

PM Matthew 4:1-11 & Ephesians 6:17 Overcoming temptation with Scripture

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[0 : 00] Matthew chapter 4 is on page 975 in the Church Bible.

Matthew chapter 4.

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.

And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 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.

[1 : 37] Jesus said to him, Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him, All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. 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.

Then the devil left him, and behold angels came and were ministering to him. Let's go to Ephesians chapter 6.

Ephesians chapter 6 verse 17 page 1178 and take the hermit of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

Amen. May God bless to us this reading from his infallible word. Let's bow our heads and pray again and this is a time to pray for different things and the church.

[3 : 13] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Father, we have to admit that we don't know how to pray.

But we thank you that even before we open our mouth, you know what we want to say. Amen. And we thank you that your Holy Spirit leads and guides us when it comes to express our concerns to you.

Not because you are not aware of these things, but you command us in your word that we should always pray. And that's all we can do, Lord.

Lord, we want to remember the people who are struggling with ill health conditions, the anxiety that they might be having about their lives.

We pray, Lord, that you would fill them with hope. And above all, Lord, we just pray that you would stretch your healing hand upon them, that your presence would be wisdom, Lord.

[4 : 48] We remember the elderly. We pray for those who are confused. and ask that, Lord, you would shine your light in their confusion, in their dark moments, that they would be able to take a step in the light that you have put before them, and that is the light of Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. We think of those who are in homes, in care homes. We pray for those who are mourning the loss of their dear ones, and like this family that we've been told that there is a funeral.

It's only you, Lord, who can comfort those who have lost their dear ones, Lord. And we just pray that you would comfort them at this time.

Fill them with hope. Help them to see you as the big picture in such a situation. And help them to depend on you, to put faith and trust in you.

We are all here, but tomorrow we are gone, but we thank you for the promise that you have given us, that you have gone to prepare places for us.

[6 : 44] Help us to navigate our lives with that in our mind, the eternity. Father, just one time for this church, thank you Lord for the way you are leading this church and its witness in this town of Dumfries.

And even though, Lord, they have no minister, but you have been a shepherd to them. Day by day you feed them, you look after them, you care for them, and now they are here worshipping you and praising you, Lord.

And with all the difficulties that that can bring without a minister and perhaps feeling a sense of being weak, Lord, we just pray that you would show them that you are strong.

Help them to lean on you. and to feed on you, Lord. Today we are here thinking about Dumfries, but across our denomination we have a number of congregations that have no ministers.

We pray for them. Some of the congregations are very small, we pray for them. And it doesn't matter how small they are, the number doesn't matter.

[8 : 17] What matters is that faithful witness, whether they are two or three. You can be in the midst and they can be your witness.

We pray for those congregations as a father. And those that are at the stage of seeking, calling a minister, Lord, we pray that you would provide good shepherds for them father.

Father, we pray that you would fill your church with truth, purge it with truth, Lord. That during this time when the world is like a desert, that your truth would be preached and people would be fed on your food, on your word.

And that their lives would be transformed and changed. We pray, Lord, for those who have sacrificed themselves to take the gospel in the most dire places, difficult places.

We think of missionaries abroad in different places. We thank you, Lord, for their love for you and their sacrifice. We pray that you would bless them, Lord, as they reach out to people with the gospel and its power.

[9 : 44] Use them, Lord, as instruments in your hands to bring change, to bring transformation in those places, Lord. We think of even those churches that meet under caves.

We thank you for the liberty and freedom that we have in this country where we can gather in such a freedom to worship you. Some churches, Lord, don't have that freedom. They gather underground, and yet they are worshipping you.

They are praising you, Lord, and your wisdom. We pray for them. Thank you, Lord, for their witnesses, Father. We pray, Lord, for children and younger people who are at the crossroads, Lord.

We pray that you capture them by your grace and bring them into the saving knowledge of yourself, your father. We see generations and generations being lost in our world today.

