

Sunday 17th August 2025 - DIY Faith

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 August 2025

Preacher: Dave Moss

- [0 : 00] Good morning. I hope you're well. Not many people well. Is this proving to be a busy or a quiet summer for you?
- ! There was a room to decorate or a garden to sort out or a shelf to put up or just something to be repaired.
- How good are you at DIY? It's great to be able to mend something or fix something. Are you a frequent visitor to Wix or B&Q;?
- Keen DIYers tell me there's a B&Q; in Canuck. I just can't see it myself. C-A-N-N-O-C-K.
- There's no B&Q; there, is there? Are you with it? I really enjoy DIY.
- [1 : 19] It's both creative and instantly satisfying. So DIY and craft were all the rage during the lockdowns.
- And I was able to get hold of some old pallets and make this summer house. It was really satisfying to be so creative. And now we've got a little summer house in our garden.
- Not to mention the water feature I built and the vegetable trugs I made all out of old pallets. So I hope you're impressed. And it's all free too.
- And it's a great way to recycle. What's not to like? And restoring old furniture is also very much in vogue at the moment.
- At our house we have various pieces of hand-me-down pieces of furniture. But a little bit of paint can make an old desk look something quite classy, don't you think?
- [2 : 21] There it is there. I'm really pleased with it. And it's great to be creative, to mend things and fix things. So what are the most popular crafts right now?
- Well, apparently it's resin art, polymer clay jewellery, and DIY home fragrance products like wax melts and reed diffusers.
- Those are the trendy things to do in 2025. Sustainable and up-cycle crafts have also grown in popularity. As more consumers look for more eco-friendly and handmade alternatives.
- Perhaps your attempts at crafts or DIY don't always go to plan. So take a look at some of these. There is, of course, another school of thought.
- Why bother? I'll simply get a professional to do it. If you ever watch a TV programme where people are buying property, then you'll see plenty of people who simply want a ready-to-move-in house, which does not need renovating, because DIY is seen as a hassle.
- [3 : 43] Better leave it to the professionals. Many people much prefer things ready-done, without the hassle. Ready-made clothes, ready-made meals, a kitchen makeover, a garden makeover, a package holiday.
- It's just so much simpler to get someone else to do it. And think of the time you save. But, of course, perhaps not the money.

It's interesting that when it comes to faith, or belief in God, many people have carefully put together their own set of beliefs, beliefs which suit them.

They build up these beliefs over the years and hold on to them dearly, defending their position. For example, you might hear things like, God created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.

Or, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about yourself.

[4 : 55] Good people go to heaven when they die. It's all very attractive to build up and believe what you want, but in the end, it's likely to be a DIY disaster.

And similarly, other people are simply happy with a more off-the-peg faith. This is how we do things at our church.

This is what we believe. This is what the Bible says. No questions are asked, no thoughts given. We believe this and we do things this way and things take on a set routine which somehow has become the accepted norm, such as, for instance, the way we celebrate communion or the way we worship or the way we pray.

Off-the-peg faith is really convenient as it demands so little of us. We just have to fit in and take on board what we're given to believe.

Here at St. John's, I'm always excited when I come. Although there are routines and regular activities, nothing is set in stone.

[6 : 18] There's room to maneuver, room to explore. And we're encouraged to look at the Bible and explore it afresh. Matt often says, I'm not asking you to agree with me.

Encouraging us to think and explore and learn for ourselves. This is very refreshing, but if you think about it, most unusual.

So this morning, let us look at a very familiar story, one perhaps we think we know well about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness.

But let's also dig a little deeper and explore it afresh. then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.

[7 : 32] Jesus answered, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

If you are the Son of God, he said, throw yourself down, For it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus answered him, It is also written, Do 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 splendor.

All this I will give you, he said, if you will bow down and worship me. Jesus said to him, Away from me, Satan, for it is written, Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew.

[8 : 57] They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people. At once, they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets.

Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Jesus here faces three temptations, and we tend just to look at this story as an off-the-peg text which shows that Jesus is the Son of God.

But these three temptations that Jesus must face are the necessary three temptations that we all must face.

As we seek to be people of faith, we're all asked to face these very same temptations. We may not be walking in the wilderness, but these temptations are very real for all of us.

[10 : 16] A little warning here. These are very easy to see in other people, but pretty difficult to see them in ourselves. Firstly, the tempter came to Jesus and said, if you're the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.

And Jesus answered, it is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. We all desire to be effective and relevant.

Just turn the stones into bread. We like to do things ourselves to make things work, to see things as successful.

We have it in our heads what success looks like and we want to adopt it or engineer it.

But our DIY efforts or our off-the-peg solutions, although often good, should not be what we desire.

[11 : 24] Jesus gives up the desire to turn stones into bread as we must do too. We cannot live on our efforts alone by our very own beliefs or indeed by our very own powers.

