

FACING TEMPTATION Sunday School- January 10, 2010

Unifying Topic: STRENGTHENED IN TEMPTATION

Lesson Text

I. Jesus Is Led To Be Tempted (Matthew 4:1-2)

III. Satan Approaches Jesus (Matthew 4:3-4)

III. Jesus Demonstrates The Appropriate Way To Handle Temptation (Matthew 4:5-11)

The Main Thought: Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4:10, KJV).

Unifying Principle: All of us face temptation in life. How can we overcome it? Jesus' experience of overcoming temptation set an example for us.

Lesson Aim: The student should better understand how Christ faced temptation and used the Scriptures to handle temptation successfully..

Life aim: To be able to understand the real presence of Satan in the world today and see that he does not have to control our lives. To help us see that hiding Scripture in our hearts has everyday benefits.

4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

HISTORY:

Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus, the Savior of the world asked to be baptized by John the Baptist. John the Baptist already filled with the Spirit of God came to prepare the people for Jesus. Jesus humbled himself that we might have life. He came to save the people from sin. Heaven opened up and God the Father spoke and the people heard the voice from heaven and The Spirit of God filled Him. Through Jesus' baptism He proclaimed publicly His Sonship, identified Himself with the people He came to save, and set forth His redemption mission. One of His greatest periods of temptation was at the beginning of His public ministry... Immediately following His baptism by John – *Matt. 3:13-17*—just prior to starting His preaching ministry – *Matt. 4:12-17*.

LESSON:

Matthew 4:1-2: Jesus Is Led To Be Tempted

¹4:1 Led By The Spirit Into The Wilderness

Right after His baptism, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness for a time of temptation and testing by the devil. Jesus had to be prepared—prepared mentally, prepared spiritually, and prepared physically.

How could He prepare Himself? There was only one way. He had to get alone with God and subject Himself; to gain complete control over His body and Spirit. He had to get completely apart from the world. Just imagine the pressure and weight pressing against His body. He prayed; He asked; He pleaded; He broke; He wept; He begged for strength and endurance to stand up under all that was to face Him in the upcoming times. The

¹ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew0313.html>

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preparation went on for forty days and forty nights...The tempter came to Him.

The wilderness of Judea was a rocky, barren, scrubby environment more or less hostile to human life. The Spirit's role in this is not to directly tempt Jesus, for God cannot tempt any man (*James 1:13*), but rather, to lead Jesus to the situation where Satan would provide the temptations. Why could Jesus not do this on His own? Because it is in and of itself a sin for man to seek temptations. Jesus taught us to pray that we not be led into temptation, but be delivered from evil (*Luke 11:4*). He told the disciples, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation" (*Luke 22:40*). The man who willingly seeks after temptations is a man who is not doing the Lord's will. Yet, it was necessary that Jesus be tempted while on earth, so the Spirit directed Jesus to undergo such. *We have not a priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin Heb.4:15.*

²Why was Jesus tempted? While Jesus was God, He was also man. Jesus hungered as a man, thirsted as a man, suffered as a man, and ultimately died as a man. He was also tempted as a man, yet without sin (*Hebrews 4:15*). This was necessary so that He could become a merciful High Priest (*Hebrews 2:17*).

The Devil is, of course, Satan. Jesus said he was a murderer from the beginning and that he has no truth in him (*John 8:44*). The word "Devil" means "adversary" or "accuser." That's Satan's true character. Times when life is so incredibly difficult, we can't imagine going on one more step. And we often don't understand what we've done to upset God, that He is punishing us in this way. But notice this. The Father said, *Matt. 3:17-4:1 "...This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."* Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The season in the wilderness did not start because Jesus upset God. It was quite the opposite. The Father was well-pleased in Him, and it was the Holy Spirit Who led Him into the wilderness for this testing. Saints, I want you to remember this the next time your life seems to take a horrible turn for the worse. Because if you remember that God is your friend, and not your executioner, then you will remember to deal with the tests and temptations the way you're supposed to. Remember three reasons:

1. To prove and demonstrate your faith.
2. To strengthen and prepare you for heavier responsibility.
3. To demonstrate the mercy, grace, and power of God in human life.

Vs. 2 – Fasting means abstinence from eating food for a period of time (*Luke 4:2*). Jesus fasted so as to focus himself for the challenge of temptation that He was about to face. Being tempted directly by Satan was no ordeal into which one ought to enter unprepared. Prayer is often accompanied with fasting (*Mark 9:29, Luke 2:37, Acts 14:23*). **A WISE TEACHER ONCE SAID, "YOU CAN PRAY WITHOUT FASTING, BUT YOU CAN'T FAST WITHOUT PRAYING."**

POINT:

How much more could be done if believers sought God with the same intensity! How much more growth and ministry could be gained!

