

Our King Is Tempted, but Without Sin

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[0:00] If you'd open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 4, verse 1 through 11, we're going to be looking at the temptation of Jesus this morning. Last week, we looked at the baptism of Jesus, and it was His inauguration day.

Do you remember the words? It kind of climaxed in chapter 3, verse 17, where God says of His Son, This is My beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased. He made a declaration, an announcement.

And in that statement, this is My beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased, God the Father, there were choice words. He's drawing on Psalm 2, this is the Messiah, this is My Son, He's going to inherit the nations.

And He's also drawing on Isaiah 42, the suffering servant with whom I'm well pleased. This Messiah is going to suffer. He's going to establish His reign through suffering.

And so what we're going to see this morning is this. We're going to go from the inauguration day to the proving day. Jesus is inaugurated as King, and then what we're going to see is Jesus' medal is proven through the temptation.

[1:18] Imagine this. This is just make-believe. I don't think this really happened, but just pretend with me. God the Father in heaven says, this is My beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased. Public announcement. Up in heaven.

Bling, bling, bling. Bling, bling, bling. Bling, bling, bling. Little telephone call in heaven. God the Father picks up. Yes? It's Satan? I just heard the announcement.

Yes? I meant it for all to hear. Yes? Now, I've heard that He is well-pleasing to you. Why don't you send Him my way? Let me put Him to the test.

Let's see what He's got. You know what God the Father would say at that point? It's in the plan. I've already sent Him. He's being led by the Spirit right now into the wilderness. And by the way, He's my beloved Son.

I think you've got more on your hands than what you realize. Click. This morning, what I want you to see is this.

[2:19] What the temptation of Jesus shows is that Jesus is trusting and obeying of His Father all the way through.

He trusts and obeys His Father all the way through each temptation. He submits Himself to the will of the Father. He trusts and obeys.

And by doing so, He proves what God the Father has just said. This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

So there are really kind of three stages in this passage. Verses 1 and 2. It's the preparation. Jesus shows up in the wilderness. And then there's 3 through 10 where we're going to see kind of three rounds between heavyweights.

The devil and Jesus the Son. I'll tell you right now, Jesus wins. And then, verse 11, the triumph. The aftermath.

[3:24] We'll be spending most of our time on 3 through 10. But let's look at this preparation to begin with. It's a preparation of extremes. Verses 1 and 2. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry. Maybe one of the most extreme understatements in the Bible. But there may be more going on there than meets the eye.

We've got some extremes. Extreme landscape. The wilderness. It was a deserted place. A lonely place. Extreme wilderness. Extreme landscape. We've got extreme hunger going on here. Jesus has been fasting 40 days and 40 nights. And we all know that kind of 40 days without food is kind of the maximum a human being can go without dying. So Jesus is at the extreme of His life, humanly speaking.

He's been fasting. He's been fasting. Which means this. He's just not going without food, going without food. He's going without food in order to prepare Himself for something. He was extremely hungry.

[4:34] But when we get into the temptations, we're going to come back to this. Because we've got to ask, what was He really hungry for? Extreme isolation.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, yes. But He alone faced the devil. Now, I'm going to just be honest with you. I can't imagine going 40 days without food.

It's hard to imagine going 40 minutes without food, just to be honest with you. And if I was in an extreme landscape with extreme hunger facing an extreme opponent like the devil, I'd fold like a cheap suit.

I think we all would. Speaking of this extreme opponent, he was led out to be tempted by the devil. We were singing a song here.

Thank you, Ben and Lindsay. What a sweet song. Our enemy meant for evil. God meant for good. Jesus is led out to the wilderness.

[5:38] The devil wants evil. God wants good. And so He's led out to the devil. And the devil goes by a lot of different handles. In the Bible, ruler of this world, John 12.

Prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2. The God of this world, 2 Corinthians 4. The serpent of old, the deceiver of the world, Revelation 12. The destroyer, Abaddon, Apollyon.

