

Sunday, October 4, 2026 - IT IS WRITTEN – RESISTING THE DEVIL – Pastor John Henry Raskin

Matthew 4:1–11 - Jesus met temptation with the written Word, obedient trust, and undivided worship—and His victory is ours in Him.

Start From Your Settled Identity

The Father's affirmation came before the wilderness assault (Matthew 3:16–17). In Christ, God's love is not the prize at the end of obedience; it is the ground beneath your feet when testing begins.

THE TEMPTATION	THE LIE	JESUS' ANSWER	KINGDOM TOOL
1. Appetite Stones to bread <i>Lust of the flesh</i>	"Meet a legitimate need apart from the Father's timing. Take the shortcut."	"It is written..." "Man shall not live by bread alone..." <i>Deut. 8:3</i>	Feed on the Word. Trust the Father's provision and timing.
2. Presumption Leap from the temple <i>Pride of life</i>	"Make God prove Himself. Use Scripture to justify what you already want."	"It is written again..." "You shall not tempt the LORD your God." <i>Deut. 6:16</i>	Handle the Word rightly. Read in context; let Scripture interpret Scripture.
3. Worldly Glory Kingdoms without the cross <i>Lust of the eyes</i>	"Take the crown without suffering. Gain the world through compromise."	"Away with you, Satan!" "Worship the LORD your God, and Him only..." <i>Deut. 6:13</i>	Worship God alone. Submit to God, then resist the devil.

A Simple Pattern for Resistance

1. **Recognize the tactic.** Temptation often arrives when you are tired, lonely, discouraged, or unseen. It questions God's Word or goodness and offers a shortcut.
2. **Recall what stands written.** Hide God's Word in your heart before the pressure comes (Psalm 119:11).
3. **Read Scripture faithfully.** Reject isolated verses used to excuse disobedience; interpret each passage in harmony with the whole counsel of God.
4. **Submit, worship, and resist.** "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).
5. **Take the way of escape.** God is faithful and provides a path to endure temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Gospel Is Better Than "Try Harder"

Where Adam failed in the garden and Israel failed in the wilderness, Jesus—the true and obedient Son—stood firm. His righteousness is credited to those who trust Him (Romans 5:19).

When you fail, do not try to earn your way back. Run boldly to the throne of grace: your High Priest understands, gives mercy, and helps those who are tempted (Hebrews 4:15–16; 2:18).

What shortcut is tempting me right now? What truth of Scripture answers it? Where must I submit to God, trust His timing, and worship Him alone?

Remember: **The Victor is also your Helper. It was written—and it stands written.**

IT IS WRITTEN – RESISTING THE DEVIL

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the last two weeks we explored the reason for Yom Kippur and Sukkot, two of the six holy days ordained by God to be kept by His people Israel.

We saw how Jesus, as the pre-Incarnate Son of the Trinity was present from the very beginning, orchestrating circumstances, covering and protecting His chosen people as the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, the water-giving Rock in the desert, and on occasion, appearing and interceding as the Angel of the Lord.

We learned that He was doing all of this because of His love for His people, even as their fallen nature caused them to make fatal mistakes.

Today I would like to zoom forward to a scenario in the Gospels, that I believe will have an extraordinary impact on the way we look at our own fatal mistakes and how in Christ we can move to correct them.

The scenario is one that I'm sure is very familiar to most of you.

Today, we are going to look at Jesus' temptations in the wilderness and how He countered the attempted snares of the enemy with scripture and a correct spiritual posture which is available to all of us now in Christ Jesus.

Every one of us has stood, at some point this week, at the edge of a big decision that felt small.

Perhaps it was a screen on your computer that you should have closed, or a word you should have swallowed before speaking.

Or maybe it was a purchase you could not afford, a resentment you would not surrender, or a corner you decided to cut on the job when no one was looking.

Nobody announced it as a spiritual battle.

There was no thunder, and no dark figure whispering from the corner of the room.

It simply arrived as a thought that seemed reasonable, a desire that felt urgent, or an opportunity that felt deserved.

We tend to imagine that temptation is lurid and rare, something reserved for the truly wicked.

Scripture tells us otherwise.

Temptation is the ordinary daily challenge of the Christian life, and the apostle Paul says so plainly:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Temptations. Common to man.

You are not the first to face what you are facing, and the enemy is not being creative with you... He is just being consistent with his nature.

He has been running the same three plays since the garden of Eden, and the remarkable thing about our text this morning is that he ran them on the Son of God Himself.

Matthew's Gospel does not give us this account merely to tell us that Jesus was strong enough to resist temptation.

