

Title: Temptation
Text: Matthew 4: 1-11
Date: October 6, 2011
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Matthew 4: 1: Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (after Matthew 3: 16-17.) Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Then: after you have been born of the Spirit of God, after that you believe and confess the Lord in believer's baptism, after the sweetest times of fellowship with God...then.

Every believer can expect to be tempted of the devil. God does not tempt men to sin—the devil does. And the devil is a very real adversary. If the devil was not afraid to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not be afraid to tempt us, brethren. But, believer, rejoice in this—though our Savior was tempted of the devil, yet Christ conquered our foe.

1 John 3: 8:...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Hebrews 2: 14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The first Adam sinned and plunged his own into spiritual death. Christ is the perfect, sinless Redeemer. Christ Jesus overcame the devil steadfast in the faith. He has delivered his children from bondage. He shall keep the believer and he shall yet deliver us into his presence. Our Lord relives us when we are tempted.

Hebrews 2: 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour (help, aid, relieve) them that are tempted.

THE DEVIL APPEALS TO OUR WEAKNESS. What is our weakness? The Lord Jesus tells us plainly:

Matthew 26: 41: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

Our flesh—the old man born of flesh the first time--is weakness. Our flesh is infirmity. Due to the fall of Adam. Due to sin. The old man of our flesh is the weakness within us. In our old fleshly man, we all we are is infirmity—weakness. And we have many infirmities—many weaknesses.

John summed up our weakness in these three things:

1 John 2: 16: For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Proposition: In the three temptations the devil used with our Lord, he made appeals to the three things that appeal most to the lusts of our old man, our sinful nature.

The devil's tempting of our Lord was real. But being born of God, our Lord could not sin. He was manifest to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3: 8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

The believer born of the Spirit cannot sinner, but our fleshly man is only sin. And in these three temptations we see the devil appealing to what is in our sinful flesh, our very weakness: the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, lust of the eyes.

I. THE LUST OF THE FLESH

Matthew 4: 2: And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3: And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

Our Lord really hungered as a man. He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Satan sought advantage at our Lord's natural hunger. Our bodies indeed have needs. At times, we are in very trying circumstances because of these needs. Using this to his advantage, the devil challenged Christ to distrust God to Provide—Satan tempted Christ to be his own provider, saying, "**If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**"

But our Lord trusted God to provide for him without Christ providing for himself.

Matthew 4: 4: But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Lord fed a multitude with a few loaves and fish, but our Lord never worked a miracle for himself. As the Son of Man the Lord Jesus depended upon every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. MORE THAN ANY OTHER BREAD—WE NEED EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.

We are born again of the word of God (James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 23.) Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10: 17.) We are sustained by the word of God, kept by the word of God and it is the Word which shall strengthen the inner man and make us to abide stedfast in the faith—when the devil tempts us to provide for ourselves (1 Corinthians 1: 21; 1 Peter 2: 2; Ephesians 6: 16-17.)

The Word that is our Bread is every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God—God shall provide.

II. THE PRIDE OF LIFE

Matthew 4: 5: Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6: And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Satan appeals to the pride of our flesh— *if thou be the Son of God—if you be a child of God*. The child born of the Spirit of God, he has nothing to prove. It matters not if the world doubts whose I am. But it eats up the child of flesh, the religious pretender.

It worth noting that Satan took him up *to the holy city, to the pinnacle of the temple*. The devil used *scripture*, he misquoted-howbeit he used the *promise of God* for the bases of this temptation. His message promotes pride, tempting the sinner to presume upon the promises of God.

Indeed, the grace of God takes his children into the holy city—heavenly Jerusalem. God makes his child to ride upon the high places of the earth as he did Jacob. God makes us stones in his holy temple in Christ our Foundation. He reveals great and precious promises in our hearts. God ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts higher than our thoughts. But when it is the grace of God at work in the heart--he draws his child *to him, to trust God*, God makes his child *rest in him*. He makes us trust God who is able to perform that which he has promised us. But the work of the Spirit does not use the promises and the power of God to justify direct rebellion against God's word.

God promises his child: Isaiah 43: 1: "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, thou art mine. 2; When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." But that does not make a child of God build a fire and jump in it!

The Lord promises, "*I'll never leave thee nor forsake thee!*" But that never makes a child of God, "forsake the assembly of the saints?" His word draws us closer to wait the day of our Lord's return.

The Lord promises, "Hebrews 10: 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin." His word of promise does not make a child of God run into sin. His promise makes us draw near to him--Hebrews 10; 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And *having* a high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23: Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

If I ever find myself using the scriptures to justify rebellion, I can be sure it is not of God!

Someone said this: "Oh, we can be Christians, and yet go there!" Can you? It may be that you can be hypocrites, and go there; that is far easier than going there as Christians."

Matthew 4: 7: Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

III. THE LUST OF THE EYES

Matthew 4: 8: Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9: And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

The believer does not serve God for worldly gain? Is our thought, "Well I have done this for God, now he ought to give me more of this world or ease in this world?" That is idolatry. Covetousness. Serving the belly.

When it came to a bribe the promise that the devil will give him earth's glory if he will but fall down and worship him, Christ ends the whole matter once for all. Listen to how the Lord answers,

Matthew 4: 10: Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Christ's reward was promised him of the Father--the glory of God, Jacob his inheritance. All the kingdoms of the world are his. All power in heaven and earth are his. His people are his purchased possession. But Christ worshipped God, served God and his reward is the lot of his inheritance—his children.

Likewise, the believer's reward IS God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Mercenaries serve for gain. God's people serve God and him ONLY only they serve. For God only!

Application: But how shall I be saved from the devil when I see nothing good in my flesh? Here is a treasury of consolation for tempted souls! We have a great, almighty Friend and Advocate in heaven, who has conquered our Adversary for us. He shall comfort us and be the comfort through the Spirit in all our temptations.

Are you ever tempted by satan to distrust God's providence? – So was Christ! Are you ever tempted to presume upon God's promises? – So was Christ! Are you ever tempted to by the show of worldly gain? – So was Christ!

Flee to him for help and spread our troubles before him. You will always find that his ear is ready to hear, his heart is ready to feel, and his arm is ready to help. He understands our sorrows, temptations, and troubles! He who was tempted and triumphant for us will also cause us to be triumphant over the tempter and his temptations.

Romans 16: 17 : Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5: 23: And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

AMEN!