

The Importance Of The Word

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 4. Matthew chapter 4, and at verse 4, these words of Jesus, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

As we know, the 40-day fast in the wilderness and this ferocious bombardment by Satan, when Jesus must have been so hungry, would have been an experience that would have been etched forever in the human mind, in the humanity of Jesus.

Jesus, as we know, is God, a very God, but he was Jesus in our nature. And he knew exactly what hunger was.

Jesus would have been as hungry as you or I would have been if we had fasted 40 days in the wilderness. So Jesus understood 100% what true, real hunger is like.

And so this is an experience that would have been always with him. And of course, as God, a very God, he knows everything.

[1 : 29] But Jesus had to experience coming our nature and really experience, identify 100% with us to know and to experience these things and to gain victory for us as well.

And so Jesus was ferociously tempted by the devil. This, of course, wasn't the only time that the devil would have tempted Jesus.

It tells us in verse 11 that the devil left him. The devil left him. That doesn't mean that he left him for good. He left him at that particular moment.

He left him for a season. But all throughout his life, and particularly throughout his public ministry, Satan would never have been far away. And sometimes Satan comes, as we know, like a roaring lion and other times as an angel of light.

And in fact, Jesus was able to understand on one occasion as Peter was trying to take him off course, where Peter was trying to tell him that he wasn't to be going the way of death and so on.

[2 : 34] And Jesus recognized that the words, remember Peter had just made the great confession, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And yet, within a moment, Jesus is having to rebuke and saying, get you behind me, Satan.

He was recognizing that Peter had become a mouthpiece of Satan. Satan was never far away. And a lot of what was happening and a lot of the opposition that Jesus was experiencing was being stirred up by the evil one.

Little do we understand just the ferocity and the intent of evil that is in the devil's heart. And his whole purpose is to ruin and to spoil the work of God.

That was his intent from the very beginning, was to spoil the handiwork of God. And the greatest handiwork of God, of course, is in his people. And that is why the Christian will always be in the focus of the demons, of Satan and all his demons.

The Christian, and he's had thousands and thousands and thousands of years of practice. But his one aim is always, it's to get against God. And so he was always attacking Christ.

[3 : 56] And of course, probably the greatest ferocity of all came at the time when, from the time of Jesus' arrest and trial and crucifixion.

Because Jesus himself said, this is the hour and the power of darkness. It was as if the very gates of hell were opened and just the whole demonic force was unleashed upon Christ.

And we can imagine that even on the cross he would be, he would be bombarded. So, although this, this was a period of real ferocity, it wasn't going to be the only period in the life of our Lord.

Now, one of the things I think when we come to this well-known incident, I'm not going to go through it all here today at all, is that we're so thankful that Jesus was tempted.

Because we're told that in the scripture, that he was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin. That's a wonderful verse. Because it means that when we are really battling with temptation, which we do, it's part and partial of our Christian life.

[5 : 06] And the Lord sees fit that we're bombarded. Martin Luther used to say it was one of the key things that the Lord used in our life to regulate Christian growth was temptation.

Temptation. Temptation, remember, doesn't equal sin. But temptation, it's very easy to move from temptation to sin. Because if we yield in any way to temptation and give in to it, then of course we sin.

Now, this is the difference. The Lord never sinned. The Lord never yielded. But he was tempted. And he was tempted brutally. And he was tempted in all points, like as we are.

That's what the Word of God tells us. And how thankful we are. And it means that we can go to him. And he wants us to go as a great high priest who understands and will enable us in our temptations. He will grant us the grace and the strength to resist. The Word tells us that. The only problem is sometimes we don't go to him. And we have to confess that there are some times that we yield all too easily and too willingly to the temptation.

[6 : 19] But we are thankful that our Lord was tempted in our place and for us. Now, we read in verse 1 that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Now, in the previous chapter, we saw the heavens opened. At the end of that chapter, the heavens opened. And the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting upon Christ.

