

How to Beat the Enemy
Mathew 4:1-11

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do 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 splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.’”

Good morning Harris Creek! Does anybody have a sweet tooth, like that’s your thing? Do you love desserts? Don't leave me hanging, I know you're here. It's funny how we describe this sweet tooth. I think I've got sweet teeth, like the whole mouth is sweet. I love desserts. I always have since I was little, and I don't discriminate. I know some of you are like, “Oh yeah, I love sweets, you know cookies, that's kind of my thing.” Cookies are my thing, cake is my thing, pie is my thing, doughnuts are my thing, and eclairs are my thing. If it's got icing on it, it's my thing. I love all kinds of hard candy, soft candy, candy that has stuff inside of it. Any kind of candy, unless it has coconut, because then it's a salad, like chocolate-covered salad. I just love it.

Every year, I give something up. This is just a practice to do without. I noticed, this is a public service announcement for some of you, that your metabolism begins to slow down. Some of you know what I'm talking about. The brakes start pumping. I started to wear the candy. I'd eat a piece of candy and I'd be like, “Oh, there it is”. My friend, Scott Kadersha, and I had this challenge. We said, “Hey, we're going to do one year with no desserts.” That's right, martyrdom. One year no desserts. The bet was if I ate a dessert, I had to give him \$100 because you have to be accountable. You have to have some skin in the game. So, I said something like “Alright, I'm all in. Let's go.”

As soon as I shook his hand on this deal, “Okay we're in, no desserts one year”, desserts started showing up out of the woodwork. People were dropping off brownies, bringing by bowls of candy, like “Hey, my, my wife just made these cookies. You're going to hurt her feelings if you don't eat one.” Everywhere I would turn, somebody who was offering me some dessert. I was like, “Did Scott put you up to this, what's going on?”

I'll give you a real example. Sometimes when you speak somewhere you get paid in a gift card, like at a wedding or funeral or something. We got this gift card to a nice restaurant, and we

celebrated an anniversary. Monica and I went and had this amazing meal. I'm ready for the bill, and I got my gift card out. The server comes by and says some kind things. He said, "Hey, I've been impacted by your ministry. God has done a work in my life. I'd love to do something special for you." He just sets in front of me this giant piece of chocolate cake. I'm just staring at it, I probably responded weirdly because I was like, "Oh no". I'm like, "That's so kind, thank you so much...Did Scott put you up to this?" He walks off, I'm just staring at it, and Monica is like, "What are you going to do?" I'm like, "I'm going to pay Scott \$100." So, I did, and she said, "Do you really think Scott put him up to that?" I said, "No, I think Satan did."

We say stuff like that. We'll say stuff like, "Oh, Satan did this, Satan did that. The enemy is attacking me right now. I want to do this thing I'm not supposed to do, that's the enemy." We say those things, right? Which brings me to a place where I'm wondering, what can the enemy actually do? This is something I've been giving some thought to.

What can he do? Can he mess with the material? Can he make me sick? Can he send a storm? What can he do? If I'm taking a person to church for the first time and I get my car and the battery's dead, did he drain my battery? How does Satan drain a battery? These are real questions. I'm asking deep theological questions.

It's interesting because if you think of Christianity as a house, you have all your theologies as rooms. On the first floor you've got Christology, it's a big living room. You've got ecclesiology and soteriology, bibliology. On the first floor of that house is going to be demonology or spiritual warfare. It's not something we talk a lot about. In fact, I think it's a room we don't really want to go in. We keep some stuff in there, but we don't go in that room.

The other end of the spectrum is being obsessed with spiritual warfare and thinking about it all the time. That's not healthy either. So, where's that balance? How do we get there? How do we figure out what the enemy can actually do? It's apparent to me that Satan, or demonic forces, does unique work in our city. Waco has been in the national news a disproportionate amount of time. There's a spiritual war being fought here. Whether we know it or not, it's happening.

A friend of mine said, "I think the reason that we don't think or talk a lot about it is because the Bible doesn't say much about it." I was like, "The Bible talks more about spiritual warfare than it does marriage." It has a lot of prescriptive, descriptive things to say about the reality that we have an enemy.

I think that he was central to the work. A lot of the things that happened in the year 2020, the enemy is behind that. Let me show you what he does. It's five D's, and I want you to think 2020. The five D's are: despair, disunity, deception, disease, and death. 2020, think about it. Despair, disunity, deception, disease, death. Do you think Satan's at work there?