He gives it to show us how the Kingdom of God answers the kingdom of this world.

So, I want us to look at three things today.

First, that the devil's tactics have not changed.

Second, that Jesus' answers were not superhuman tricks, but Kingdom truths placed within reach of His people.

And third, most important of all, that the One who won this battle won it for us before He ever called us to fight ours.

Let's read the whole scene together in Matthew's Gospel.

MATTHEW 4:1–11 -Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9

And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Let’s begin with the very first word of the chapter: “Then”. Then, after what? For that, we need to go to the last two verses of scripture in the preceding chapter.

MATTHEW 3:16-17 - 16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

We should be careful not to miss the order of events here.

The affirmation comes before the assault.

Jesus does not go into the wilderness to earn the Father's approval. He goes in already possessing it.

And this should be a comfort to every believer, because the love of God is not the prize at the end of your obedience.

It is the ground beneath your feet as you enter the challenge.

For those who are in Christ, your identity is settled before your testing starts.

Now let’s look again at verse 1 of chapter 4

MATTHEW 4:1

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

Now here we need to pay close attention... Why did Jesus go into the wilderness to begin with?

There is a why and a how here. First comes the how and then the why.

First the how... This verse says He was led by the Spirit.

Then the why... To be tempted by the devil.

Wow. The Spirit led Jesus to be tempted by the devil.

Mark states it even more sharply in His Gospel

MARK 1:12 -Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

Let that sink in. The same Spirit who anointed Him at His Baptism in the river Jordan led Him, no... DROVE Him to the place of testing.

Now please understand, that does not make God the author of sin.

The Apostle James is unmistakable on this point:

JAMES 1:13 -Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

The verb that James and Matthew both use in Greek for the word we translate as tempt is *peirazō* (pi-RAD-zo) — to test, to prove; or to tempt.

The verb in Matthew 4:1 carries two meanings, and only context tells us which one is truly meant.

To test is to prove something genuine.

To tempt is to entice toward evil.

In this scene both are happening at once.

The Spirit leads Jesus to be proven, while the devil works to seduce Him into sin.

What Satan intends for devastation, God intends for vindication.

We see the same design in Israel's story. Moses tells the people:

DEUTERONOMY 8:2 - And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Israel was tested for forty years in the wilderness, and Israel failed.

Now the beloved Son, the true Israel of God, is tested for forty days in the same wilderness.

Keep that in mind, because it will matter at the end of this message.

Verse 2 of chapter 4 gives us the understatement of the New Testament:

Matthew 4:2 - And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

Notice when the tempter comes.

He doesn't come at the baptism, in the glow of the dove and the voice from Heaven.

He comes when Jesus fully human body is depleted, when the crowds are gone, and when the wilderness is quiet.

Temptation seldom arrives at our strongest hour.

It comes when we are tired, lonely, discouraged, or unseen, in the late hour, in the long season of grief, or the dry stretch when heaven feels silent.

Matthew 4:3 - Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

If You are the Son of God”

Do you hear the if? Only a short time before, the Father had said, "This is My beloved Son."

Now the enemy arrives with a conditional. If.

His opening move is to contradict what God has just said, and the pattern is ancient. It goes all the way back to the garden:

GENESIS 3:1 - And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

At the root, every temptation is an attempt to make us doubt either the word of God or the goodness of God.

And notice how reasonable the request is. Bread is not evil. Hunger is not a sin.

Jesus will one day multiply loaves for hungry thousands.

The temptation is not to eat when you are hungry.

It is to meet a legitimate need by an illegitimate route, apart from the Father's timing and ahead of the Father's provision.

Jesus is hungry, and the Father who led Him here has not yet fed Him. So, the devil offers Him a shortcut.

“You don't have to wait on God. Take care of yourself.”

This is exactly how appetite tempts believers today.

The apostle John gives us the categories:

1 JOHN 2:16 - For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

The lust of the flesh is not only sexual desire.

It is every craving of the body and the comfort-seeking self, the voice that says, “I need it now, I deserve it, and God is taking too long”.

It shows up in the glass, the plate, the screen, the credit card, and the bed you will not leave.

It shows up in the compromise a person makes at work because the bills are due and they cannot see how God will provide.

It shows up in the lean season, whether the lack is financial, relational, or emotional, when a quick relief is offered that will cost far more than it gives.

And just look how these same three categories appear in Eden:

GENESIS 3:6 - So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Good for food: lust of the flesh.

Pleasant to the eyes: the lust of the eyes.

Desirable to make one wise: the pride of life.