Our governments that pass laws that have nothing to do with your decrees, we pray against them in the name of Jesus.

[10 : 55] We pray that these leaders would lead people in accordance with your will, perfect will, that they would pass laws that give you honor and praise.

And so, Father, we pray for our leaders, the leaders here in Holy Road and Westminster, Lord. We pray, Lord, that you bring wisdom to them, Lord.

this chaos that we see in leadership would be turned into a peaceful thing, Lord, for you, for your glory, Lord.

And again, we cannot forget to pray for those who are caught in conflict, in wars, those who are in war zones. Lord, be their shield, be their comforter, help them to lean on you.

These are things that have not captured you by surprise. These are things that are taking place under your watch.

[12 : 13] You know them, you, and as a matter of fact, you have allowed them to happen. There is a reason.

And all of this confusion and chaos that we find ourselves in, Lord, we pray that your past passes would be worked out and your goals would be achieved.

And we who are in this situation, it helps us to see you as a big picture, to focus on you, to lean on you, and to draw strength from you.

Help us not fear, but instead to be strengthened by what you are doing, by your word. And so,

Father, continue to be with us as we worship you, and as we hear your word, Lord, we just pray that

your spirit would speak.

and we ask all of these things in Jesus' name and for his sake and forgiveness of our sins. Amen. Amen.

[13:32] We're going to sing again and we are going to sing a hymn, soldiers of Christ arise. so if you can turn with me for the moment in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 17.

Ephesians 6, verse 17.

So this morning we looked at Take the Hermit of Salvation. Amen. So tonight we're going to look at the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. I don't know what comes into your mind if someone refers to you as an overcomer.

Now, that is not something that we want to hear overcomer. Because that kind of have a connotation of being like a fighter.

[15:04] And we don't want to be under the fighter as a fighter. Because to overcome, you must be a fighter and overcome something.

It's kind of a strange, strange thing to say about you as a Christian. Or if someone refers to you as a fighter, as it were.

Or a soldier. A soldier? Am I a soldier? Soldiers go in the battle. Yeah, yeah, yeah, you are in the battle. Really? Am I fighting? Yes. Fighting who?

The enemy. By the way, let me tell you something. The battle that you are engaging is bloody. Like that bloody word that you see on the screen of your TVs. And you either win or he wins.

And it's fatal if he wins. The devil. But Paul is good because this chapter 6 is... I love Ephesians chapter 6. It's one of my favorite, favorite chapters in the Bible.

[16:13] Because it talks about the spiritual warfare. And we as overcomers, we are always warned that we are in a spiritual battle. It is a spiritual battle. A spiritual warfare, to be quite honest.

And when you are in a battle, you need a special equipment if you are to win that war. You need a special equipment.

You've often and often heard that this man, the president of Ukraine, saying, We need equipment. We need weapons. Give us weapons.

You need a special weapon if you are to win the battle. Now, Ephesians 6 tells us how wonderful God has protected us by giving us exactly the equipment we need to wage this battle that we are in. And one of them is the sword of the spirit, which I'm talking about tonight. The sword of spirit. Which is the word of God. The sword of spirit is the word of God.

[17:22] Now, what I intend to do tonight is, I want to talk about this before I jump into Matthew. To see how the Lord Jesus demonstrated to us how to use this weapon.

That is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. To defeat the enemy. And from the spiritual perspective, our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual.

So, we don't use tanks and missiles, but we use spiritual tanks and spiritual missiles when we are waging a war against the enemy. So, what I intend to do is to explore and explain this sword of the spirit.

First, focusing on three topics that reveal its full meaning and purposes. First, I will explain what the sword really is. What the sword of the spirit really is.

And how it works. Next, I will reveal to you an example of one who welded this sword with masterful precision. And finally, I will suggest ways you and I can benefit from the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

[18:36] First of all then, explanation. The sword of the spirit, which is the word. Now, this passage leaves us no confusion as to what the sword metaphor really means.