Any part of the world that has fallen, he's behind. Things that are not as they should be, he's at work in. But we are not without culpability. What he uses is a sixth D, our desires. He uses our desires to hinder our relationship with God. This is what it says in James chapter one, verse 13, **"When tempted, no one should say 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away**

by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

We're in this series *Hindsight is 2020*. Life without regrets. When you sit in the regrets of 2020, in 2021 looking forward, every time you have given yourself to temptation, you regret that. If you have the Holy Spirit, you will regret that. You will fight that and seek to bring that to the light so as not to give the enemy a foothold. Not to invite Him into your world.

There are three kinds of people here this morning. There are those of you who are walking by the Holy Spirit, resisting temptation. The Scripture says, **“Stand firm and he will flee from you,”** it says that in 1 Peter 5. In our relationship with Jesus, we're going to see how He resists the devil in Matthew chapter 4.

There are those of you who are in the fight. There are those of you who have given yourself fully to temptation. You look back and it's a season of every month or every week, falling in the same ways. It's porn in this season, materialism in this season. It's the air you breathe. You've given yourself to it.

Then there's those of you who, if I haven't talked about you yet you probably in this category, you're just oblivious. You're like, “Ah, that's weird. I don't think about that. I didn't wake up this morning thinking that I'm in a spiritual war. I can't see it. It's odd. I'm just going to move on from that.”

2020 was marked by many temptations. It's really what we're talking about, temptation. Here's what temptation is, let me define it: It's just a proposition not to trust God. Anytime you're given choices, and one of those choices is to not trust God, that is temptation. You can choose some options, and one of those options is to trust your feelings, your thoughts, your desires, other sources, logic, whatever it is you want to put around it, but not God, That's temptation.

So, what did the temptations look like in 2020? Let me read some to you, and as I do, I want you to think about which one most marked you. You need to leave this list with one in mind. I'm going to put it in front of you, and I hope you grab onto one today like, “Oh yeah, that's me.” If you're struggling with that, turn to your spouse and say, “Which one?” They'll tell you really quick.

The first one is fear. The enemy is a liar, the lie he says is, “God's no longer watching over you. He's no longer taking care of you.” Your justification is, “I'm just a responsible person. It's not that I'm afraid it's not that I'm anxious. I'm just responsible.”

Laziness or apathy. The lie, “You deserve a break. Everybody else gets a break. Everybody else gets to watch football. I mean, can't there be a transition when you've been working all day? Just like for a minute to kick up your feet and relax? Self-care is important.”

Prejudice. It says, “People who do not agree with me are fools. People who do not think like me have not figured it out yet. But there's so much evidence. But logic says, but the statistics say.”

Cynicism. I know, you're not a cynic. You just think critically. You're a blessing to the world. You're such a critical thinker, but you're not blessing the people around you. They start to distance themselves from you. You're negative. You think, "No one is as smart as me."

Materialism. The lie is, "I need that". The Amazon boxes, they just start showing up. You get home and you're excited because you don't even remember what you bought. Go back in 2020 and look at your Amazon orders. There was a spike. Somebody elbows, "No don't do that man."

Alcoholism or drug use or escapism of any kind. "I need a drink man. I need a glass of wine. I just need...", you need? Are you a user? Do you need something? Do you need a sedative?

Isolation. It's so easy to justify isolation. How to talk to those of you at home right now, it's no problem that you're at home being wise. You're making a wise decision, but don't get too comfortable. The church has always been the assembly of the people. Some people are like, "Well, you know, I kind of enjoy just putting on my pajamas." Who cares what you enjoy? What has God called you to do? What does that look like? What's your path? What's your plan? Where does this go? Put some things in place, "Hey, here's when I'm going to come back."

Anger. "This was done to me. I'm a victim." Despair. "There is no hope. I found myself in this place where I stopped believing that there's hope." If that's you, I hope you'll lean in this morning as we move into Matthew chapter four, the temptations of Jesus. We're talking about overcoming temptation. We define that as just a proposition to not trust God. As we move through this text, we're going to see how Jesus was tempted with His wants. Jesus was tempted to display power, and Jesus is tempted to take a shortcut.

