

**Text:** Matthew 4:4-11

**Introduction:** In the devotional readings (Heb. 2:10-18), we read the following

**Hebrews 2:17(NKJV)** <sup>17</sup>Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Concerning this verse we read the following in the “NKJV Study Bible.”

2:17 **In all things** includes Jesus’ humanity (v. 14) and His suffering (v. 18). Jesus participated in our nature and in our sufferings on earth so that He could be a sympathetic Mediator between God and humanity. He understands our weaknesses and intercedes for us in the presence of God the Father. He is a **merciful** (sympathetic) and **faithful** (trustworthy) **High Priest**. This is the first time the title High Priest occurs in Hebrews, and the first time the title is applied to Jesus Christ in the Bible. **Make propitiation** refers to the satisfaction of the claims of a holy and righteous God against sinners who have broken His law. Christ appeased God’s righteous wrath by dying on the Cross in our place (see Rom. 3:21-26). Although completely perfect and sinless, Christ voluntarily submitted to the penalty of sin, this agonizing death on the Cross. This voluntary sacrifice of Himself for our welfare satisfied the justice and holiness of God. The benefits of His sacrifice are applied to all who place their faith in Him. 2:18 **being tempted:** Christ’s suffering included temptation. He experienced the lure of sin, but He never surrendered Himself to it. He knows what it is like to be tempted, so He knows how to assist those who are being tempted.

We read also in **Hebrews 4:14-16(NKJV)** <sup>14</sup>Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

These passages tell us a lot about the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus, both while He was here on the earth and now in His ministry on our behalf in heaven.

**“Tempted just as we are...”** After Man sinned in the Garden and fell, he needed a Redeemer. All through the Old Testament we read about that redeemer who would come. He would have to be both God and man. Jesus is our Kinsman-redeemer. The passage in Heb. 4:14-16 tells us that he knows what we went/are going through in life because He experienced it as the God-Man. Our lesson today is from Matthew 4:1-11; it is the encounter with Satan in the Wilderness.

**Lesson Background:** Last Sunday we had the lesson about John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. The last words in Matthew 3 are in v. 17 **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** The events in our lesson today are also recorded in Mark 1 & Luke 4.

## I. Satisfying Cravings (Matt. 4:1-4)

A. **Context** (vv. 1-2) John MacArthur writes, “God Himself is never the agent of temptation (James 1:13), but here, as in the Book of Job—God uses even satanic tempting to serve His sovereign purposes. Christ was tempted in all points (Heb.

4;15); I John 2;16) Satan tempted Him with “the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eyes,” and “the pride of life.” (refer to I John 2:15-17). All throughout the OT, we see Satan trying to thwart the work of redemption. We see it in many instances in the OT; we saw it in a previous lesson about Herod killing the baby boys in and around Bethlehem, and we will see it throughout the life of Jesus. Christians are admonished “to take up the ‘whole armor of God.’” (Eph. 6:10-20)

Matthew 4:2. The result of fasting 40 days and 40 nights. The importance of this verse shows us how Satan works—he tempts all of us in different ways—He goes after our weaknesses and strikes at those weaknesses. Whatever your weakness is he will exploit it. To him, Jesus’ weakness should have been hunger and we see Satan exploiting that.

B. **Temptation** (v. 3) We see here the basic work of the devil—temptation. Matthew 4:1-11—**Note** the conditional “If.” Satan knew that Jesus was the Son of God, he was trying to get Him to violate the Plan of God.

**Warren Wiersbe writes,** Satan appealed to the body, the desires of the flesh. There was no sin in being hungry. Yet Satan suggested that, if Christ were God’s Son, He should not let Him hunger. Satan always wants us to think that God is “holding out on us” (see Gen 3:5). The suggestion is, “God must not love you. If He did, He would take better care of you!” For Christ to use His divine powers out of the will of God would be defeat. He always did what pleased God (John 8:29).

C. **Result (v.4)** Wiersbe further says,

Christ met this temptation with Deut 8:3. Feeding the inner spiritual person is far more important than feeding the physical. Read Deut 8:1-6 and note that God tests us and proves us in the ordinary things of life, like eating and drinking. Jesus lived under the authority of God’s Word; so should we.