For the Christians. Paul tells us plainly that the sword of the spirit is the word of God. It is the word of God.

The sword, in Greek actually, is a dagger. A short knife with a pointed and edged blade used as a weapon.

Just a short knife. It's a dagger. And, I mean, something associated with such a sword is like a bayonet, a machete, or jack knife.

Or a bolo, or bowie knife. It is a short knife. As opposed to a longer knife. If you have been, if you have ever been to, who was this man?

[19 : 58] World's monument in the starting. You'll find his sword there. It's so long. But, this sword of the spirit, this dagger is a short knife, but with double edges.

So, that's the kind of picture that Paul is using here. Now, there are two Greek terms commonly translated into English as the word.

Two Greek terms translated into English as the word. The first one is logos. Which is the common of the two.

And, logos is used to describe the overarching revelation of God that we have in the Bible. Logos is an all-encompassing term denoting the whole of the Bible.

What we often call God's word. So, the Bible in its totality, right from Genesis to Revelation, is the logos of God.

[21 : 11] The entire Bible is the logos of God. But, logos is not the word that Paul uses here. When he says, the sword of the spirit, which is the word.

He's not using logos. The Greek term for that word that Paul uses is rhema. R-H-E-M-A.

Rhema. And, the rhema of God means a saying of God. A saying of God. So, we could translate the verse this way.

Take the sword of the spirit, which is the saying of God. So, the difference between the logos of God and the rhema of God is critical to our understanding of this offensive weapon.

The logos refers to complete revelation of what God has said in the Bible. But, the rhema means a specific saying of God. A passage.

[22 : 19] A passage. Or a verse. Drown from the whole chapter. That has a specific application to an immediate situation.

So, rhema is a saying. From the Bible. From a verse. I mean a verse from the scripture. From a chapter.

Whatever it is. That has a special application to an immediate situation. A saying of God.

And, some of you have been using these sayings of God. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. Where do you get that? Because you are in a certain situation.

And, something like that comes into your mind. Such a saying. Are rhema's.

[23 : 19] Now, when I became a Christian, I was made to think that the whole Bible was a sword. That the whole Bible was a sword. But, the whole Bible is not a sword.

The Bible is an armory. Filled with swords. Filled with the sayings of God. That's what this is.

This is an armory. If you want a weapon, go to the armory. If you want a missile, you go to the armory. This is where the weapons are kept.

And, please note that I'm not saying that the Bible becomes the word of God when we use it in a certain way. You know, some historians teach that the Bible is just a book of literature.

And, that when you have a revelation about something it says, then at that moment it becomes your word of God. No, no, no. You have made it the word of God in your own mind.

[24 : 24] By your own interaction with it. You know, today many believers believe that the Bible has no special meaning except what you give to it.

That sounds like Hebrew theology. That's heresy. And, that's not certainly what I'm teaching you tonight. The Bible is the word of God whether we read it or not. It is the word of God whether it means anything to us or not.

It is the word of God whether we ever feel anything when we read it. Whether we even don't understand what we are reading. The Bible is God's word.

And, nothing can change that. But, from this arsenal, that is the word of God. We find specific sayings of God that are swords.

That are swords that he gives us to use in spiritual warfare. Ray Steedman has a helpful word concerning the way the sword or the spirit works in our lives.

[25 : 28] He writes and says, Sometimes when you are reading a passage of the scripture, the words seem suddenly to come alive. Take on flesh and bones and leap off the page at you.

Or grow eyes that follow you around everywhere you go. Or develop a voice that echoes in your ears until you can't get away from it.

This is the rammer of God. The saying of God that strikes home like arrows to the heart. This is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

That's what the sword does. Penetrates. You see, the Bible says that the word of God is sharper than a double-edged sword. That it goes through the flesh and cuts the bone and separates the

marrow from the bone.

The saying of God. I don't know about you, but someone can say something from me. Just the saying of God. And it remains with you wherever you go. You don't rest. Until you come to terms with that.