And these great words, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And yet, the Holy Spirit who has come in power upon Jesus, The very first thing after this baptism is that the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And right away at the very beginning here, We see that at the very start of his public ministry, We find that this is when Satan comes with all his power.

And he's determined right at the start, Here's Jesus, as it were, embarking upon the public ministry. Right then, Satan is in. Because his whole aim is to take Jesus off track.

[7 : 27] To try and get Jesus to yield. To try and break his mission. To spoil the purposes and plans of God. But it was essential that Christ had to meet Satan and had to triumph over him.

This was an essential, an absolutely essential part of his work and of his mission and of his ministry. Now, we sometimes think that if trials or problems come our way, Then that we're not walking in the right way.

And if we're meeting problems and trials in life, We say to ourselves, You know, the Holy Spirit cannot be in me. The Holy Spirit cannot be directing me.

I cannot be walking in the Spirit. We're told in Galatians, walk in the Spirit. And you're saying to yourself, Well, if I'm meeting trial and there's problems coming into my life, And I'm meeting temptations all the time, I can't be walking in the Spirit.

Well, we mustn't think like that. Because here we find that Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

[8 : 35] It's not that God will tempt anybody in and of himself. But this was an essential part of Christ's ministry here. And so we have to understand that this is not an indication that if problems and trials and temptations come into our life, That we are going in the wrong course at all.

Now, Jesus had fasted 40 days and 40 nights. And if you can imagine what that would be like to be without food for 40 days and 40 nights, You would imagine that he must have been severely, really, really hungry.

And I would believe that in that 40 days and 40 nights, That Jesus would have been given over to prayer and to meditation. This was his time of preparation for the great ministry and work that he was entering into.

And you find the Lord doing that with the likes of Moses, Before he went embarked on the great work of leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, He had that time away in the wilderness.

The Apostle Paul, before he became the great evangelist, The great leader of the setting of churches, The great Gentile missionary, He too had his time away alone in the desert.

[10 : 02] And Jesus is here. He has been set aside in this time. And I believe that this would be a key time of absolute devotion and meditation and prayer with the Father.

And so the tempter comes to him from the outside. And the tempter came and said to him, Now as we know, Satan is malicious in the extreme.

And part of what Satan does, which he wasn't able to do with Jesus, But which he does with us, When he comes with his temptation and his enticing, He will set out before us in the way of temptation, In such a way that we will say, I have to have this.

He will make it in such a way that it is so desirable, And that it is so right, And that there is actually nothing wrong with it. You go back to the temptation in Eden, And he colored it and carved it and set it in such a way that It was taking down, He was making it much, much less than what God had said.

And in fact he was saying, That's not really what God said at all. And he is the master of deception. And the moment that we yield, Or very shortly after we yield, If we yield to the temptation, He then changes.

[11 : 26] And he becomes the accuser. And he then comes and he accuses us relentlessly. He is the accuser of the brethren. That's another of the definitions that scripture gives us.

First he is the deceiver. He is a tempter. And when he succeeds, Then he accuses us. And you see how malicious he is. And how he is the disturber of our peace.

And that's what he does. Tempts us. Deceives us. And then we can be going along fine in our Christian life. And then we fall. We give in.

We yield. And then he comes. And he accuses us. And as he accuses us, He has become the disturber of our peace. The peace that we enjoyed is gone.

And so this is part of the way he works all the time. Now you'll notice that his strategy with Jesus is very similar to that of which he used in Eden.

[12 : 27] Because he came by questioning. When he came to Eve, he began with a question. And it's the same here with Jesus. He says, If, If, He comes to Eve and says, Did, Did God say?

Plants the seed of doubt in her heart. And he comes to Jesus and he says, If, You are the Son of God. Are you sure you're the Son of God? Are you really the Son of God?

And you see what he's doing. Because, Remember, The Father had just made this declaration.

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And Satan is kind of saying, If you really are the Son of God, Do you think that your Father would permit you to be here?

You will remember you were led by the Spirit in here. And the Spirit is not leading you out. Forty days you've had no food. What kind of heavenly Father would do that to a Son?