The accuser, the slanderer, the tempter. Head to head. Extreme opponent. There's extreme stakes. Will Jesus, when facing all these extremes, will Jesus prove Himself as the Son of God, faithful to His Father, or will He be disqualified?

Will He yield to the devil's temptations and not just Himself be disqualified, but throw God's plan of salvation into the garbage can?

[6:42] The stakes are high. A lot of extremes going on here, but there's one other extreme I want you to see. There's extreme fulfillment going on here.

When you hear the word wilderness, when you read the word 40, when you read the words hunger, when you hear the words sun, you need to be realizing that Jesus is experiencing here something that parallels what Israel experienced in the wilderness.

Very intentional. Remember, Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, wandering the wilderness.

And we see in Deuteronomy 6, 7, and 8, right before they enter Canaan, the promised land, God through Moses addresses them.

And so what we see here in the temptation of Jesus is when He says it is written, He is quoting from Deuteronomy 8 and Deuteronomy 6. Parallel.

What you also need to know is that in Deuteronomy 8, Israel is likened to being God. God's son. God led His people, Israel, His son, into the wilderness to test them, quote unquote, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep God's commandments or not.

[8:07] So God leads His people, His son, Israel, through the wilderness to prepare them for entering Canaan. And we all know they failed miserably. They're a bunch of complainers.

stiff-necked, made it hard. God was merciful, though. God leads His son, Jesus, into the wilderness to prepare Him for His public ministry to prove that He is the true Son of God.

to prove what was in His heart, to fully obey the Father, no matter what, to submit Himself gladly to His God.

He did what Israel did not do. God has a purpose for leading His son into the wilderness. Jesus. Jesus is going to show Himself as the true Son of God.

So there's extreme fulfillment. A lot of action going on here, isn't there? Matthew has this, like, if you, like, if you, like, cut Him, He'd bleed out like Old Testament.

[9:19] He's just, He's just, got Old Testament all over the place. Okay, so verses 1 and 2, our King is being put to a very extreme test.

If any of us were in that situation, we'd fold, like, cheap suits. You've got to understand we've got extremes going on here. And He's going to prove Himself to be faithful. He's going to, this is saying He's ready for ministry.

Stage 2, the Son is tempted. In verses 3 through 10, the devil seeks to disqualify. Jesus and undermine God's plan of salvation with three temptations.

Now, has anybody seen a boxing match before? There are these things called rounds, and so they come out, the fighters fight for a round, they go back to their corners, and they come back for another round.

And so imagine the temptation as three rounds. Who's going to win? Let's look at round one. The first temptation of Jesus.

[10:30] And the tempter, this is verse 3, and the tempter came and said to Him, Jesus, if You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

So here's the setting. We're in the wilderness, dry, barren, and it lacks a lot of stuff, but what it doesn't lack is stones. And Satan knows that Jesus is quote unquote hungry.

And so in verse 3, I hope you notice how the devil kind of moves into this temptation. If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

If you are the Son of God, if you are the Son of God, what you need to realize is that the devil is not questioning Jesus' sonship.

What the devil is doing is tempting him to use his sonship in a way that would cause him to disobey his father, to cause him to move independently.

[11:43] It's kind of like this. Jesus, I got the memo. I heard the whole thing. You're his beloved son in whom his soul delights.

I get it. I get it. Well, since you are the Son of God, Jesus, since you're the Messiah, God in the flesh, you've got all the power to create out of nothing, since you're that, why don't you just use your Son of God power to feed yourself?

Why don't you fill your little tummy? I know you're hungry. What the devil is tempting Jesus to do is to misuse his power as the Son of God.

To use his power not for the advancement of his Father's will, but to satisfy himself, personal gratification. And you might be sitting in your pew right now saying, what's wrong with that?

I mean, seriously, he's got all the power he wants to. If he's hungry, we could just make some bread out of stones. What's the big deal about that? Well, the big deal about it is he can't do whatever he wants.

[12:59] He is submitted himself, Jesus, to the will of his Father. He is the divine Son sent to accomplish the Father's purposes.