Eve stood in a garden of abundance, with every tree available but the forbidden one, and she fell to a temptation that was a lie and Adam fell with her.

Jesus stands in a wasteland with an empty stomach, and He does not give in to the temptation to feed himself.

He is the last Adam, doing what the first Adam would not.

Matthew 4:4 - But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’

Now let’s see where that was written... Moses tells Israel...

DEUTERONOMY 8:3 - So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

Jesus answers a temptation about hunger by quoting this passage about manna, a passage about a hungry people learning that the Father's provision comes in the Father's time and in His way.

Three things are worth noticing here.

First, Jesus answers with Scripture.

Not with an argument, and not by flexing His divine power, but with what is written.

He fights against temptation as a human being, with the very weapon that is available to every believer.

Second, He does not deny the hunger. He relocates the question.

The real question is not "Will I eat?" but "Whom will I trust and what will truly feed me?"

Third, look at the phrase itself.

The word Jesus uses as “it is written” is gegraptai (geg-RAP-tie) meaning "it stands written".

This verb is in the perfect tense, which describes a past action whose result continues perpetually.

It was written, and it stands written, with its authority undiminished.

Three times in this passage Jesus plants His feet on that one word, “gegraptie”, It Stands Written.

Here, then, is our first Kingdom tool: feed on the Word before you face the famine.

You cannot draw from a well you have never dug.

King David knew this full well when he wrote...

PSALM 119:11 - Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Jesus could quote Deuteronomy in the wilderness because Deuteronomy was already at the forefront of His mind.

The believer who plans to resist temptation by improvising when it comes will lose.

The believer who has been feeding on the Word of God, in season and out of season, will find that the Spirit brings it to mind when the tempter comes.

The Kingdom answer to appetite is not white-knuckled denial.

It is a deeper hunger, a settled conviction that the Father's Word is more real than the bread in your hand.

By the way, this is why fasting works on a spiritual level.

Rebuffed by Scripture, the devil changes tactics.

If Jesus will not be moved by appetite, perhaps He will be moved by a Bible verse.

So, the devil takes Him to the holy city, sets Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and quotes Psalm 91 ALMOST verbatim:

Matthew 4:6 – And said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

That ought to sober every one of us. The devil knows the Bible.

He can quote it and he quotes it almost accurately.

But the real scripture he was misusing says this...

PSALM 91:11–12 -For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Look at what the devil leaves out. Matthew's account tells us he skips the phrase "He will keep you in all your ways."

The promise of protection belongs to the one who walks in the paths God has appointed, not to the one who leaps where God has not sent him.

In omitting this verse, the devil takes a promise for the obedient and twists it into a license for the reckless.

Notice also where this happens.

It is the holy city, Jerusalem, at the temple, the most religious place on earth.

Temptation does not stay outside the church. Some of its most dangerous forms come dressed in religious clothing.

This is the pride of life joined to presumption: the desire for spectacular vindication, to be seen and applauded, and the impulse to make God prove Himself.

How does this tempt believers today?

It happens whenever we lift a verse out of its setting to justify what we already wanted to do.

"God wants me to be happy" is used to walk away from a covenant.

"God will provide" is used to cover a reckless financial decision, and then God is blamed for the consequences.

It happens when we bargain with heaven: "If You are real, then You will do this, and only then will I obey".

It happens when we sin boldly and assume grace will sweep up the mess.

And it happens in quieter forms as well, when ministry becomes a platform, when faith becomes a performance, and when we care more about being seen as spiritual than about being made holy.

Now watch how Jesus answers. He does not say, "You quoted that verse incorrectly."

He again takes a Word from Deuteronomy.

MATTHEW 4:7 - Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

That little word "again" is a rebuke. Jesus does not answer a verse with a verse in a contest of Bible quotations.

He lets the whole counsel of Scripture interpret the part the devil left out.

Deuteronomy 6:16 – You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

The reference to Massah is telling.

Back in Exodus 17, Israel stood thirsty in the wilderness... it was their first temptation after they miraculously crossed through the Red Sea.

EXODUS 17:7 - So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Israel had demanded a demonstration.

Satan too, demands a demonstration but Jesus refuses to turn His Father into a performer.

Real trust does not need a stunt to be convinced.

So here is our second kingdom tool: handle the Word rightly, in the context of the whole Word.

Read verses in their context.

Let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Submit your reading to the Holy Spirit and the teaching of faithful shepherds.

If a verse is being used to lead you toward something the rest of Scripture forbids, then it is not the Spirit of God speaking, no matter how spiritual someone makes it sound.