Fasting helps the prayer life. There are special times when communion with God is absolutely essential:

- After a mountaintop experience (Christ's baptism)
- Before a great trial of time of temptation (Jesus' 40days and 40nights* with the tempter)
- Periods of great service for God (Jesus' ministry- going before the public)

SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU" MATT.6:33.

NOTE :

*There seems to be a significance in the number 40 here. The earth was cleansed in 40 days and 40 nights of rain during the flood. Joseph's embalming process was 40 days (Genesis 50:3). The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. It seems to be a number that indicates cleansing and purification. The numerology is consistent in the case of Jesus' fasting as well.

² <http://preachersfiles.com/matthew-41-11-jesus-is-tempted-by-satan/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Matthew 4:3-4: Satan Approaches Jesus

4:3-4 Three Temptations

Maturity does not exempt a person from temptation. **Jesus' first temptation** was for Him to use His power to meet a personal hunger. He could then see fit to feed the world and prove Himself to be the Son of God. Men would rush to serve any Messiah or man who could meet their physical and material needs. However, Jesus would have failed:

- To meet their spiritual need.
- By teaching error that the physical is more important than the spiritual.
- By teaching that receiving was more important than giving.

Jesus was alone and hungry. He may have seemed defenseless when the devil came to Him with **three temptations**. But He was not. He was packing a massive broad sword, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Every time the devil attacked with a temptation, Jesus quoted the Word of God to repel the attack:

1. The devil said, "You're hungry, so turn these stones into bread." Jesus quoted *Deut.8:3*.
2. The devil said, "Jump off this high place to prove that God will protect You." Jesus quoted *Deut.6:16*.
3. The devil said, "Take the easy way out, and I'll give you the world." Jesus quoted *Deut.6:13*.

Saints, the Word of God is your offensive weapon against the devil. God has given it to us to wage war against tests and temptations. Matthew calls Satan "the Tempter" in verse 3. The tempter can only tempt, appeal, entice not force. Four clear lessons are seen in these temptations.

1. Temptation often attacks an area of desperate need such as hunger.
2. Temptation is to be resisted by using the Word of God.
3. When needs arise, be strengthened in God's presence and plan alone not yours.
4. Trust that the enemy will flee by the Spirit's Power.

PSALMS 51:11 SAYS, "CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM THY PRESENCE; AND TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME."

Matthew 4:5-11: Jesus Demonstrates The Appropriate Way To Handle Temptation

4:5- The **second temptation** was to prove His deity by the spectacular, so the devil thinks. The worshipers at the temple, seeing such an event would accept and proclaim Him to be the Son of God. The holy city was Jerusalem and the pinnacle of the temple was the highest point on the top of the temple which overlooked the lowest valley on one of its sides making for a height of around 700 feet.

The thing that's wrong with this reasoning is that God is not to be tested or tried (that is to attempt to ensnare Christ; challenging God to sin). *In Acts 5:9, But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* This is not something we want to be caught doing. While in contrast, the challenge God gives in Mal.3:10c, is a challenge to prove Him regarding the rewards of tithing. God is to be trusted and He wants men to believe Him because they love Him as their Father, not because of the events and happenings.

God would have failed if He had given in to this temptation:

1. This act would have abused God's Will and misused what God had promised. This would have ignored what God really wanted and had really said.
2. This would have had the people's attention centered on the spectacular instead of faith in God.

"BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM: FOR HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM" HEB.11:6.

The power of Satan is limited. He can only tempt. He could not push Christ off the pinnacle and he cannot push or force us to sin. The lust or desire is from within man. Satan's temptation can only stir and arouse the desire and lust. **Satan cannot cause a man to lust. Therefore, if a person is living in communion with God and living in God's Word, he will be stirred to obey God more than he is stirred to yield to the temptation.** Satan knew scripture. It is possible to know the scripture and not know God. It is also possible to know the scripture and stand against God, abusing and misusing His Word.

4:8-The **third temptation** was to prove His deity by compromise. He was tempted to secure the world without the cross, without paying the price. He was tempted to choose another way instead of God's Way. He was tempted

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to compromise His life and His loyalty—switch loyalties. He was offered the world and the sovereign leadership of the world if He would just do one thing: worship the devil. What does this mean? It means that Christ would have been tempted to allow the world (including man) to remain corruptible and dying with no hope of life eternal with God. There are two things wrong with this reasoning behind the temptation:

1. Compromise with the devil and the world is not God's way. God's way is to conquer the corruption and death of this world.
2. God alone is to be worshiped, not the devil nor the world and its power.

