Sermon Follow-up | August 7, 2022

**Summer Series —** When Jesus is tested: “It is written.”

**Focus Passage:** Matthew 4:1–11

**Other Passages Referenced:** Matthew 27:40; 28:18; 1 Peter 4:12–13

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**Sermon Recap**

The Big Idea of the sermon was, “God, in Jesus, endured the test that we could not pass in order to train and deliver us.” The focus passage of Matthew 4:1–11 gives an account of Jesus being tempted three times by the devil in the wilderness. The first temptation (vss. 1–4) could be called “the temptation to separate sonship from suffering.” After 40 days of fasting, when Jesus would have been physically hungry and tired, the devil said, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” We want to keep the context in mind that the temptation comes immediately after Jesus’ baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. (Matt 3:17). Jesus understood that sonship and suffering go together (Luke 9:22, 17:25). The early church also understood the suffering went with being a follower of Jesus. 1 Peter 4:12–13 speaks of sharing in the sufferings of Christ so that we may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory. The sermon suggested, “Maybe life wouldn’t be so hard if we didn’t have a vision that it should be so easy.”

We might call the second temptation (vss. 5–7) “the temptation to tell God what to do.” God tests us to train and deliver us. We are not to test God. That doesn’t mean we don’t plead and pray. If that were true, our Bibles would not have the books of Job, Psalms, or Ecclesiastes. Not testing God does mean that we release the need for a particular outcome after pleading and praying.

The third temptation (vss. 8–10) could be called “the temptation to pursue God’s plan in our own way.” The devil offered Jesus a workaround to gain authority that would allow Him to bypass the cross. In *In the Name of Jesus, Reflections on Christian Leadership*, Henri Nouwen writes, “We are tempted to replace love with power, control over the cross, and being a leader without being led.” We find after the cross and resurrection of Jesus when the LORD Jesus gives the great commission to His disciples, He says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me ....” This authority far exceeded the authority Satan had promised if Jesus would have bowed to worship him.

In the three temptations, Jesus responds to Satan’s temptation by quoting scriptures from Deuteronomy 6–8. We even see the devil quoting scripture out of context to Jesus. The great difference is that Jesus obeyed Scripture while Satan rebels against it. Training was essential for Jesus. We see training with the truth as a tool for testing. While Jesus was hanging on the cross, people from the crowd again questioned His identity, saying, “If you are the Son of God, come down from that cross.” The training of Jesus in the wilderness temptation that questioned His sonship and tried to separate sonship from suffering prepared Jesus for the cross when He once again refused to separate the two. Jesus passed the test we could not and now waits around the corner of the next life to receive those who put their trust in Him as their substitute and deliverer.

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**Allow the Word to Speak —** READ Matthew 4:1–11

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. Who led Jesus to be tempted in the wilderness?
4. When did the wilderness temptation happen in relation to previous events?
5. How does the devil tie Jesus’ identity into the first two temptations?
6. What distinct appetites does the devil appeal to in each of the three temptations?
7. Who quotes Scripture in Matthew 4:6?
8. What Scripture passages does Jesus use in responding to each of the three temptations?
**Put the Word into Practice**

1. Are there certain times or patterns in which you most often find yourself tempted? (Like Jesus was tempted right after the high of his baptism and the Spirit descending on him)

2. Can you see ways in which the devil tempts you in relation to your identity? (Like taunting Jesus with “If you are the Son of God ....”)

3. Consider the appetites you listed in question 6 above. How are you tempted in relation to these appetites? (For example, physical appetites, appetite for God to show spectacular proof of His promises, appetite for power)

4. Can you see examples in your life of trying to separate suffering from sonship, telling God what to do, and/or trying to pursue God’s plan in our own way? If needed, spend some time in confession and repentance.

**The Big Question:** What do you need to do personally in response to this week’s passage and sermon?

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:** Click [here](#) for some good opportunities.
1. And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” *Luke 24:25-26*

2. Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. *1 Peter 4:12-13 (NLT)*

3. “For Moses the presence of God was the Promised Land.” —Ruth Haley Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*

4. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” *Matthew 29:18*

5. “Ever since the snake said, ‘The day you eat of this tree your eyes will be open and you will be like God, knowing good from evil’ (Genesis 3:5), we have been tempted to replace love with power...The long painful history of the church is the history of people ever and again tempted to choose power over love, control over the cross, being a leader over being led.” —Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

6. “Much Christian leadership is exercised by people who do not know how to develop healthy intimate relationships and have opted for power and control instead.” —Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

7. Jesus is tested to train us and deliver us—Matt. 4:1-11
   - The temptation to separate sonship from suffering—vv.1-4
   - The Temptation to Tell God What to Do—vv.5-7
   - The temptation to pursue God’s purposes your way—vv.8-10
     - Tool for Testing: Train with the truth

8. “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” *Matthew 27:40*