At the end of Matthew chapter three, Jesus is baptized. This is the beginning of his ministry. We don't have a whole lot of information about Jesus's life prior to this moment. He's baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove, we hear the voice of God say, "This is my son with whom I am well pleased." God has told those present that this is His son, and Jesus's ministry is about to take off. But that same spirit that descended on Him like a dove, listen, "**Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**"

What? Why would God do that? There are a couple of reasons. One, so that we can see that He was tempted in every way but did not sin. To give you hope, as an example for you. To display to you, also, how to resist temptation. He's going to give you the secret today for the rest of your life. He's going to show you by example how you can resist the devil and how he will flee from you as the scripture promises.

After fasting, forty days and forty nights He was hungry. That makes sense. I fasted four hours once, I was hungry. I fast, I do fast. Just not to give you an out there. "**The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell the stones to become bread.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'**"

Satan is the tempter. He shows up and appeals to Jesus's wants and desires. He says, "I know that you're hungry." He tries to get Him to doubt God and he entices him. If you crack open that

door, you give the enemy a foothold, he sticks his foot in that door, “Can I come in?” But you can say, “I’m not going to do that”, as Jesus models for us here.

1. When tempted with His wants, Jesus trusted God's word.

There’s temptation, desires of His flesh in this moment, and He hasn’t eaten food for forty days. The enemy comes and says, “Why don’t you eat that.” He doesn’t come on day eight. He doesn’t come in the middle of his fasting. He comes at the lowest moment, the most difficult time when Jesus is at His weakest.

Let me also say this, keep in mind, He just got baptized. So, at the spiritual mountain top moment, the enemy pursues you. A lot of times, temptation comes after that spiritual mountaintop. A lot of times, it will come at your weakest moment. So, pride goes before the fall. Be aware of how the enemy works here.

Everything in the humanity of Jesus would have agreed with Satan, “I’m hungry.” But it’s not the will of His Father so he doesn’t do it. What’s the will of His father? That He would be hungry and without food. Are you okay with that? God wants for Jesus at this moment for Him to be hungry and without food.

I’ve been doing ministry with young adults for a while, and what they’ll tell me is “Well JP, if God didn’t want me to do this, He wouldn’t have given me these desires. If He didn’t want me to do that, I wouldn’t feel this way.” Let me be abundantly clear with you, you have desires that God does not want you to act on.

There are things that you want that you should put to death and not follow. You should resist. You should stand strong. You should be disciplined, say, “I’m not going to just follow every inkling of a desire within my body. Sometimes I’ll fast, and sometimes I know that’s toxic, and I’m going to trust His Word, rather than follow my wants.”

What Jesus does is He responds from Deuteronomy chapter eight. It’s interesting, the parallels are so many. This text is so rich. You spend more time than just what we’ll be in this morning because it’s a rich text. The parallels are mind-blowing. Jesus is in the wilderness for forty days. He references a time when the Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years. This is what it says in Deuteronomy 8, **“Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart...”**, sometimes God will test you to know what’s in your heart, **“...whether or not you would keep his commands.”** He will test you to see if you will keep His commands. **“He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that...”**, and here’s what Jesus says, **“...that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”** That what you would want most, your greatest desire would be the Word of God.

The Israelites failed the test in the wilderness in the forty years that they wandered. Jesus, though, now passes the test in his wilderness, after He’s been there for forty days, and He stands strong. I think when we’re in trouble, that’s when we feel entitled. Pandemic hits: “I just need a

vacation. This is hard. I just need to get out. I mean, it's okay.” Pornography is on the rise. alcohol sales are on the rise, addictions are skyrocketing right now because we're Americans.

Purchases. Everyone thought, “Oh, the economy's going to shut down like purchases are going to go low.” But no, purchases are through the roof. We're Americans. Cope, cope, cope. What's in my control? If I don't control that, what do I control? What can I control?

Trust yourself the least when you really want something, because the enemy plays in the fence of your desires. He knows what you want. He’s studied you. I'll insert this little distraction here. The enemy, Satan, he's probably never been anywhere near you. It makes sense that he would be the one conversing with the Son of God when he was on the earth, but Satan's not omnipresent, he’s not omniscient, he's not all-powerful. He's at one place and one time.

Revelation 12 tells us a third of the angelic realm fell with them, so they're all these demons here assigned to you or to places and I don't know exactly how that works. I just know their native language is lies. They twist the Word of God and they come alongside you and they whisper to you, “You should do that. You deserve that. It's going to be okay. God's not going to care. You can eat that.” It's often our own desires, some of which are good. Satan masquerades like an angel of light. That's 2 Corinthians 11 verse 14, that he presents himself to be something good and he knows what you want. He uses your desires as bait.