And so let's look at how Jesus responds to this temptation. Chapter 4, verse 4. But Jesus answered, it is written.

It is written. Look at 4.4, it is written. Look at 4.7, again, it is written. Now look at verse 10.

For it is written. Jesus resists by quoting the Bible. Jesus resists by reciting God's Word. Jesus is saying, hey, I'm not going to trust your Word, you fork-tongue liar, but I'm going to stand on what God has said.

I'm going to trust and obey. As the Son of God, I'm going to trust my Father. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

[14:20] What's he hungry for? What's Jesus really hungry for? He fasted 40 days and 40 nights. He was hungry. We immediately interpret that as, oh, he is just looking for a snack.

Could it be that he's hungry to accomplish the Father's will? He's more hungry to obey his Father than to fill his belly even though he could.

He submits his power to the Father's purposes. And he quotes Deuteronomy 8.3. It's a reference to when Israel was in the wilderness and without food. God put them there intentionally to test them, to see what they would do and to show them what he can do.

He can provide for their most basic needs on a daily basis. So he sends Israel daily supplies of this stuff called manna, this heavenly bread, to teach his son Israel that God, their father, is able and

willing to meet their everyday needs.

All they needed to trust his word to believe what he said. And you know what God does? He provides for them daily for 40 years while they're in the wilderness.

[15:40] 40 years, day after day, manna on the ground. All they need, he provides for them. 40 years of manna just like he said he would do.

40 years of God's faithfulness to his own word. By quoting Deuteronomy 8.3, Jesus is saying, Satan, I'm going to trust and obey my father's word.

He has me here. I've been fasting. I am going to trust that he will provide for me. I'm not going to provide for myself even though I can.

I'm going to submit myself to him. I'm going to trust his timing to when I'm going to eat next. but my appetite is to do the will of my father and even if that means I just got to put my own power under his will.

The son submits to the father proving to be the true son and he wins the first round. Second round.

[16:50] temptation number two, verses five through seven. The setting from the stones in the wilderness the devil takes Jesus to the highest point of the temple in Jerusalem.

You see that in verse five. Now whether this is a real actual physical taking Jesus to the temple or this is some kind of vision, it's not clear but what is clear is that the temptation is real.

And we read the temptation in verse six. If you are the son of God throw yourself down. Again, the devil is trying to play on the son of God thing that God has already announced.

If you are the son of God he's seeking to cause Jesus to misuse his sonship. He wants to disqualify Jesus and undermine our salvation.

the temptation is Jesus throw yourself down. They are like three hundred feet above a valley on the temple.

[17:57] He said throw yourself down from his height. He is saying willingly, Jesus will you willingly put yourself in harm's way Jesus. Let's see what God does.

Let's see what your father does. Now, the devil is pretty slick. because the reason he gives, he quotes the Bible.

There's one other it is written in this passage. It comes from the lips of the devil. Throw yourself down, son of God, for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you.

On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against toes. You won't even step your toe. It is written very slick. Very slick.

Evidently, the devil knows the Bible. He's lousy at applying it, but he knows it. Not even lousy. He intentionally misapplies it.

[19:01] Now, remember what just happened. This is instructive. Jesus just resisted the devil by saying, hey, I live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

So, the devil says, oh, oh, really? Well, how about this? Put this on for size, son of God. If you live by every word from the mouth of God, how about you live by this?

Psalms 91, 11, and 12. How about this, Jesus? Let's go up on the temple, let's throw yourself down, and let's see you live by Psalm 91, 11, and 12. Throw yourself down, and as you're falling, let's see if God the Father commands his angels to come, gather you with their hands, and protect you from falling and smashing.

Jesus, put your money where your mouth is. You see what the devil is doing? He's saying, prove it, Jesus.

If you're the son of God, live by God's word. God's word. And what the devil is doing is he's trying to corner Jesus with God's word.

[20:09] It's a misapplication of the Bible. He's trying to use God's word to disqualify Jesus, to trap him. Now, just to remind you, the devil has been distorting God's word from the very beginning.