[26 : 45] So that is what it means when Paul says the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. It is a saying of God. You have to be equipped with those sayings when you are confronted with the enemy.

This morning we are talking about wisdom. That you need to read the word of God and find wisdom. It's the same thing actually. You have to be equipped with those swords. So that is the explanation.

Number two. The person who wielded this sword. Now, let's go to Matthew chapter 4. The chapter we read is Matthew chapter 4. The person who uses the sword of the spirit better than anyone else is the one who designed it.

Right? The Lord Jesus Christ. He designed this sword. And how did he use scripture to overcome temptation?

So when Christ was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, he wielded the sword of the spirit with deftness and precision. In this warrior, his use of the sword provides us with the best example in all scripture of how this powerful weapon is to be used.

[28 : 02] So in Matthew chapter 4. So in Matthew chapter 4, verse 1 to 11, we read the spirit led Jesus to the wilderness. Where Satan tempted him at the very heart of the father's words.

And we read that Satan approached him with separate temptations. And these three temptations comprise the enemy's strategy against humanity from the beginning of time.

They are the last of the flesh, the last of the eyes, and the pride of life. Just as we read them in 1 John 2.16.

This was Satan's strategy in the garden of Eden. He told Eve that the fruit was good for the food. Last of the flesh.

Pleasant to the eye. Last of the eyes. And able to make one wise. The pride of life. And Satan employed these same temptations against Jesus.

[29 : 08] So in Matthew 1.3. The tempter came to Jesus when he had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. And he was hungry.

He was hungry. And he said, if you are the son of God, command these stones to come roves of bread. What is Satan saying?

He's saying, why not satisfy your hunger by performing a simple little miracle? You are the son of God. What is harm turning this rock into bread?

So Satan was attempting Jesus to use his divine power to meet his human needs. He was trying to get Jesus to act independently of the Father.

To contradict the Father's word. And how did you overcome that? To overcome this first thrust of temptation. Jesus reached into his armory.

[30 : 18] And pulled out a sword. A rammer. Jesus answered and said, it is written. Man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Matthew 4. Chapter 4. Verse 4. See, to overcome Satan. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy. Chapter 8. Verse 3. Deuteronomy. Chapter 8. That's where he pulled the sword. And the key word here is alone.

Man shall not live by bread alone. Or by bread only. Jesus reminded Satan that feeding on and obeying God's word is more important than eating and being nourished by physical food.

Obeying God's word. That's what we are talking about this morning. Because everything is meaningless unless we obey God's word. In other words, it is God who keeps people alive.

[31 : 28] Not bread. Besides, he knows his people's needs. And he meets them anyway. He gives Israel manna in Sinai.

Wilderness. He will take care of me, Jesus said, in this wilderness. And he does it by giving more than bread. He gives me himself through every act.

Every word. So you overcome that temptation using that sword of the spirit.

The last of the eye, Matthew 4, 5, 6. The second temptation took place at 450 feet above Cedron Valley.

Above the temple floor. Jesus was standing on the pinnacle of the temple with Satan. Josephus, the Jewish historian, said that this particular place was so high, one would get busy just looking down. [32 : 36] So if you are too frightened of the height like me, you wouldn't stand there. And the reference to the temple, it certainly referred to the temple, the reference to the temple and the holy city are very important in the temptation.

Because according to the tradition of the rabbi, the rabbinic tradition, the coming of the Messiah was to be marked by his appearance on the temple roof.

So if Jesus had jumped off the pinnacle of the temple and landed on the temple floor and hut, he would certainly have been identified by most of the Jewish people as the Messiah.

So Satan was saying, if you won't work a miracle yourself, let God do it for you. Jump off. Jump off. And let God catch you and protect you on the way down.

That will prove to everyone that you are the Messiah. But the Lord Jesus had the perfect sword ready. The rammer.