I saw an example of someone who's just really ministered to me through the years of the way that they were able to resist temptation. I wanted to bring them here because their example, their physical example, is so powerful to me that it stayed with me. In fact, I think about him often, just a dear loyal friend. He passed away two years ago, and so I couldn't have him here this morning and I was thinking, “How could I bring him to you?”, and then I realized I had him on video. I'm going to show you that video. It's just about a minute and a half long. It's a little bit weird to watch a sermon within a sermon, like Inception or something, so don't be distracted by that. Don't be distracted by my older fashion sense or anything like that. I want you to pay attention to the example of my friend resisting his animal instinct, his urges. Would you watch this:

“I'd like you guys to meet a friend of mine. I want my friend Jay to come up here. This is Jay. Jay has been with his master for seven years; his master has told him what is good for him and what is not good for him and he has learned to trust him. This is another friend of mine, this is roast. Meet my friend roast. I don't know if you can smell it down there, but it was freshly cooked this morning. It is very delicious. It smells really good. So, I'm just going to go ahead and tempt Jay with this roast.

I don't know if you see what's going on but Jay is watching his master. ‘Is it good for me? I trust you. If you say it's not good for me, I think I'll scoot away. I don't want anything to do with that which isn't good for me, and you get to decide what is good for me. Everything in me wants the roast, man it smells good. But you get to decide. I want to please you.’ He's like ‘Dude, you don't even know. This isn't even hard man. I'm just trusting my master, let me yawn for a minute.’

Trust the master. I think he wants the roast, but he's like, 'I'm not even going to look at it. I'm not even going to look at it. No, sir.'

What you can't see in that video is my friend Brad, Jay's owner, who's been really good to him and has rewarded him throughout the years for his obedience. So, when he is propositioned to not trust him, he looks at him and says, "What do I do? Is this good? Do I eat it? Do I not? What do I do? Because you've not disappointed me. You've not let me down so I'm just going to trust you over my urges, over what my flesh wants, over what everything says, over my animal instincts, or whenever my carnal instinct says to take it and eat it. What do you say?"

Trust God's word over your wants. You have to know the Word. Then the devil, Mathew 4 verse five, **"Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God', he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against the stone.'** Jesus answered him, **'It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'".**

Jesus now responds with Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 16. What Satan does is he will appeal to your desire for power. When you want more power, Satan is at work. Think about that. Leave here and test it. Is it true? I'm going to say it again when you want more power Satan is at work.

2. When tempted to display power, Jesus trusted God's plan.

"Prove you are the Son of God. Prove it to me, prove it to them." You add a face value like, "What's going on here?" In Malachi Chapter 3, the Prophet says that the Messiah, the Christ, would descend upon the temple. So, the Jews of this day have been watching the temple. They've been watching the sky around the temple wondering, "When is the Messiah going to show himself?" Satan is saying, "Now's the time." Remember when Jesus in ministry was like, "But my time has not come yet. It's not the time, don't tell anybody". Here Satan is saying, "No, tell them. Let's get this show on the road. Show them you're powerful. Show them you're powerful."

Satan recites Psalm 91. If I said to you guys, "Hey, let me get a mic. Get a hot mic and somebody come up here and just recite Psalm 91 for us." How would we do? Who knows Psalm 91 by heart? The devil does. The devil does, he's got it down. He knows it. Except for he leaves out a part. He says, because he twists scripture, **"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you,"** and this **"in all your ways"**, he leaves that out. He doesn't want you to know God is sovereign, that He's intimate, that He cares about you.

"They will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against the stone." And Jesus responds, **"Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah,"** is what Deuteronomy 6 says. This is when the Israelites are like, "God, what have you done for me lately? We're thirsty. Yeah, you gave us water earlier, but we're thirsty again. Can you give us more water? We would have been better off as slaves in Egypt."

Jesus doesn't need to prove anything. That's such a powerful idea for us. If I was in this situation, because I'm fallen, I might say, "Prove to you I'm the son of God? Did you not hear my daddy just told you I'm the son of God? But you want me to prove it here? What do you want me to do? I'll prove it. Let me show you what I can do."

That's what we want to be like. "Do you know where I work, where I live, who I know, how much I make, what I can buy, what I drive? We're constantly building our resume, accessorizing a character in a show to one-up somebody, living the game of comparison, that as long as we're a little bit better than them we can sleep. And Jesus says, "I don't have to prove to you anything. In a little while, you're going to see an empty tomb. That's all the evidence you need. I don't have to prove to you anything."

