

Matthew 4:1-11

“Battling Temptation”

Intro.

I. **Basic tenets of temptation**

- A. Temptation is **ALWAYS** selfish & satanic – Is. 53:6; James 1:13-14.
- B. Temptation may not *initially* be sinful.
- C. Temptation has no **boundaries**: our enemy doesn't care *who* we are, *where* we are or *how* we got there; his focus is on our destruction by using everything at his disposal.

Body

I. **Battling Temptation**

A. **The timing of temptation – V.1-3.**

- 1) V.1 – “*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit...*”
 - a) Then = following a spiritual memorial – 3:13-**17**.
 - b) ***Temptation almost always follows spiritual victory or commitment. Why?***
 - i) Our enemy is wicked: relaxation = vulnerability = attack – 1 Pet. 5:7; Gen. 4:7.
 - ii) Our enemy is livid when we draw closer to God.
 - iii) Our enemy is committed to our destruction – Eph. 6:10-20.
- 2) V.2-3 – “*And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now **when** the tempter came to him...*”
 - a) Impacts of fasting for 40 days: muscle fatigue/weakness, headaches, low blood sugar = low energy levels.

- b) *Satan's timing is perfect; i.e. he attacks when we're weakest: following/during tragedy, difficulty, death, discouragement, doubt, change, pandemics, paranoia, persecution...in short, whenever we don't feel like or have the energy to fight.*

B. The type of temptation – v.1 – “Then (a) Jesus was (b) led up by the Spirit (c) into the wilderness (d) to be tempted by the devil.”

- 1) Jesus = the Son of God; the Son of Man; the Messiah.
 - a) *The audacity of our enemy reveals just how cautious, alert & sober minded we need to be. *Lions known to attack much bigger & stronger animals.*
- 2) “Led by the Spirit” = God permitted & Jesus submitted; temptation involves the will – John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 10:1-10.
 - a) **Difficulty doesn't always have us at the center; sometimes it's primarily for the benefit of others.**
- 3) “...into the wilderness...”
 - a) Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness & satan took full advantage of His isolation.
 - i) ***Isolation is a vital component to the success of his attacks. *Zebra pic***
 - 1) Weakness (there's strength in numbers) – Prov. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6; 1 Cor. 12:14; Heb. 10:24-25.
 - 2) Fear – Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:9; 1 John 4:18
 - a) *Greatest command given most often by God: DO NOT FEAR!*
 - 3) Deception – Deut. 1:26-27; Prov. 18:1.
 - ii) ***Be extremely cautious of the enemy's tactics to isolate you from your family, your church & your God!***

4) “...to be tempted by the devil.” **How?**

a) V.3 – through needs (selfishness).

b) V.5-6 – through pride: “***if*** *You are the Son of God...*”

c) V.8-9 – through lies: “*All these things **I will give You.***”

C. **The purpose of temptation**

1) From the enemy’s perspective:

a) To get us to surrender our will to his – v.9: *Just bend the knee!*

2) From God’s perspective:

a) To strengthen our faith – Deut. 8:2; Ps. 11:5a; 66:10; **Matt. 14:22; Mark 4:35-5:1**; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12.

b) To draw us closer to our Savior – James 1:12; 5:11.

c) To give us an example – Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Pet. 1:21-23.

i) Victory – Heb. 2:14; Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 10:13

1) Satan vs. 1st Adam/ Last Adam