, it says that, quote, "He showed him all the kingdoms in a moment of time." Somehow, it seems in this moment of time, Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of this world. Perhaps this is a perspective that only supernatural beings can see. Satan's temptation would have allowed Jesus to bypass waiting for what was actually rightfully His. In fact, God the Father already told Jesus in Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me, and I will surely give you the nations as your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as your possession." Again, it was a partial truth that Satan here presented - a bait and switch. Satan's lying, pretending to offer what is not even his to give. He may be called the prince of the power of the air, but he's only the prince of wickedness and evil systems and the ways of this world. It's astonishing here that Satan would claim that all the kingdoms are his to give, when we already know that Jesus created everything that is. Remember, Jesus was in a place of absolute humility, with no place to lay His head; He was in the wilderness, and He had nothing. And now the riches of this world were being offered to Him. He was in the wilderness with no shelter, no protection; and Jesus knows what it's like to have nothing. And yet, denying Himself of everything, Jesus fixed His eyes on the joy set before Him at the cross of redeeming all that the Father gave Him. Again, He responds (Jesus does) "It is written." Standing on the Word of God. Although Satan's temptation comes with many different angles and strategies, Jesus's response always rests solidly on the written word of God.

Jesus again, refers to Israel's wilderness experience and this time He draws from Deuteronomy 6:10-15. Let me read it for you.

“Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and carved cisterns which you did not carve out, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the people who surround you, for the Lord your God who is in the midst of you is a jealous God, so follow Him, otherwise, the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.”

Afterwards, God though, if you look at the last verse, in verse 11, it says,

“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.”

Afterwards, God fulfilled His promise of the verse in Psalm 91, by sending angels to come, and minister and comfort Jesus. All the kingdoms of this world belong to Jesus, and the Father has promised to give them to Jesus as an inheritance. And yet Satan appeals to the fact that Jesus has nothing in this world. He had nothing but the clothes on His back, and Satan offers Him a shortcut here to get the kingdoms of this world. Satan promises riches, wealth, endless resources. He promises big, but his promises are always empty. These kingdoms, in fact, they're not even his to give. It's a bold-faced lie, and he desperately wants Jesus to step outside of the Father's Will, to doubt His promise to get what “You deserve now the easy way, Jesus. God's way is hard. You don't have to wait like God said, get it now. Just bow.”

When Jesus says that “You should worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.” He's saying this. He says, I believe that God's ways are best. He's saying, “I will trust every single promise that God has made.” He's saying, “I will wait for Him faithfully to fulfill every promise He's ever made.” He is saying, I will not give allegiance to any other, I submit, and I worship, and I hold in the highest regard only God.”

You see, the lust of the eyes is strong. Let's look at ourselves for just a second. Let's look at society for a moment. We want new, we want better, we want shiny, or we want cutting edge. We want comfort. We want things now, we want more. We want the better life. We want our own way. We want independence. Ultimately, we want our own little kingdom, putting ourselves first. We want all of those things, and the lust of the eyes is everywhere in this world. We though, need to be discerning; and we need to worship God first and only, and not get caught up with the lust of the eyes.

In these temptations, though, we see that Satan has a lot of strategies that he employs. Here's some of them. He wants us first to doubt God and His word. Satan questions God's goodness and His word. Satan plants seeds of doubt. And there are people out there who want us to doubt God's word. And they

say, "Doubt everything you've been taught, for there's a new Christianity, it's an emerging Christianity." Secondly, he twists and he distorts God's word, to try and make it mean something different. Third, he's subtle. He tries to trick us with partial truths. He presents one side of the truth, and he puts aside other truths. He strives to get us to obsess on partial truths, or just one aspect of a truth. Fourth, he tempts us toward pride that we know better; we know how to do things better than God, and we presume that God is still going to bless us. We can do things our own way we can navigate things with our own wisdom. He wants us to think that we can do things our own way and get away with it. Fifth, he looks for weakness, and he tempts us from all sorts of angles when we are weak. He tempts us sixth, to be focused and obsessed on anything besides our Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth of the written word. And seventh, he's relentless. He persists.