Every year I read a book. Just one book. No, I'm kidding. It's called *The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness* by Timothy Keller. It's a short book. One of the things that it talks about is a problem of pride. You can identify it by: when you need to make the conversation about yourself, something's off. Somebody's like, "Yeah, well, my kid... their report card...", you say "Oh, well, let me tell you about my kid... their report card." "Yeah, we just bought a new car...", "Oh, we bought a new car too." "Yeah, we're thinking about moving...", "Oh, we moved once. We got a house, also." "Yeah, you know, job change...", "Let me tell you about my job." "My marriage...", "Hold on, can we go back to my marriage? No, no, no, let me have the spotlight. Can we put the spotlight back on me because candidly, I've been thinking about myself so much that I am socially dysfunctional, that I don't know how to carry on a conversation with someone else."

I say that so passionately because I experienced that firsthand. I noticed at one point in ministry that so much of my time was just helping people. They would kind of line up and say, "Well, here's my marriage. Here's my kid. Here's my situation. Here are my struggles. Here's my addiction. Can you help me? Can you help me? Can you help me?"

I found myself in this place where I was socially awkward because I would go to the party and if someone wasn't asking me for help, I didn't know what to talk about. They would say, "Hey, man, did you see that game? How about this?" I'd say, "No. "How's your marriage?" You know? It's like everything needs to be a pastoral care situation.

Some of you, maybe you identify it by asking: Can you just sit there and listen to somebody else? You just say, "Tell me more. Tell me more about that. That's great. You keep talking. I'm just going to sit here and listen, I just love being with you. We don't need to talk about me yet. How are you doing? It's so great to see you."

That's humility. Do we trust that God is the avenger? Do we trust that we don't have to make our home here? That we don't have to let the enemy eat our lunch by feeding our constant pride. So, trust God's plan, don't seek power. Trust God's plan, don't crawl on your hands and knees trying to get to the next spot. Trust the Lord. Trust Him.

Verse 8, **"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow**

down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

This is a literal account of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, conversing with Satan himself. It's not fiction. It's not Lord of the Rings, or Star Wars, or Star Trek, or something like that. This conversation actually happened. Jesus says, **“Away from me!”** Satan leaves, and angels come and tend to him. It's a really powerful picture, what happened here. Jesus responded again, from Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 13. Now the temptation that is happening is again difficult to understand at a face value. Reading: Satan is, the Bible calls him, listen because I think we forget about this, the god of this world. The literal god of this world, the prince of the air here. He has power here. In a sense, this is his domain.

Let me explain it like this: We are a part of this supernatural experiment. Satan is in heaven, he is the greatest of angels, and he doesn't want to worship God, he wants to be God. So, God says, “Hey, let's see what kind of God you can be.” He sends him to the world, He creates humans, and says, “Alright, I'm going to be a good father to these humans, you're going to be destructive to them, and I hope they follow me. I'm going to show them that I love them in the greatest way imaginable. I'm going to give my only son for them to get them back to me.” And Satan is constantly trying to lure us away. Temptation is a proposition not to trust God, right? He's involved in all of those opportunities, where your proposition is not to trust God. And what he offers you is a shortcut. The shortcut he offers Jesus here is “You can have the world. I'll give you my kingdom if you'll just worship me, without the cross.”

3. When tempted with a shortcut, Jesus trusts God's schedule.

When tempted with a shortcut, Jesus trusts God's schedule. He says, “I'll hand this to you.” We know how this plays out, Jesus reigns at the right hand of the Father forevermore. Abraham Kuyper says, “There not a square inch over all of creation which He doesn't hover over and cry out ‘Mine’”. That this is His. But what happens between this moment and then is the suffering and the death of Jesus. Satan says, “Hey, I can give you all of that without the cross. I can give you things without the ‘in this world, you will have trouble’ if you'll just follow me.” Right?

How much does Jesus love you, that He says no to that? “No, you don't understand. I'm dying for them. I love them.” It says in Hebrews, **“For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.”** Some of us need to hear that because there are those of you who've been in church your whole life and you love following the rules. “Just give me the rules and I'll follow the rules.”