And be careful not to overlook the posture of the person who is quoting scripture, which must be humility. There are wolves among us.

The man who leaps is not walking.

The person who runs ahead is not following.

The Kingdom answer to presumption is obedient trust: walking in the way God has given in His Word and by His Spirit and resting in His care within it.

Now for the third temptation...

Matthew 4:8-9 -Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

He shows Him the glittering thing. The world and all its obvious appeal.

Then he names his price: "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Here is what makes this the most revealing of the three temptations.

Those kingdoms were going to belong to Jesus anyway. The Father had already promised them:

PSALM 2:8 - Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

The devil is offering the Son what the Father has already pledged to Him, minus the suffering.

It is the crown without the Cross, the glory without the hard road, the destination without the walking in obedience.

This is the lust of the eyes: the glittering thing that promises to satisfy and insists you can have it all now.

And it comes to us in a hundred forms.

It comes as the promotion that requires one small compromise of integrity, the flattering lie, the adjusted number, or the silence when we should have spoken.

It comes as the pursuit of wealth for security, and the hunger for approval, platform, or influence that tempts us to soften the gospel in order to keep the crowd.

In every generation it comes as the belief that the kingdoms of this world can accomplish what only the Kingdom of God already has.

It comes in the idols of image, romance, career, and our children's success.

And notice the price is always the same. The tempter's deals always cost worship to those things.

Whatever and whomever we serve in order to gain the world, is something or someone we have bowed down to.

Mark 8:36 - For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

And what is Jesus' response to the devil's final offer in the wilderness?

Matthew 4:10 - Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Now listen to the change in Jesus' tone. He does not simply quote scripture this time.

He commands. "Away with you, Satan!" And then He grounds the command in the Word:

He uses Deuteronomy a third and final time...

DEUTERONOMY 6:13 - You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him and shall take oaths in His name.

Matthew records Jesus drawing out that verse's meaning: "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve."

Notice the word "only".

The kingdom of God is not a shortcut to the kingdoms of this world.

It is a different Kingdom altogether, with a different King, and He alone is to be worshiped.

Jesus says elsewhere what the Kingdom answer to the world's glory looks like:

MATTHEW 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

So here then is our third Kingdom tool: resist through undivided worship.

James gives us the correct order:

JAMES 4:7 - Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Submit first, then resist.

Surrender, then the strength will come.

Resistance is not only saying no to the devil.

It is first saying yes to God, in true surrender, in prayer, in gratitude, in gathered worship, and in service.

Worship recalibrates the heart.

When the glory of this world is dazzling, the answer is not to look away in fear but to look up at a greater glory.

And you do not need to submit to the devil to get what the Father will give you in His own time:

REVELATION 11:15 ...The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!

Now let's look at the last line of the testing of Jesus in Matthew. The victory!

Matthew 4:11 -Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

The Father who withheld bread for a season now sends angels to serve.

Wait on God, and the provision comes in His time.

Luke's Gospel adds a sober note:

LUKE 4:13 - Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

The fight would resume, in the garden and at the cross. But at the cross the serpent's head was crushed.

Now we must guard against a serious mistake.

After every victory, the tempter will always look for an opportune time in our lives as well.

The first lesson of this passage is not "Try harder to be like Jesus."

If that is all you hear, you will leave here defeated, because you know your own record.

You have fallen where Jesus stood.

The good news of Matthew 4 begins somewhere else.

Jesus stood in your place.

Where Adam failed in a garden and Israel failed in the wilderness, the true Son succeeded in both.

ROMANS 5:19 - For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

His victory is credited to everyone who trusts Him.

So, when you fail, and you will, you don't have to go back to the wilderness to earn your standing.

The next time you are tested, you run to the throne.

HEBREWS 4:15-16 -For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

HEBREWS 2:18 - For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

He knows what it is to be hungry.

He knows what it is to be offered a shortcut and a crown.

He does not sympathize from a distance. He sympathizes from the very place where you are standing.

So, carry these tools out the door with you today.

Hide the Word in your heart and trust the Father for your provision over the world's shortcuts.

Handle the Word rightly and refuse to presume upon grace.

Worship the Lord alone and resist the glitter of a glory that is passing away.

And through it all, remember that a way of escape has been made, because the Victor is also your Helper.

Some of you are in the wilderness right now: hungry, tired, and feeling unseen.

Hear the voice that God spoke over the Jordan, for it speaks over everyone who is in Christ.

You are already His beloved Child.

And if you have never trusted this Victor, if you have been trying to survive the wilderness on your own strength, He is calling you today to lay down the fight and receive His victory as your own.

Let's pray.