[33 : 48] He said, again it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Here Jesus overcame Satan's temptation by quoting Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 16.

Verse 16. If we have a tendency to be presumptuous with God, to demand from him things he hasn't promised, let us remember this saying.

It is absolutely right to believe in miracles. It is absolutely wrong to shed you them. So Jesus, the devil was asking Jesus to do a miracle.

But I don't think the devil understood that actually Jesus was on God's mission. It's God who shed you miracles. We don't shed you miracles.

If God wants to do a miracle, he does it. But we believe in miracles. Today there is a problem in a church in Africa.

[35 : 01] I don't know why it's the same here. There are so many pastors who tell people that your miracle is tomorrow. Your miracle is tonight. I was reading the news.

One of the pastors who has told his congregation, he said, if you have not received your miracle in three years, because they promised them miracles, you get your miracle within two years or three years. If you have not received your miracle, you better leave the church.

And others are saying, you give so much and the miracle of healing will happen tonight. Some people have sold their properties.

People have asked for loans from the banks in order to receive miracles. For their lives.

Who can shed you miracles? It's God. So Satan was saying to Jesus, you do a miracle. Because you are son of God.

[36 : 06] You can jump off and he will catch you. And did you notice that when Satan tempted Jesus the second time, he quoted the Bible in himself? He said, he will command his angels concerning you, and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Matthew 4, chapter 4, verse 6. And he quoted Psalm 91, verse 12. Psalm we have just read. Read. So Satan knows God's words, and he's not above using them to his advantage.

You see, Satan uses scripture to lead us to question God, or by selectively using the scripture, he tries to confuse us, as he tried to do to Jesus in this temptation.

Yes, as the psalm says, God will give us, give his angels charge of us, he will bear us, but the scripture that Satan chose to ignore was the very one Jesus thrust back at him.

You shall not put the Lord your God to test. He chose to ignore that. And then, the pride of life.

[37 : 25] Matthew 4, verses 8 to 9. The devil is the ruler of this world. John says in his chapter 14, verse 30, that he was stopped the title from humanity when Adam and Eve sinned in Eden.

When he faced Jesus in the wilderness, Satan offered to turn over to him, the entire world, and his own kingdom to rule. But the only catch was that Jesus would have to acknowledge Satan as his master.

In other words, he tempted Jesus with a personal ambition, with pride. See, Jesus came into the world for the very purpose of setting up a worldwide kingdom.

But standing dark and ominous in that path to that goal was the cross. So the devil offered Jesus a shortcut that would bypass the cross.

Why not avoid the cross and take your kingdom by force? The devil says. Because I can help you do that. It will get you in the same place anyway.

[38 : 40] Surely, the end justifies the means. And we can see why this sad temptation might have appeared to Jesus much more than the previous ones.

Because the devil was offering a way of ruling the world without going through the agony of the cross. Once again, Jesus reached into his sheath of swords and pulled out the rammer of God. He says, Be gone. Away Satan. Or Satan. For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only you serve.

Matthew 14. Jesus replied to the sad temptation by commanding Satan to live and emphatically rejecting his offer with a quote from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 13.

verse 11 is very beautiful of that chapter 4 that the angels came and ministered him. Hallelujah. And imagine the day when you overcome the angels descend from heaven and minister you.

[39 : 57] so briefly, how do we benefit from this? See, ever since the faithful day in Aden, temptation has been the primary factor leading men and women away from God because temptation affects everyone.

It doesn't matter who you are, how strong you are, how knowledgeable you are, how immense in the Bible or how committed to integrity.

You had men and women of integrity drowning through temptation.

men who have been preaching the gospel on fire for Jesus all of a sudden gone. To be an overcomer we must be on our guard because temptation is no respecter of persons.

Sin has never been so as accessible as it is now. and evil has never been so user friendly as it is now.