But you follow the rules with the wrong heart. It said, “For the joy set before him.” You're like, “Fine, God. Fine. I'll wait until I'm married. That's fine. No, it's fine. I'll stay in my marriage. Yeah, it's a commitment, whatever. Honor the commitment. That's fine. I'll go to church. Yeah, okay we'll go. I'll get up on Sunday. I'll be there. I'll go to life group, that's fine. Whatever you say, I'll do it. That's fine. I'm the older brother.” Rather than saying, “Man, I know you know best. Your law leads to life. My heart desires to follow you. Your ways are better than mine. I want to do what most honors you. That's my heart's desire. I love you.”

It should seem crazy when we read this because we know, how is Satan going to tempt Jesus with the world? All things were created by Him and for Him? Of course, Jesus isn't going to fall for that. He knows what He's going to get, that's dumb.

How do you fall for it? You understand the narrative right? You get a kingdom. You're an heir to a kingdom. Glorious riches forevermore are yours. You're going to be in a place of no weeping, no sadness, no death, no disease, no despair, only joy forevermore in the presence of God. You know that right? That's comedy, right? So why would you ever fall for a shortcut? "Because I need to get married. I need somebody to like me, somebody to follow me. I want to be popular. I want a nicer car. I want that. There are some things that I want." Heaven's not good enough? When did heaven stop being good enough? We see this with Jesus. We're like, "How could he fall for that?" How do we fall for that? How could we fall for that?

There's significance here that Jesus is the second Adam. If you watch the parallels in this, in the Garden of Eden Eve was presented with food. She's offered power, and they're given a shortcut. It doesn't work out well for them. Romans 5 says, "**For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners...**", that's you and I, "**...so also of the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous,**" that's also you and I, should you trust in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Adam and Eve doubted God and they ate the forbidden fruit in hopes to be like Him, and they ushered in sin. They fractured creation. So, we have perspective friends, we know how it works out for people. Abraham, right? God says, "Hey, you're going to have a child." "Yeah, God, but you're kind of taking your time. Let me take the shortcut with my maid service." Ishmael is born, he's the father of the Islamic faith. All kinds of challenges come from that.

We could look at Jacob who stole his birthright from his brother Esau. He took a shortcut and lived a life of deception. For much of his adult life he ran for his life. He had to hide and was afraid. We could look at Saul who offered a burnt offering, he didn't want to wait for Samuel, and his reign was destroyed. David, who had an affair with Bathsheba, and whenever you sin you have to commit more sins to cover up those sins. So, then he has her husband killed, and his son, as a result, is killed. He dies. Not only that, but he invites generational dysfunction into his life.

Give me one example where someone takes a shortcut and it works out. You're never going to get away with sin, never. Not one time, it will never happen. And the worst thing you can do is hide it. "I think I'm going to see this one down, no one's ever going to know." The enemy's having a heyday, he'll eat your lunch. He's having a heyday.

Or you can trust the Father. You can bring it to the light, you can walk in His way. Trust God's schedule over any shortcut. Let me just say this, you're never going to have to sin. That's good news. Never in your life will you be like, "Okay, I've got two options. One is sin and two is sin." That will never happen. You'll never have to sin. There's always an option, I don't care how difficult it is. If they kill me, I'm going to go your way, I'm going to follow you, Father.

1 Corinthians 10:13: **“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”** God will always, He promises you, provide a way out. He says in the Scripture, in James 4, **“Submit yourself then to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you”**. In 1 Peter 5 He says, **“The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him.”** Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that believers around the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering. Stand firm, stand strong.

In summary, trust God's word over your wants. We trust God's word over our wants. This is huge. This is the primary application of this text. The way that you defeat the enemy, who is a liar, is you know the truth, which is God's Word. There's a chapter on spiritual warfare. It's Ephesians chapter 6, the armor of God chapter. You've heard it right? The helmet, the breastplate, the belt, the feet. There's one offensive weapon there. There's one weapon that you can use on offense, which is the sword of the Spirit, which is what? The Word of God. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the Bible. Do not go out there unarmed, you have to have your sword. You have to know the truth.

If you like, “But I don't know the truth. How do I know the truth?” You're in a great place. We have this thing called the Bible reading plan: biblereadingplan.com, jump on with me. They do an amazing job. There's a text, and then there's a description. You're going to learn something every morning. It'll show up on your phone. It's on the Harris Creek app. It'll show up in your email. Jump on with us, begin to read the Bible.

I'm not selling you a bill of goods here; it will change your life. You don't want to go out there unarmed. Can you imagine? Because he's a liar. You know what he's going to say to you? He'll speak to you like this:

“I'm worthless. I'm worthless.”

