

MATTHEW 4:1-11

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "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 ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" 5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand 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 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.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" 8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very 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 fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

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

Let's start by first noticing where Jesus goes. He goes to the wilderness. This is significant. In order to understand it's significance let's first look at some other Wilderness experiences in scripture:

Matthew 3:1 (NASB) 1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

Genesis 37:22 (NASB) Reuben further said to them, "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him"--that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.

Exodus 4:27 (NASB) Now the LORD said to Aaron, "Go to meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.

We also know that the Children of Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness.

Here is the important principle: We all go into the Wilderness.

There will always be a central purpose in the wilderness, this doesn't change.

The central purpose is for us to be brought to a place where we arrive at a deeper level of TRUST in Him. *This is a deeper level of trust than salvation trust.* This is a level of trust and belief where we quite literally cross over into a deeper understanding of the trust He requires of us in order to experience the Abundant, Spirit Filled life that is on the other side of the Jordan River in Canaan.

For the individuals we just looked at, the Wilderness preceded their ministries. God lead all of them into the wilderness to try them and test them in order to deepen their level of trust in Him, to equip them for their journies ahead.

Here's the point: He did the same thing for His Son.

It's The Spirit that leads Jesus into the wilderness. His time in the wilderness is right after His baptism and right before His ministry. God is going have His Son go through a period of trial and testing in order to learn the deeper level of Trust & Obedience required for His journey ahead.

Hebrews 5:8 (NLT) Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.

Philippians 2:6-8 (NASB) 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is a specific time of testing for Jesus that we see He does indeed pass but God is going to have His Son go through this none the less to bring His Son's level of Trust in Him to an even higher degree.

Salvation vs Sanctification – Obedience is not a requirement for salvation. It is for sanctification.

2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

Forty days and forty nights –

- Mentioned 146 times in scripture
- Generally symbolizes a period of testing, trial or probation.

He then became hungry - This shows us Jesus humanness. Jesus didn't suffer in this life as God only. He suffered these things as God but also as completely man. God doesn't get hungry. God in human form get's hungry.

He went through this temptation and His time on this earth as a human being.

3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

What is the PRIMARY reason Jesus came to this earth? John the Baptist tells us:

John 1:29 (NASB) 29 The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

What would have happened had Jesus given in?

Jesus came here to live a perfect life and do what none of us were capable of doing. He came to take our sins away.

If Jesus were to stumble and sin here, God's plan has been ruined by Satan. If God's plan is ruined then you and I's lives have now lost meaning. We are dead in our sins and our faith is worthless and there is no power to overcome sin.

Christ's **perfect** sacrifice was God's plan and it was everything.

Therefore Satan's temptations were going to be meaningful.

Satan's first temptation is for Jesus to turn the stones into bread.

Jesus hasn't eaten for 40 days! We already know that Christ had to have been starving at this point. Imagine the depth of His hunger.

But notice Jesus' response:

4 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.'"

Exodus 16:2-4,14-15,35 (NASB) 2 The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the **wilderness**. 3 The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction...14 When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. 15 When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat...35 The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

There's some lessons for us here:

1. The Children of Israel **didn't** have an **eternal perspective**, they had a **temporal one**.
2. Because of this they always had a **hard time looking past their needs and seeing the bigger picture** of what God was trying to do in them.
3. Because they had a hard time looking past their needs they **rarely waited on Him** to do what He was trying to do in them. They were **rarely obedient to Him**.
4. This **resulted** in them **not developing the Trust in Him that He desired for them** to have and an **entire generation** of this people didn't get to **cross the Jordan and go into Canaan**.

Our trials and testing allow us to do one of two things. We either:

1. Develop a deeper level of Trust in Him (eternal perspective)
2. Develop a deeper level of Trust in ourselves (temporal perspective & also futile).

This is exactly why Jesus said the following:

Luke 12:23-31 (NASB) 23 "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

So what was Satan really trying to get Jesus to do? If Jesus would turn those stones into bread He would be providing for Himself instead of exercising trust that His Father would provide for Him.

5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand 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 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.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

I used to always wonder why this one was so tempting. Have you? Why would standing on top of the highest part of the temple and jumping be tempting?

Let's take a deeper look for the answer. He took Him into the Holy City. Jerusalem is the Holy City. He didn't take Him to the top of just any temple it was The Temple.

There is significance in where Satan took Him. Satan's second temptation is to have Jesus focus in on a subset of people. The Jewish people. This is significant because this is the group of people that God made His promise to with Abraham:

Genesis 17:7 (NASB) "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

This people group *never* accepted Him as their King though:

1 Samuel 8:7-8 (NASB) 7 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the

people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. 8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day--in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also.

This is why Jesus specifically pointed out that it was the Children of Israel that He had come for:

Matthew 15:24 (NASB) But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

He came here to fulfill the promise that His Father had made with Abraham and the Children of Israel. That promise is still going to be fulfilled:

Matthew 19:28 (NASB) And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall **sit** upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

That throne is going to be in the Holy City (Jerusalem) and the throne will reside in The Temple.