If you are the Son. So you see, He's trying to cast doubt, To bring doubt into the mind of Jesus. And you wouldn't be starving, surely, If he was your Father.

[13 : 41] And of course, He's wanting at the very start to take Jesus off course. And it's also very interesting that Satan, Satan's attack on the last Adam, Is very similar to the first Adam, In that the temptation centers around food.

Because it was with regard to, Remember, There was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Where they were not permitted to take the fruit of that tree. But they were permitted to take the fruit of any other tree.

But it's in that area, That very area of food, That he comes, He came to Eve, And now he's coming to our Lord. But of course, There was a great difference, In the sense that, In the Garden of Eden, It was far easier, In a sense, You would say, For Eve, To resist, Because, Here's this one tree, That they were forbidden.

But if you looked around that garden, It was full of everything else, That their hearts desired. And they could have it. So Eve wasn't hungry, Eve wasn't in need.

But Satan brought her focus upon this, As being the most essential thing that she was to have. The garden was beautiful, Everything in the garden was perfect.

[15 : 03] Now Jesus' surrounds couldn't have been more different. He was in the howling wilderness. He was 40 days without food. He was famished, From a human point of view.

But Satan is coming, In the same way, With the very same strategy. But the wonderful thing is, That while the first Adam failed, The second Adam resisted.

Or the last Adam. He resisted the temptation. And you see, The tempter was, His aim was, To destroy the confidence, Of the son and the father.

That's what he was trying to do. If you're the son, He's trying to destroy, Which would be the worst thing that could happen. That's why he's trying to destroy, The son's confidence, In his father.

And to cast doubt on who he is. And to take matters into his own hand. In other words, To step out, Of the father's will. To begin to, Do things himself.

[16:04] Because every step, That Jesus took in this world, It was in fulfillment, To the will of the father. He kept saying that, All the time. I have not come to do my own will, But the will of him that sent me.

Every step, Was according to the father's will. But we see that, Jesus rebuffs, Satan's temptation, Straight away. And how does he do so?

He does so by quoting from the word. And it's very interesting, That even our Lord, Didn't stop and argue with the devil. You would imagine, That Jesus could have started saying, Listen, Do you not realize who I am?

I, And I said, No, All he says, And in every temptation, He's consistent in it. And he says, It is written. It is written.

It was the same with the, With the next one in verse 7. The next temptation, Again, It is written. And then when you come to the, Last temptation, Verse 10, It is written.

[17:08] You see what Jesus is doing? He's setting before us, The great example, That God's word, Is the key. The word of God, Is the key. And when Jesus says this, He makes the greatest state, One of the great statements, Man shall not live by bread alone, But by every word, That comes, From the mouth of God.

And, This is absolutely essential, For us to take on board, Because God's word, Is key to everything. The very world, That we live in, Exists, Because of God's word.

In the beginning, God, God said, Let there be light. Let there be, Let there be, Let there be, The word of God, Brought into being.

And people can have, All fanciful ideas, About, How this world, Came into being. We go to Genesis, And it tells us, Very simply, God said, Let there be, That is the word, Of God.

But not only, Is that word, The word that brought, Into being, It is also the word, That upholds, This world. There are so many people, Today panicking, About the world, That we are living in.

[18:25] What is going to happen, To the world? I don't know. I will tell you, One thing that is going to happen, To the world at the end. It is going to burn up, In fire. The Bible tells us that. And there is nothing, That anybody can do, To prevent that.

And we are told, That very simply, That the elements, Will melt with fervent heat. And that there will be, New heavens, And a new earth. That we are told, All that. But what we are told also, Is that, This world is upheld, Sustained, By the word of his power.

God upholds this world. And as long as, It is his will to do so, It will remain, No matter what else may happen. But not only, Is this world brought into being, And sustained by his power, We come to faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, By his word.

It is his word, That brought you, Into the place of salvation. We are told very simply, Faith, Comes by hearing, And hearing by the word of God.

