



TRUSTING GOD IN THE WILDERNESS MATTHEW 4:1-11

1971. Undefeated 26—0 with 23 KOs—5'11 205 Guy from Beaufort SC, Smokin Joe Frazier. His opponent also undefeated 31—0 w/25KOs 6'3 215 hailed from Louisville KY Muhammad Ali. Frazier won in 15 rounds by unanimous decision. Madison Square Garden “Fight of the Century”

3 Temptations (1) Read each interaction (2) Identify the temptation (3) See how God's empowers us to fight. **Pray.**

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” “This is my Beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.” (Mt. 3:17)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

Now what exactly is the temptation here? Turning the stones to bread? Remember, temptation is an enticement to sin. That is, how is Satan tempting Jesus to sin? It's not terribly obvious. It wouldn't necessarily be sin to grant Satan a request—God does in Job. It's not sin for Jesus to make food—he makes bread and fish for thousands. Certainly nothing wrong with bread or being hungry. So, if turning stones into bread isn't itself sinful, where's the sin? What is Satan really tempting Jesus to do?

Satan is tempting Jesus by trying to make him look to himself to satisfy his longings and needs. Satan is trying to get Jesus to doubt the goodness of his Father.

Remember Jesus has been in the wilderness for 40 days and he hasn't eaten. Can you imagine that? The headache? The low energy? And Satan sees this as a prime opportunity to tempt Jesus. “Why would God do this to you? Spirit threw him out there—didn't get lost! Didn't God say he loved you? And he shows it by sending you out into this wilderness? In your weakness in your moment of deepest need God is watching you—He sees you—and He's not doing anything. I know you're trusting God but look around—how's this going to for ya? You need to stop looking to your Father to take care of you and satisfy you and you need to look to yourself and take matters into your own hands. Compare yourself to others—Israel got bread! Think about how great you are. If anyone deserves a hot meal, it's you. Stop trusting in a Father who keeps failing to give you what you need and start making your own moves to find fulfillment.

Is this temptation not astonishingly close to home? How does Jesus respond to this? He quotes Scripture. In fact he could have just said something and whatever he said would have been Scripture in this moment.

But instead he quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, “But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

He says something similar in Jn. 4:34, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.” My strength to continue, my joy for today, my hope for tomorrow isn’t found in the kind of circumstances I’m. It’s found in the kind of God who’s in them with me. Honoring him in the wilderness is more important than escaping the wilderness. Three are people in this room who are in the wilderness and you’re asking “How could a loving God lead me here?”

You’re tempted to turn to yourself bc God’s far away. Ps. 34:18, “He’s close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Everything that has happened to you has come across his desk and he’s signed off on it. And he only intends good for you and is forming and shaping you for his glory in ways that you could never imagine. Screwtape letters “Be not deceived, Wormwood, our cause is never more in jeopardy than when a human, no longer desiring but still intending to do our Enemy’s will, looks round upon a universe in which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.” How are we able to do that because we can say with the Psalmist Ps 73. He’s your portion! Don’t live like anything else is.

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and 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 will command his angels concerning you,” and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.””

So they teleported—because supernatural beings can do that—to Jerusalem, the highest point of the temple, about 450 feet. And Satan says, “Since you’re God’s son, jump off this thing, God will send angels to catch you.” Now at first glance, it’s really hard to understand how this proposal would even be tempting for Jesus. He wasn’t suicidal. He wasn’t an adrenaline junkie. Didn’t walk around looking at tall buildings and say, “Duuuuude I wanna jump off that!” Honestly, on the surface this looks like a temptation I could easily resist— “Chase jump” *looks over the edge* “Nah dude I’m good.”

So what’s going on here? What *sin* is hidden in Satan’s proposal? We need to look at Jesus’ answer to understand. Vs 7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Satan is tempting Jesus to test God. Jesus is in a bad place—He’s having a rough go in the wilderness. And trusting the Father but his circumstances have not improved. And the temptation for Jesus is to do something that will force God to prove that he’s there and that he cares. Hey God, I’m out in here in the wilderness starving not feeling the love—so I’m going to do something that forces you do prove it; that will force you to provide a definitive sign. And whether or not you do will be the proof of whether or not you really love me. You’ve probably been there. Maybe you are now. Maybe you’re tempted to measure God’s love for you by whether or not he gives you what you’re asking for.

Ray Vann’s adoption—so much sacrifice. We went to lunch. Can you imagine him saying, “The measure of your love is whether or not you give me a quarter for the gumball machine on the way out.”

Friends please listen—it’s not wrong to want God to prove his love for you. It is wrong for you to come up with your own test. The fact has proven his love for you through incredible sacrifice and immeasurable cost to himself in the giving of his son. All the treasures of the world couldn’t amount to that cost. So we’re right to measure God’s love, but we’re wrong to measure it by our current circumstances. We measure God’s love by the cross. “Come behold the wondrous mystery, Christ the Lord upon the tree In

the stead of ruined sinners hangs the Lamb in victory See the price of our redemption, see the Father's plan unfold Bringing many sons to glory, grace unmeasured, love untold.”

Broad application in Jesus' answer. Stepping into traffic and “trusting” God is testing God. It's not faith, it's sin. Don't do that.

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 I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.””

Now this is the third time Satan has done this. Can we appreciate how composed Jesus is when he's hungry? I get hangry. *Imagine after 40 days.* Satan says, “Hey Chase” “WHAT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?” “Geez, sorry.” “Yea you should be now go back to hell.” Jesus' self-control is amazing to me. And so is his use of Scripture.