You remember this? To Eve? Did God actually say you shall can't eat of any tree from the garden? Did God really say that to Eve? Puts a little doubt in her head. And then remember this one? This is also Genesis 3.

Eve, you shall not surely die. If you eat that, eat from that tree, you won't die. God's just being dramatic.

It's a clear distortion of God's word. The devil has been distorting and misusing God's word from the very beginning. He is the father of lies. And so though Psalm 91 does promise safety to those who trust God, the devil is intentionally misapplying it.

[21:22] Nowhere in Psalm 91 is the believer told to intentionally put themselves in harm's way in order to obligate God to save them. There's no way in Psalm 91 it says that.

What we see in Psalm 91 is a live by faith, a humble faith, trusting in your God and trust that he is going to keep you safe. what Satan is subtly doing is tempting Jesus, the son of God, the second person of the Trinity to elevate himself over the father, the first person of the Trinity to force the father to do the son's bidding.

Satan is tempting Jesus through a misuse of Psalm 91 to force the father's hands and Jesus sees right through it. I know you.

I know you from the very beginning. And Jesus' response in verse 7 of chapter 4 is this. Again, it is written. It is written.

There it is. He's standing on the word of God. He uses God's word to correct a misuse of God's word. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

[22:42] I see what you're doing. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. I'm not going to test him, devil. He's quoting Deuteronomy 6.16 which says in full, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested him at Massa.

It's a reference to Exodus 17. Israel, again, is in the wilderness deprived of water and they start to complain. Wah, wah, wah. Where's the water?

Moses, wah, where's the water? We're thirsty. Why'd you bring us out of Egypt? We're so thirsty. They have water there. Seriously, we're going to die.

So thirsty. And they're complaining to Moses. And Moses responds to them, why are you complaining to me? Why are you testing the Lord?

Why are you testing the Lord? And in chapter 17, verse 7, Moses sums it up by summarizing what Israel is saying is that they're asking, is the Lord among us or not?

[23:48] We're thirsty! Israel's testing of God was Israel's doubting of God. Satan was trying to lure Jesus into putting God to the test in order to prove Jesus is the Son of God.

And that whole line there actually disproves, disqualifies Him. But Jesus knows better. He's not going to put the Lord His God to the test.

He's going to be the faithful son. He's going to trust and obey. He's going to prove His sonship to His Father. There's no need for any of this stuff, any of this sensationalism.

He's not going to throw Himself down from the temple because God's not asking Him to do that. In fact, not yet.

Jesus will one day give His life. He will voluntarily put Himself in harm's way. But that comes later. That comes later.

[25:03] In Golgotha, in the cross, the suffering servant, Isaiah 53, Jesus becomes sin for us. He doesn't put God to the test.

He actually submits Himself to the will of the Father. Remember Gethsemane? Not my will, but your will be done. And there it is. Matthew 26. Jesus submitting Himself again to the will of the Father. Jesus will one time, one day, give His life up, not by throwing it down from the temple, but by hanging on a cursed cross. And in so doing, obey the Father's will.

Jesus says, I'm not buying this stuff. I'm not throwing myself down. I'm not putting God to the test. I'm going to submit myself to the will of the Father because I'm His Son.

Jesus wins round two. Round three. Verses eight through ten. The setting. The devil takes Him to a very high mountain.

[26:11] You see this in verse eight. And shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Now, we all know that there's not one mountain high enough where we can go to and see all the kingdoms of the world at once.

So mostly, likely, this is some kind of a vision. But what Satan is doing is trying to shortcut the Savior's mission.

He's trying to tempt Him to idolatry and shortcut the mission. Now, imagine this. If this was modern day, times, Satan showing Jesus all the metropolitan areas of the world in their glories.

New York City, the Big Apple. Glories of finance and trade. Sophisticated people, shows in Paris, the glories of fine food and fashion.

the glories of Geneva, Switzerland, glories of international finance and banking. You can have that too.