Brothers or sisters, we need to know his strategies. We need to know his ploys, but we need to stand on God's written word to flee and resist the temptations that we were faced with. That is the sword of the Spirit that He's given us to fight with. That's the word of God. You see, Jesus sent an example for us of how to resist temptation. What do we need to do that Jesus did? What can we learn from Jesus through all of this? Well, there's a few practical applications that I want to look at from the life of Jesus in this account.

First of all, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. He was filled and He was controlled by the Spirit. Even the Son of God from heaven was full of and led by the Holy Spirit. It's the power of the Spirit within us, that gives us the power to resist temptation. If we are not walking in the Spirit, we won't have the power to resist. Resisting is something that we can only do because of the Holy Spirit within us. We are commanded to set our mind though, according to the Spirit. Listen to what it says in Romans 8:5-8.

For those who are according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Let me ask you a question. Let me ask you several questions. Are you walking according to the Spirit? Do you have the Spirit within you? If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit living within you. Have you repented and believed in Jesus and confessed Him as your Savior? Are you regularly studying God's word, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and the prophets? Are you listening to the Spirit as He leads you by His written word? Are you abiding in the Vine since apart from the Vine, the branches you and I can do nothing? Are you earnestly seeking God first in everything in your life?

The second application is Jesus knew the written word of God. He knew the truth and He stood securely on the full truth of Scripture. He always went back to God's word in the Bible. He studied it. He

meditated upon it. He stored it in His heart, He memorized it, He knew it inside out so that He could easily identify the lies of a slightly twisted truth. In Psalm 119:9-11, it says this,

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I've treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”

You see, if we're going to be able to resist sin and temptation, we have to hide God's Word in our heart. We have to know it, we have to treasure it. We have to meditate upon it and understand it, so that when the temptations come, we can quickly identify it and resist it by the power of the Spirit with a truth of His word. Jesus says that if we know the truth, it will set us free – free not only from the punishment of sin, but free from the slavery of sin. We have a new master, and we are free from the shackles of sin by the blood of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit living within us; and we are free to obey Him.

Be encouraged brothers and sisters, because it says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 it says,

“No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man, and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you're able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

First Corinthians 10:13. You see, the escape is always the same. It's by the power of the Holy Spirit living within you. And it's by God's word, the truth that we stand on.

The third point of application is this, Jesus stayed focused on doing the will of the Father. You see, we in the same way need to have our eyes focused on Jesus. If we become obsessed with anything else besides Jesus and obeying Him, we fall into sin. It says in Hebrews 12:2, “Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” As we focus on Jesus, we need to remember this. Keep this in mind when we are tempted, and we need to focus on Jesus. Consider the fact that He was shamed for us on our behalf, He took the shame that we deserved, He was punished for us, and He was ultimately forsaken by the Father, on our behalf. Remember what He did for you when we are tempted.

Friends, brothers and sisters, praise Jesus that He lived a perfect life, and that He modeled for us how to resist temptation. Praise Jesus that He sent the Spirit to live within us, giving us power to resist temptations. And praise Jesus, that we have the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God to fight, sin and temptation. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we thank You that You sent the Lord Jesus to go into the desert and be tempted. We thank you that our Lord and Savior demonstrated, proved the testing, that He is righteous and sinless.

And that He demonstrated for us how to resist temptation. Lord, you know we struggle with temptation. We are often tempted in all sorts of forms and all sorts of ways. And, Lord, we know that the enemy uses all sorts of strategies and ploys and tactics to wear us down and to cause us to sin and to lose focus. I pray Father, that we would not lose focus but that we would remain fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ and the commands that He's given to us. I pray Father, that You would strengthen us and that we would be people who are walking by the power of the Spirit, that we would be people who spend time in Your word to study it to know it, that we would treasure it in our heart. Forgive us, Lord for where we have failed, where we have fallen into sin and stumbled. And yet, Lord, we take heart in the fact that we have been forgiven, and that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Father, I pray that You would guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and that we would be sober minded in this world that we live in with all the temptations that we face. I pray that we would not grow weary. I pray that we would not grow lackadaisical and relaxed and carefree and careless about things, thinking that we're strong enough. But I pray that Lord, we would be focused, that we would be sober minded, that we would be quick to identify temptations and quick to resist them. May we not be slack, but I pray that we will be focused and sharp and these things Lord. I pray for each one of us, Lord, that we would be walking in the Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Thank you for joining us. May the Lord bless you today.