If Christ would have given into this temptation, he would have failed:

- Because He would have secured the kingdom of this world through compromise, not by God's hands.
- He would have switched His loyalty from God to the devil.

"FOR WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR SHAL SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?" MATT.16:26.

Four significant lessons at this point:

1. A believer is often tempted to compromise both his life and his work or ministry.
2. Satan deceives and lies. The kingdoms of this world are only temporary—for a few short years.
3. Believers cannot receive from Satan what God has promised them.
4. Temptation must be resisted immediately. Jesus did not hesitate a moment in resisting temptation.

When a believer is tempted time after time, he faces two critical dangers:

1. Discouragement – Succumbing to temptation and sinning can discourage a person. In fact, the greater the fall of a person, the more unworthy and self-accusing he becomes. Self-pity, shame, guilt, and failure always discourage to some degree.
2. Over-confidence – A person can feel strong and mature, feeling above temptation, leading them to think that everything they do is bound to be right; feeling they can conquer any temptation on their own; pulling scripture out of context to justify their ungodly and loose behavior.

4:11 Angels Ministering To Him

There was the triumphant victory. Jesus resisted the temptation the only way he could!—By doing exactly what the Word of God said. He simply obeyed God. Therefore He never got out of the Will of God. The end result of Jesus' successful battle was twofold. **First**, the devil left Him. This is how we are to obey James' command: *James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* **Secondly**, after the devil left angels came and ministered to Him.

You might think, Well, Jesus was special, so He was ministered to by angels. And you might say, I'm nobody, what makes you think that I would ever qualify to be ministered to by angels? Well, the writer of *Hebrews 1:14* says about angels, "...all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation." We are accounted to inherit this salvation that Christ gave His life for.

SUMMARY:

Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit. He didn't eat anything for 40days and 40nights, in contrast with John the Baptist being in the desert eating locust and wild honey. Satan, the devil, the tempter came to Jesus with three temptations.

- TEMPTATIONS**
1. Turn these stones into bread (tempting the flesh).
 2. Cast Yourself down from this pinnacle (tempting the pride of life; fame).
 3. Fall down and worship me, the devil (tempting the lust of the eyes-can have it all).

Jesus does not hesitate on any. He says, "*IT IS WRITTEN!*"

- IT IS WRITTEN**
1. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God v4.*
 2. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God v7.*
 3. *Get thee hence...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve v10.*

The primary focus is doing the Will of God when tempted by the enemy—not to compromise. It therefore shows

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you, who you are and who God is. It showed Jesus, who was both God and man; that resisting the enemy, **can** be done; not in our power alone but *in the power of His might Eph.6:10*.

As a man, He had to be filled with the Holy Spirit (*the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove Matt.316*). As a man He had to confess the Word of God (*It is written Matt4*). As a man, He was hungered (*fasted 40days and 40 nights Matt.4:2*). As a man, he had to pray and keep in constant contact with the Father.

Every trial and temptation was for our learning and example because at the end the devil had to leave. When He said *away from me Satan*, he had to leave. When He endured the temptations, and didn't give in, Satan had to leave. When He submitted first to God and resisted the devil, the devil had to flee. *1Corth.10;13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it"*. God always has someone to minister to us in our time of need. Jesus did not minister to Himself. *"...Behold, angels came and ministered unto him."* This was a time of complete exhaustion for Jesus. As the enemy departs, he departs for a season, meaning that there would be other temptations. But for now we have the victory because of Jesus! One of the blessings of having Jesus as our Savior is His ability to comfort and aid those who are tempted. He is sympathetic, and can provide mercy and grace to help in the time of need – *Heb. 4:14-16*. This is because He too was tempted – *Heb. 2:18*.

APPLICATION:

How many of you know how to play the game "Simon Says?" If Simon says to do something, you do it, but if Simon doesn't say to do it, you don't do it. The devil will try to trick you into doing what he wants you to do? If he tried with Jesus, he will try with us. When he does, do what Jesus did, answer with Scripture. Remember, adhering to the temptation is a sin. Are you going to inherit salvation? Well the way you can know, is that the Bible says in, *Rom. 10:9-11 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation*. For the Scripture says, **"WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."** Maybe life has offered you a lot of disappointments. Jesus never will. He died to pay the price of your sin, and then rose from the dead, alive today. If you believe Him, repent, and be baptized, you will inherit salvation. Now, tell others of your belief. You will need to inherit salvation before facing the temptations of life. The Lord gives us His Holy Spirit to be our guide, strengthener, and consoler in temptation and testing.