[27:29] The glories of Washington, D.C., Beijing, Moscow, the glories of political force and might. You can have that too. You can have that too.

You can have all this, Jesus, if you would just bow down and worship me.

You can have all the kingdoms of the world and their glories. They can all be yours if you just worship me. We've got a different tactic going on here.

Do you notice there's no if you're the son of God? He just, all pretense is gone, out the window. It's like, hey, I'll give you all this stuff if you'll just worship me.

Why doesn't Satan start with if you're the son of God? Maybe he's realizing it's working against him. Maybe he realizes that, hey, the first two rounds, Jesus won and that's not working.

[28:36] So let's get rid of all pretenses and let's get down right to it. Jesus, I'll give you all this stuff if you'll just worship me. And in so doing, in verse nine, we see the vain glorious imposter that Satan is.

If you'll fall down and worship me. Let's just think about it this way. The devil who's a created being is tempting the son of God, the eternal son of God, second person of the trinity, to worship him, a created being.

This is blatant idolatry. I mean, it verges on being ridiculous. Satan has always wanted what belongs to God alone, exclusive worship.

What caused the fall of Satan to begin with was his lifting himself up to the place of God to be worshiped. And he got expelled from God's presence because of it. He's a glory stealer.

And so what Satan wants is for the son of God to bow down and worship him. In order for the son of God to bow down and worship him, the son of God would have to turn his back on the father and say, sorry, I'm no longer exclusively devoted to you.

[30:02] I'm going to get all these kingdoms in order to worship him. It's the cardinal sin. It's the worship of another God. But it's also a shortcut.

What Satan is offering Jesus is all the kingdoms of the world without suffering. It's undermining the very mission of the son of God.

Would you turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 28? This comes after Jesus suffers, after he's crucified, dead, buried, and raised from the dead.

I just want your eyes to fall upon something. Matthew chapter 28 verse 18. This is the great commission. This is after all of his suffering.

And Jesus came and said to his disciples, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[31:08] All of it's mine. It comes after his work on the cross. In order for Jesus to accomplish his mission, he would have to suffer.

Jesus knew full well that what lied ahead of him was pain and hardship, betrayal, that he would have to bear the very wrath of the Father in order to save a people for himself.

And Satan very subtly here is saying, hey, I'll give you a shortcut. I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if you just bow down and worship me. And then we see in verse 10, Jesus brings this bout to an end.

Be gone, Satan, for it is written. Be gone, Satan, for it is written. We're done here, Satan, for it is written. Deuteronomy 6.13, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only, him only, exclusive worship and service.

Him only shall you serve. Now, Israel failed that test, but Jesus, the true Son, is faithful. He proves himself to be faithful in his worship of his Father.

[32:29] What Jesus is saying in Deuteronomy 6.13 is that I submit to his word, my Father's word, not your word. I don't buy your little half

promise.

I don't buy the shortcut. I see what God the Father has called me to as a son. And I'm going to stick to it. I'm going to do it. Jesus is saying, I worship and serve not no one but my Father.

I'm exclusively and wholeheartedly and by the way, happily devoted to him and his will. He says, get out of here. Get. I belong to him.

Winner of round three, Jesus. He proves himself to be the true son of God, the one who trusts and obeys his father.

He's been through some extreme temptations and he's shown himself faithful. And then in verse 11, we see the triumph. Don't miss that first little phrase, then the devil left him.

[33:36] Jesus told him to leave and the devil left. The devil obeyed. And then what we see is the angels come and minister to him.

Surely they brought with them food. Surely they brought with them encouragement for his obedience. And surely this is the right working out of Psalm 91. 91. Jesus the son has entrusted himself to the father and the father commanded his angels concerning him and they met his needs. Jesus triumphed over Satan's temptations proving himself to be the true son of God. This says he's ready to go.

He's walked through it. He's resisted the devil's temptations. He's prepared to start his ministry. A light has dawned.

Now I want to point to three things to walk away with. The first is man I was trying to wrestle through this this week.