We are like Jesus to give up that desire. We cannot live on bread alone. Secondly, the devil took Jesus to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

If you are the son of God, he said, throw yourself down. This is the desire to be right. It's the desire to use God and to stand on our religion for our own purposes.

We hear it all the time. I'm saved. I'm born again. I believe in the truth of the Bible. The spirit is moving in our church. It's the desire to be right, to have all the correct answers.

It suits our ego very well. Jesus has to give up that assurance of being right, the need to flatter his own ego.

[12 : 44] Please note that it's very symbolic that it's the devil who has Jesus stand on the temple. And it's the only time in the entire Bible that the devil quotes scripture. Matthew, the writer of this, is showing us that we can use religion for diabolical purposes.

Religion can be good, but unfortunately it's also subject to misuse, as I'm sure you are aware. Jesus answered him, it's also written, do not put the Lord your God to the test.

In other words, don't play games with God. Be careful what you say about God, and what you think and tell others God is like.

Your version of God is probably not sufficient. God cannot be contained by what we believe. And thirdly, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

all this I will give you, he said, if you will bow down and worship me. Jesus said to him, away from me, Satan, for it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

[14 : 07] Here, we see the temptation is the desire for power or control, symbolized by the devil showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

that desire for power and control has many forms and many disguises in all of us. It's perhaps easier to spot the need for control in others than in ourselves.

Yet, if we're honest, it's there. We like to do things our way, the way we're used to doing it, the way we think works, and what others do the same as us.

Jesus firmly rejects that desire for power and control, as indeed we all must do. Once we refuse to seek power in any form, there's not really much Satan can do to us.

These three temptations are in all our lives, the desire to be effective, the desire to be right, the desire to be powerful or in control.

[15 : 24] Until we learn to face all these things and hear what God is saying, we will very likely not preach the good news of God's love and grace, but instead we'll just preach our own ideas.

Please note that it's only after 30 years that Jesus exercises these three temptations. It's only then that he sets out on his public ministry, engaging with people and teaching them about the love of God.

It should be no surprise to us, therefore, if even after years and years and years we're still trying to work out all this for ourselves. And in the next clip, as Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.

They were casting a net into the lake for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people. At once they left their nets and followed him.

Did it happen exactly like that? We don't know. But the point is that Jesus gave these fishermen a major vision and challenge.

[16 : 43] he always appeals to risk takers, not those who are comfortable with life, not those who like to sort it out all for themselves. Jesus asks people to take risks.

And Jesus somehow fascinates people and all they want to do is follow him. But the next encounter is even more intriguing because going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John.

They were in a boat with their father, Zebedee, preparing their nets. And Jesus called them and immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.

And we should observe two things here. Firstly, James and John were with their father, Zebedee. their loyalties are clearly to Zebedee and to the family.

And secondly, they are working. And this has not changed over the centuries. We're often still defined by our family and the jobs we do.

[18 : 02] These are often the things we talk about most, our families and the jobs we do. But Jesus calls James and John to leave them.

Yes, to leave them. Now, families and jobs are not bad things in themselves, but often they can be a distraction and quite time-consuming, so much so they keep us from asking new questions about life and following where Jesus might lead.

And also interesting here is that Jesus does not tell his followers to repent from their evil life and to follow him.

He says, leave your father and your nets and follow me. Interesting. Notice the two temptations begin with the phrase, if you are the son of God, as though this is something Jesus needs to prove.

And this is what we face every day. We often doubt who we are, where we come from, whether our names are written in heaven or whether we're children of God.

[19 : 21] But deep down, we long for the space where there is nothing to prove and nothing to protect. Where I am, who I am, in the mind and heart of God.

Jesus claimed and believed the divine image within him and quite straightforwardly told us to do the same. This is the good news.

We are God's children. We belong to him. No ifs, no buts, we belong. We are accepted. accepted. We should not doubt who we are in God.

Jesus claimed and believed the divine image within him and simply asked us to do the same. We're accepted as we are and not as we think we should be.

We do not need to construct a DIY faith to impress or borrow an off-the-peg version. For God loves us as we are, not as we think we should be.

[20 : 36] The treasure and freedom we long for is revealed in God's love and grace, shown to us in the very person of Jesus.

This is the good news. We are who we are because in his grace, God loves us through and through today and always.

Shall we pray? Lord, it's so easy to try and construct a faith which suits us or to borrow a faith from somewhere else.

And you call us to give up on so many things, perhaps things we don't realize. we face many difficulties, many temptations, but really it's simply accepting the fact that you hold us and hold on to us and love us through and through.

You accept us as we are and not as we think we should be. Thank you for your never-ending, all-consuming love.

[21 : 53] Love. Amen.