[41 : 15] You just need only to get out and just see what is happening on our streets or even our families or even our governments and so on. So it is not just the major red letter temptation that assault us because the dearest trace of life today creates constant opportunities for us to yield to impatience to irritability anxiety profanity and sharpness of tongue.

Often the big sin is the big sin is preceded by a lack of self-control. Even the small moments even in small moments perhaps no other temptation or tempter is as easy to embrace as a simple lie just a simple lie.

What harm can it do? And you think that's okay. No, it's not okay. After all it's just words and that's where the slippery slope begins.

And we see it all around us in all aspects of life ranging from church to politics telephone and email scammers serial cheaters dishonest co-workers bosses men who use women and vice versa bullies and social media trolls even family members who take advantage of our love and generosity. Jesus said of Satan he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. John 8 verse 44. Friends, temptation is attractive otherwise it wouldn't be tempting and it is always dangerous no matter how simple it is.

[43 : 22] Don't call it a simple thing. It's dangerous. Temptation is very dangerous. Just remember temptation itself is not sin.

Yielding temptation is I need to repeat that one. Temptation itself is not a sin. Yielding temptation is sin. Even Jesus first temptation Hebrews 4 15 says 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.

Remember too that temptation never comes from God. James 1 13 let no one say when he is tempted I am being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one.

He may test us allowing temptation but he never tempts us himself. It is the devil who tempts us to evil. That's why he's called the tempter.

It's one of his names called the tempter. And as long as we live we will be tempted. As long as we live we will be tempted. So whatever temptation you are going through right now you are not alone.

[44 : 55] You are not alone. We all get tempted. We all have stuff. We are all struggling with stuff. The good news is that our faithful God won't allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.

He may test us by allowing temptation but he never tempts himself. Warren Wazibi wrote Jesus was not tempted so that the father could learn anything about his son for the father had already given Jesus his divine approval.

Jesus was tempted so that every creature in heaven and on earth might know that Jesus Christ is a conqueror.

So he's our best example. We can learn from him he exposed Satan and his tactics and he defeated Satan and because of his victory we can have victory over the tempter. So when I say you are a fighter remember this we are fighting on the ground that has been won for us by Jesus Christ. We are fighting on the ground of victory.

[46 : 17] I was expecting to hear hallelujah. We are fighting on the ground of victory. Jesus has won the battle.

We only need to depend on this. You know what I mean? He has done it all. It's finished. So because you see Jesus knew that resisting Satan in our own strength can be futile because we can't.

He's too strong for us. Satan is too strong for us. Do you believe that? He's too strong for us. We cannot overcome the devil or his temptation without the presence of God in our lives.

And Jesus came and did that for us. When you read this chapter Ephesians 6 Paul keeps saying you stand firm.

Stand firm. Stand where? On that ground of victory that Jesus has won for us. So without the presence of God in our lives we cannot overcome the devil.

[47 : 32] That's why it is so critical so necessary to have scriptures stored in our minds. And that's our role. That's our responsibilities. We cannot simply say that Jesus did it for us.

Yes he did it for us but he gave that scripture we need to store this in our minds because these are weapons. We have our weapons at disposal. Oh no no I can say that I am not doing because it is written.

It is written. Scriptures are only consistently effective weapons against our adversary.

So friends we are born into a kingly family and we are promised a glorious destiny. Let me ask you a question.

What can another temptation offer in comparison with our glorious destiny in heaven? what can an acid temptation offer?

[48 : 42] See the acid temptation is like a bait. How can you compare that with our glorious destiny in heaven? We have an armory the same armory Jesus pulled his weapons to defeat the devil completely.

Can you imagine that Jesus defeated the devil using armory from Deuteronomy the book of Deuteronomy and this is one of the books that scholars have been arguing that it should be scrapped from the Bible to be an overcomer let us set our eyes on Jesus and see him as the ultimate objective behind our deepest desires once we develop a real longing to be in his presence to become one with him and to love him throughout eternity temptation will no longer have any real power over us amen may God bless this word to us right no money do you