And you can say, “Wait, hold on, Genesis 2 says I've been created in the image of God. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John said I've been purchased by His blood, that He purchased me with His son. Ephesians 2:10 says, **‘For I have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for me to walk in.’** He has a purpose. I'm not worthless. That's what the truth says.”

“Well just take a second look at him. Take a second look at her. I know you're not married. That's okay. Just a second look. It's no big deal. Just entertain some thought.”

“No. Job 31:1 says, **‘I've made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at another woman.’** Matthew 5 says that if I look lustfully at someone, I've already committed adultery with them. 1 Corinthians 6 says that I'm to flee sexual immorality. All of the sins a person commits sins against their body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. I've been bought by the Holy Spirit. I'm not my own. I'm going to honor God with my body.”

“You know if you just had a little bit more. Maybe a little bit more money. You lived in that neighborhood, had that car, you'd be happy then. If you just increased your income a little bit, you'd be happy.”

“That's interesting. That's interesting, deceiver, because what the scripture tells me is whoever loves money never has enough. That, in Ecclesiastes, it sprouts wings and flies away. It says that with food and clothing, I should be content with these. In fact, it says in 1 Timothy 6 that anyone who loves money falls to temptation, in a trap, and is lured away. So, you're a liar.”

Trust God's plan. Don't seek power. He's in charge of what others think of you. Trust God's schedule. Don't take shortcuts. Join the staff, an application for you. If you already read the Bible, join the staff in giving me something up. Coffee, alcohol, desserts. I gave up sodas this year. No sodas for me this year. Jump on with us, just choose one thing and give it up. Go a year to train your body to not follow its every desire.

When the girls were little, Monica and I have two girls and a son, and when the girls were little, Finley was about four years old and Presley was a couple of years older than her, I had this daddy-daughter date planned. These are fun for me, just to get some intentional time with them. This particular one I planned an afternoon, and we were going to start with getting frozen yogurt. We were going to go to this place that they didn't even know about yet, where they just dump the piles of stuff, you know again with desserts. I mean, they just dumped the stuff on top, and I'm so excited. You get it, you know you're going to bless your kids and you're excited.

So, we're getting ready and there's this old Halloween candy in the pantry. I don't know what happened but Finley, my four-year-old at the time, saw it. It's like three pieces of candy corn, you know. And she's like, “Daddy, I want that.” I'm like “No, trust me. Come on.” She says, “No but I want that.” I'm like, “That's interesting. Come on. No, we're not going to have that. Let's go.”

I don't know if your kids have ever done this, maybe just mine, but she just melts down. I mean, just going the wrong way. “I want that! I don't understand! You don't love me!” And I'm frustrated because I know what's about to happen. I have to take a breather. I go to the other room, “Lord help me”, you know, just trying to catch my breath. I'm just thinking, “No, don't do this. You don't know what I'm about to do, I'm about to bless you. We're going to go to a place that has candy corn scoops on ice cream. Why are you doing this?” And I hear Presley going over to her and she says, “Fin, you can trust your dad. He desires to give us good things.” I said, “I knew she was my favorite.” I am joking. Finley, I don't have favorites, and I love you very much.

All that happened there is Presley has spent more time with me. She has seen this experiment. She knows where this goes. She knows that I desired to bless them. Do you believe that God desires to bless you? Do you believe that God your Father in heaven desires good for you? Do you believe that His ways are better than your urges? Even when you want good things, that His timing is perfect? With children, with marriage, with promotions. Can you trust Him with those things? If you can't, press into Him. Spend some more time there. Let me end with two really powerful questions: “What might the enemy be doing here?” and “What does God want to do

here?" When you're faced with that situation, what might the enemy be doing? What does God want to do?

Father, I pray you'd help us, you'd strengthen us, you'd lead and guide us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Father, would you lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil? Father if there's any stronghold on this church, in our city, would you lift it? If there are friends here that have fallen to temptation, would you send your angels to tend to them? As your Word says, for the spiritually, or I'll say the biblically illiterate, God would you teach us? Would you fill our hearts with your truth? Would you help us to know you? Would you give us the confidence and courage to walk with you? Would you increase our faith? Would you increase your blessings on this place, but Lord, never give us so much that we would be led astray from you. Fix our eyes on you. God as we sing this song, would you move our hearts towards you, stir our affections for you. In the name of Jesus, amen.