Jesus was an AWANA champ. Notice that this is the third time Jesus has quoted Scripture in response to the devil. I mean this is the definition of spiritual warfare—directed repeated temptations by Satan—and Jesus' response is to quote Scripture every single time. The word of God is sufficient to empower and sustain you amidst the most targeted attacks of the enemy. The word is the sword of the Spirit. And when we memorize Scripture we are arming ourselves for combat. When Satan tells you a lie you have to be prepared to tell him the truth. And if you haven't stored up the truth in your heart, then you're going into battle without a sword. Daily Bible intake, Scripture memory, all of these are meant to empower us with the truth of the Word to live effectively for God's glory.

And so they're on this mountain—some scholars think it's a vision—and Satan's last effort to get Jesus to sin is to try to offer him a way to save the world, without the agony of the cross; He's offering Jesus a short-cut to redemption. “Hey you're going to have to die on the cross and endure God's wrath gosh that's terrible...I got an alternative if you're interested...I'll offer you another way that's painless.” And Jesus has had enough, he says “Be gone, You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” It's interesting, Satan is the first one to suggest that Jesus can save his people and skip the cross but he's not the last. Peter does and Jesus says, “get behind me Satan.” Exactly what Satan was trying: a way to be the Davidic Messiah without having to be the Suffering Servant. But that's not an option.

We live in a time of mind-blowing technology, and efficiency. Used to have to go to Red-Lobster. But that's inconvenient! Grub Hub! It is awesome! I love it. But unfortunately our culture's cravings for better faster cheaper has invaded the church. Like God has called us to a mission to know him and make him known, and I think one of the number one ways Satan tempts us lures away from Jesus is by constantly offering us a pain free easy Christianity; a Grub Hub Christianity that thrives on skipping the inconvenience but still getting results delivered just the same. Is this not a temptation for us? To move toward the most stripped-down bare bones version of Christianity that will qualify for heaven?

Imagine if I said to my wife, I want as my wife. But I don't want to deal with any of the inconveniences that with being married to you, don't want to put in any of the effort that comes with getting to know you, I don't want to sacrifice time to spend with you if I don't have to, I don't be disciplined in pursuing you...I just want the benefits of being married to you and avoid all the burdens. This is exactly how Satan tempts

us with a version of Christianity than looks far more like a benefits program than a love relationship. We're remoted to come to Jesus and say I want you but not the sacrifice of reading,

"A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. A cheap Christianity without a cross will prove in the end to be a useless Christianity without a crown." Friends this Jesus is worthy of all our devotion. Might we take up our crosses and follow-him and not be seduced by cheap shortcuts that rob God of glory and us of the fulfillment of relationship with God.

Vs. 11 says, "Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him." Don't miss the irony here. Satan just told Jesus if he would sin, angels would come minister to him. Jesus obeyed and now angels are ministering to him.

Now I think it's really interesting that angels were watching this scene and I can't imagine how intense this must have been for them especially since they've been following this story since Satan triumphed over Adam in Genesis 3. Want to try and see this from a 10,000 ft view.

Skip to chapter 1. Goes from Abraham. And these two people serve as bookends in God's plan to set the world right. You see Adam and Eve were supposed to reflect God's glory and extend God's reign. They didn't. Sin came into the world, but God didn't stop. He's going to set the world right through people who *will* faithfully reflect his glory and extend his reign. God's starts with Abram the Hebrew. And he builds him into a nation called Israel and they're job is to keep God's covenant and reflect and extend his reign—be a blessing to the world. But they don't. Israel isn't faithful. No one is? And we're left with the question, who is going to keep God's covenant and reflect his glory to the world?

Years later there is going to be a descendant of Abraham who comes on the scene named Jesus of Nazareth. If you look at chapter 2 when Jesus is a child he's forced to flee to Egypt to avoid being killed by king Herod and 2:15 is interesting. "This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son..." Now this is a prophecy made by Hosea that Matthew is applying to Jesus but when Hosea said this the immediate reference was another son of God that God brought out of Egypt—Israel. Jesus in Matt. 3 comes up out of the water with God's presence descending? Who else—Israel? Who else goes to the wilderness—Israel. Who goes to the wilderness to be tested—Israel? Who is tested for 40 years—Israel. Jesus as the true Israel. Jesus is in one person who Israel was supposed to be as a nation. Jesus as an individual keeps the covenant that the children of Abraham were supposed to keep all along.

And if you're these angels here, watching this scene you feel the weight of these temptation in the desert. Since the nation of Israel began, you've seen every single Israelite fall to temptation and sin. Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon—all of them sinners who have succumbed to temptation and sin and because of that are not qualified to save anyone from theirs. But God has seen the problem, and has taken matters into his own hands and has sent his son from heaven to do for us what we couldn't do ourselves. Finally after years, here's a son of Abraham—an Israelite—who will can fulfill the conditions of the covenant and faithfully image God to the world.

And so you can imagine the anticipation when the Prince of Peace faces off with the Prince of Darkness. The God of this world verses the God of the universe. If this man can't stand against temptation, no one can. If Jesus is tempted into sinning, he is no longer qualified to redeem. When Satan comes, heaven leans in to watch and after the third temptation I believe they exploded in praise. He's won this incredible fight—Jesus is 3-0 and guess what? He's going to stay undefeated until the moment he takes his last breath.

Which means this friends, that we have an advocate in heaven who has perfectly kept God's covenant we have someone who is willing to give us credit for keeping it too. The good news of the Gospel is not if you try hard enough that you too can perfectly keep God's covenant. It's that while you can't there was one who did—Jesus Christ the one perfectly keeps the Covenant—and when I repent of my sin and trust in him God looks at me as if I never broke it.

Not only is he qualified to save us from our sin he's qualified to help us fight our sin.

Heb. 4:15-16 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.