Jesus has a tremendous desire to take His rightful place as King of Israel:

Luke 19:41-42,44 (NASB) 41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes....44...because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

So what was Satan doing? He was tempting Christ with something he knew that Jesus deeply loved and desired: to rule His city and His people. Satan quotes the below scripture to try to convince Jesus of what God will do if He jumps:

Psalms 91:11 (NASB) 11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. 12 They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

This is really an ingenious request from Satan. Satan is banking on this: If Jesus were to throw Himself down God is going to protect His Son, if Christ were to die then the perfect lamb has been killed and God's plan of salvation ruined.

Additionally if God saves Him certainly all of the people in Jerusalem would see it and know that this must be the Messiah if all of these angels come to His aid?

Satan is tempting Jesus to test God's plan and see if He will save Him. If He does, Satan is telling Jesus, as long as you do that and obey my command, since you want to be their King so bad I'll let you be their King.

Jesus answers the following way:

7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

We don't Test God we Trust God.

Additionally, something we see here that ought to make all of our blood run just a little cold is:

1. Satan knows scripture.
2. He doesn't mind using it and twisting it to meet his agenda.
3. He's even bold enough to use it and twist it against The Author of It!

Notice what Jesus did though. He understood what Satan was trying to make this about. He was trying to twist scripture to meet his needs. Notice that Jesus understood scripture well enough to combat what Satan said with an accurate interpretation of scripture and by pointing out to Satan the principle that he wasn't grasping, that is that God is not to be made our own genie in a bottle that we use to help us out of our tough situations.

8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very 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 fall down and worship me."

- showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

What has Satan done here? He has expanded the temptation to all the kingdoms of the world, why? Because He's taken it from just the Jewish people to who Christ is destined to be King over, which is all the nations.

9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You..."

Another question...how is it that Satan is able to offer all the kingdoms of the world? Because he's been given dominion over this world for a period of time:

Luke 4:6 (NASB) And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

John 12:31 (NASB) 31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

If Satan couldn't offer this why didn't Jesus just simply remind him of that? Notice Jesus says nothing to Satan about whether his offer is legitimate or not. He simply repeats more scripture to Satan.

Satan doesn't even hide what he wants from Jesus on this request. He just says it straight away:

if You fall down and worship me."

Satan is going for broke on this request. If this final temptation of Satan's is Satan throwing caution to the wind then Satan knows something about Jesus. He knows Jesus compassion and desire to be with and rule His people (only this time it is not just a subset but whom Jesus is destined to rule...the entire world).

Again we see Jesus' heart for people:

Matthew 9:36 (ESV) When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

John 11:32-35 (NASB) 32 Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, 34 and said, "Where have you laid him?" They *said to Him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept.

Jesus knows something so much better is in all of our futures:

Revelation 21:2-5,23-27 (NASB) 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true.

Here's what I think Satan knows: Just how much Jesus desires to end this curse and be here ruling as our King. He wants to use that desire against Jesus here.

10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Jesus again uses scripture to rebuke Satan and what happens? Angels came and began to minister to Him. While Satan is trying to get Christ to get stones to rely on Himself and turn stones to bread, God has bigger plans. He is going to take care of His Son by having angels minister Him.

- angels came and began to minister to Him.

But Jesus understood that this world and it's temporary offers are nothing compared to the Glory that comes in waiting on His Father's timing:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NASB) 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Jesus' willingness to humble Himself and learn obedience and deeper trust with His Father also provided a very practical thing in our relationship with Him that would not have been revealed had He not gone through this testing:

Before revealing that we should first understand a spiritual principle:

James 1:13 (NASB) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

God in His heavenly form is unable to experience temptation. That is not the case for God in Human form though:

Hebrews 2:18 (NASB) 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 (NLT) This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

Understand - *sympatheō* (süm-pä-the'-ō)

1. to be affected with the same feeling as another, to sympathise with
2. to feel for, have compassion on

Jesus is now able to provide evidence to us that He understands or empathizes with our trials and difficulties.

Let's think about this for a minute. A God who didn't need to come down here and experience every aspect of life did. Even the aspect of temptation.

He did this so that we would be able to look at Him and understand that He loves you and I enough to not only take our sins but to allow us to know something:

He has felt what we've felt, he's hurt the way we hurt.

He is able relate to us.

There's a passage of scripture that I'd like for us to look at:

1 Corinthians 13:12 (NASB) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

There is going to be a point for every person when we get on the other side that we are going to have the opportunity to look into our Savior's eyes. Just you and Him Face to Face, eyes locked.

There's times I find myself thinking of this scene. The thought that comes to me most often is what kind of eyes will I see looking back at me?

Something that each, one of us here today has the opportunity to see are eyes of understanding.

The eyes of a person who understands the pain we've felt when we lost that person that was dear to us, the eyes of a person who understands the physical and mental anguish and sickness we felt when we went through those treatments for the disease we were diagnosed with. Eyes that understand the trials and the testing that comes from being human in this life.

This be said because:

Hebrews 4:15 (NLT) This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

He told His apostles something great as it relates to what we are looking at:

He's been through what we've been through and He beat it for us:

John 16:33 (NASB) 33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."