So, Although maybe at the time, When you came to faith, You did not analyze it, In such a way, This is how it is. It is by the word, And through the word, That we come, Because as we know, The Lord is, The living word.

[19:47] And again, Paul asks the question, With regard to the Holy Spirit. He says, How does the Spirit come? Did you receive the Spirit, By the work of the law, Or by hearing, With faith?

And the answer is, Hearing with faith. And faith comes by hearing, And hearing by the word of God. And the word of God, And the Holy Spirit, Are never separate.

There is no division, In the Godhead. And the word, And the Spirit, Are always together, They always accompany, One another. Many people think that, In order to be full of the Spirit, That you just kind of, Put yourself into this, Sort of, Maybe, I don't know, Let yourself go, Into this kind of, Empty trance, And just say, Lord, Fill me with your Spirit.

And that's the way, The Spirit comes, Well you know, The Holy Spirit comes to us, Through the word. This is, This is the way. And it is the word, And prayer.

And if you ever find people, Sometimes, I've come across people, Who can have, Sometimes very strange ideas, And strange practices. And practices that are, Even contrary to God's word.

[21:02] And they'll say, Ah, The Spirit has led me, The Spirit is telling me, That this is what I've got to do. And you're saying, No, no, You're wrong. Because the Holy Spirit, Will never take you, Or lead you in a way, That is contrary, To the word.

The word and the Spirit, Are one. So that, If somebody is going, In another direction, To the word of God, Then it's certainly not, The Holy Spirit, That is leading them, In that way.

There is a unity, And a togetherness, In the Godhead, And that is reflected, In this world, And reflected, In the people of God. That the people of God, Are in one, With the word, And with the spirit.

So, We've got to remember, That the more time, We spend in the word, Reading the word, Studying the word, Meditating upon the word, Prayerfully, The more, The more we believe, That the spirit's influence, Will be, In and upon our life, Because as Paul said, It is, How do we get the spirit, It is, Through the word.

Now of course, There's many great blessings, That come to us, Through the word of God, One of the great, Another of the great blessings, Is the blessing, Of liberty and freedom. Remember what Jesus said, You shall know the truth, The word, And the truth, Shall make you free, The truth, Shall make you free.

[22 : 29] So many people, Bown today, And they, Boggled down with this and that, And the sad thing is, So many people think, That God's word, Is a heavy, A heavy tome, That just crushes you, Into the ground.

And that I'm telling you, There's loads of people, Out there today, And they will feel sorry for you, As a Christian. And they'll think, That your life, Is one of just, That you're, Just shackled, With all kinds of rules, And do's, And don'ts, And burdens, And that you haven't, The first clue, Of what liberty, And freedom is like.

Well nothing could be, Further from the truth. Nobody knows liberty, And freedom, Like the Christian. And the closer, We live to Christ, The freer, And more liberated, We are.

And that's what Jesus says, The truth, Shall set you free. You remember that, Remember when you first, Came to faith. Do you remember when you first, Came to that, Sense of assurance, Of your salvation.

And the freedom, You felt. The sense of, Peace, That, That enveloped your heart. World could never, Give you that. God. This was in Jesus.

[23 : 48] And this is, This is, This is, This is freedom, This liberty, That the Lord gives, In and through, Through his word. Again, God's word gives us, Wisdom and discretion.

And the psalm, That we were singing there, The testimonies of the Lord, Is sure, Making wise, The simple. And that's what, God's word does for us.

God's word, You see, Is a lamp, And a light, To our path. So God's word, Gives us, This is the beauty of it, That so often, God's word, Is the only rule, To direct us, How we may glorify, And enjoy him.

But if, The closer we live, To God's word, And just, Say for example, In the morning, You read God's word, Prayerfully, You meditate upon it. Although the passage, That you're reading, May have no direct bearing, Upon, What is happening, To you in the day.