[34:55] Do I apply anything? Because it's awesome to see Jesus just resisting the devil successfully. It's awesome. What a God we have.

What a king. What a savior. He did what none of us could do. He perfectly lived a righteous life. Not once did he give himself to temptation. Not once. He did what none of us could do. And then he died in our place for our unfaithfulness. What a God we got.

What a savior. What a king. His obedience from beginning to end secured our salvation. He submitted himself to the will of the father even to the cross.

That's one thing. Rejoice in your savior. Second thing. Jesus is able to help you when you're tempted.

[35:57] Because Jesus suffered when he was tempted. Would you turn your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 2 verse 18. I just want you to let this sink into your heart a little bit because all of us are facing temptations right?

I just want to let you know Jesus gets it. He's been there. He knows what it's like to be tempted. He can sympathize with our weaknesses. But not only can he sympathize, he can help you.

He's able to help you. He's willing to help you. Hebrews 2 18. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Anybody tempted in the room? Anybody? Anybody? Yes. Yes. We're all tempted. And you know what? Instead of letting that kind of distance you from your Savior, recognize he is ready and able to help you in the temptation because he himself has been tempted yet without sinning.

You know what you do when tempted? Here's what I do. Jesus, help me in the middle of the night when my anxiety meter is off the charts, when my fears are going, when I don't know what's going to happen.

[37:10] I'm trying to cling to things and make sense of things and I can't because my brain is not big enough. I start to freak out. You know what I do? Jesus, help me in my bed. My wife has heard it. Jesus, help me.

He's able to help us when tempted. He knows what it's like. The last thing, the third thing, when temptations come, Jesus shows us how to resist temptation.

We resist temptation by reciting God's word. In order to recite God's word, it's got to be on our hearts. Psalm 119, 11, I have stored up your word in my heart that I may not sin against you.

We don't read the Bible just to read the Bible. We read the Bible to fight. We read the Bible to resist. Can we be a church that regularly says when tempted, it is written.

It is written. When you're tempted to greed, it is written. When you're tempted to sexual immorality, it's written. Sinful anger, it's written.

[38:32] Unforgiveness and bitterness, it is written. Condemnation, it is written. There's another thing I've found myself doing in the middle of the night. Lying in my bed, and these thoughts come in of past sins I've committed, and I start to think, what a miserable wretch I am, and I start thinking more about my sin than about the Savior who saved me from it, and you know what comes into my head?

It is written. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. If God is for me, who can be against me? There's nothing that separates me from the love of God, not even my own sin.

when you're afraid, it is written.

God is with me. When you're anxious, it is written. Don't be anxious for anything, but in all things with prayer and supplication, make your request to God, and He'll give you the peace of God which transcends on all understanding.

When you're questioning your worth, it is written. I am the apple of His eye. When you're facing discouragement, it is written.

[39:46] This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. When you're tempted to gossip, it is written. I will use my lips to build up.

Ephesians 4.29. Where are you tempted? Where are you regularly tempted? Are you saying it is written to it?

Are you resisting it? And maybe you're sitting and you're saying, well, I know where I'm being tempted, but I don't know where it is written. Ask for help.

Because surely there is another saint in this room who's been tempted by the same thing, and they have an it is written right there in the top pocket of their heart that they can share with you.

Let's seek each other's help for finding out what is written so that we can honor our Savior in resisting the temptations of the devil. We can live in his victory that way.

[40:50] Jesus is the true Son of God. He fully entrusted, obeyed the Father. His obedience secured our salvation, and it compels us to be faithful and true ourselves.

Let's pray. God in heaven, we are a tempted people. And we have a Savior who trusted and obeyed and never, never wavered.

He was tempted in every way, yet without sin. And God, we rejoice in our Savior who won this bout with the devil, and then through his death, through his resurrection, he triumphed over the power of sin.

And we are now united with him in his death and resurrection, and so we're dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. And we give you thanks for that, God. Help us to rejoice in our Savior.

Help us to fight with it as written in Jesus' name. Amen.