The very fact, That you've been grounded, In that word, And remember, The spirit accompanies the word, You are given a direction, The Lord will help you, To make the right decisions, Because he will give you, His wisdom, And his discretion, Discretion, Discretion is a wonderful thing, And so, As you journey through life, You're making the right choices, The right decisions, Because your life, Is filled with the word, Based on the word, And the spirit is applying, That word, Into your soul, Again, It's through the word, That we get assurance, One of the great, Things that we, We need for our lives, We require for our lives, In fact, As we come to our communion, It's one of the things, So often, And Satan, Satan's a master, You know, When you're coming to a communion, He'll be whispering into you, Haha, You were never properly converted, You've been following for years, But you haven't really been following, You're following, And you're scared to go back,

[25 : 50] That's what's wrong, You're just, Because you say, What will people say, If I give up, You're nothing but a hypocrite, Satan comes to you, And he'll say these sort of things, And that can be difficult, Because when we begin, To look in at ourselves, What do we see?

We see a black heart, But you know, When we go to the word, The word again will assure us, John, Remember, And the minister's going through that, Just now, In John, First John's letter, He says, I have written this to you, Who believe, In the name of the Son of God, That you may know, That you have eternal life, You see, That's one of the great things, In first John, John, First John gives so many pointers, Through the word, To the fact that we have eternal life, And so, God brings these things to, Like for instance, We know that we pass from death to life, Because we love the brothers, Because we love other Christians, That's one of the evidences, There's loads of these marks, Given to us, And John says, I have written these things, To you so that you may know, So assurance is so

important, But we get our assurance, Through the word, And again, Jesus shows us, In this passage, That it is through the word, That we fight the enemy, The word, Remember, We're told in Ephesians, Is the sword of the spirit, And what a sword this is, It's sharper, The word is, We're told, It's actually sharper, Than any two-edged sword, And, It's vital, That you and I, Remember this, That when we're tempted, Bring the word, To bear, Because if we stop, And we say, You know, Don't stop, And reason, With the tempter, At any point, Because one of the things, That he always tempts you, Or says to you, Is, It's not that bad, It's not that bad, It's not what you're making out, Well the moment, You begin to reason, In your own mind, And say, Well maybe, Maybe it isn't, That he's got you, The moment you're aware, That you're being tempted, That you've got to bring in the word,

And just, As Jesus says, It's written, This is what it says, It is written, And every time, It is written, Be gone Satan, For it is written, And this is a great example, That's why it's a sword of spirit, We're given the shield of faith, And the sword of the spirit, Part of the armory, And that is how, When we meet the enemy, That we do so, With the word, So let us seek then, To make, This word, The word of the living God, Our rule, That it's what we live on, It's what we will die on, It's what we will, Live out every day, What we go to sleep on at night, That it will be our pillow at night, And our light, And our lamp, Through the day, Because if that is the case, Then, The Lord will take us through, This world, Being guided, In the right way, So that we will hear,

What God the Lord, Will speak, Let us pray, Lord our God, We give thanks, For this word, That you've given to us, This word, That is a lamp to our feet, And a light to our path, This word, That is sweeter than honey, This word, That nourishes us, And strengthens us, For the journey, This word, That we live on, And this word, That we must die upon, And so we pray, Lord, That your word, Will become ever more, Precious to us, Grant us your grace, And for everything, And in everything, Take us to our home, Safely we pray, Do us good, And cleanse us, From our every sin, In Jesus name, We ask it, Amen, We'll conclude singing, In Psalm 91, The 91st Psalm, And verses 4 to 6, Psalm 91, And verse 4, And verse 4,

[30 : 33] Psalm 91, And we sing, Well, We'll sing verses 5, 5 and 6, Verses 5 and 6, Of Psalm 91, Amen, gauge who's the Lord, Blast of the Queen, Folge 6, surfaces, though the city goes into flowing water.

Helena, an Extension schematic young, for a lot of g Sono, we select the point, because an Highrigile arena has the right-to- represent stretch, and when we select the field carefully Lyricoch cose■'ve Ha Ha Ha 1 All Of Of Of Of this bucking over the deal through my lovely did 1 1 Artists■■■ Prof.

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