Note that Jesus had the Word “hidden in His heart” (Ps 119:11) and was able to quote it and apply it at the right time.

In all of the temptations, Jesus uses Scripture from Deuteronomy to refute the temptations and claims of Satan. The tempter many times misuses the Word of God, but Jesus is True to it. We need to remind ourselves of the priority of feeding upon the Word of God. Jesus knew His priorities.

- II. **Testing God (Matthew 4:5-7)** here we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation. “The second temptation (vv. 5-7). The locale shifts from the Wilderness to the Holy City, to the Temple—“the Pinnacle of the Temple.” (use MacArthur’s notes). Wiersbe writes,
- Satan “dares” Jesus to prove the faithfulness of God. “Since You believe the Word of God,” implies Satan, “then why not prove one of God’s promises?” Satan then quotes - or misquotes - Ps 91:11-12. “If You really believe in God’s care, then throw Yourself off the temple and let the angels catch You!” Christ answered him from Deut 6:16. Satan left out the important phrase “in all Your ways” (Ps 91:11, NKJV). God keeps His promises when we keep His ways. Jesus said we should live by every word that God utters, but Satan adds to the Bible or takes from it. He can twist the Bible and give carnal Christians biblical reasons to support their foolish actions. Beware of taking promises out of their context, or claiming promises when you have not met the conditions. To do something without the Bible’s authority is to sin, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). This is to tempt God - to “dare Him” to intervene and

rescue us when we are in trouble. Deliberate disobedience is an invitation for chastening.

- This is an account of Satan's misquoting scripture.
- Verse 7—the same result as above “It is written...” We are not to “test God,” but to “trust Him.” In the Quarterly it says, “*The Christian is called to trust God, not demand of God.*”

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III. **Achieving Greatness (Matthew 4:8-11)** This is the temptation regarding “the pride of life.” Most of us want the most we can get out of life and most of the time that is OK, Jesus came that we might have the “abundant life.” He wants to give His children every good gift from above. What is different here, on the one hand, is that Satan is trying to get Jesus to take a “short-cut” that detours the Cross.

- **V. 8** - Some have said that Satan did/does not have the authority to offer what he did. But, he did and does! When man fell in Eden, Satan received dominion over this world; he received the “title deed of the earth.” Jesus takes that back in Revelation 5. He is our Kinsman-Redeemer (read the book of Ruth.)
- **So, Satan** did have the authority to give Jesus what he offered. But there was a catch—Jesus had to bow down to him—take the easy way out—You don't have to make it hard and die on the Cross, he told Jesus.
- Satan offers Christ an “easy way” to become King. As the prince of this world (John 14:30), Satan is permitted by God to have a certain amount of control over its kingdoms. According to Ps 2:6-9, God had already promised these kingdoms to Christ. (Note how Ps 2:6-7, NKJV, takes you back to Christ's baptism, “You art My Son.”) But He would have to die on the cross to gain this kingdom. Satan was trying to tempt Him away from the cross.
- **V. 9** Satan was trying to short-circuit the ultimate goal of Jesus' becoming the redeemer of mankind by offering the crown without the Cross. At the Annunciation Gabriel promised Mary that Jesus would sit on the Throne of David and rule forever.
- **Luke 24:26** says that Jesus has to suffer before he enters into glory.
- **Matthew 4:10-11** - “Jesus understands that to worship anyone or anything other than “the Lord, your God” is to be an idolater. Jesus affirms that the only One worthy of worship is God.
- **V. 11** “the devil left Him.” We have to go to Luke 4:13 to get the whole story, Luke 4:13 “When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.”

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**Conclusion:** Jesus came to earth to be the sacrifice for sin. Remember John's words, “behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” Gal. 4:4 tells us “that in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son...to redeem us...” Jesus had to be the lamb without blemish 1 Peter 1:19. The temptations Jesus faced mirror the ones we face (1 John 2:15-17). James tells us to “resist the devil and he will flee from you.” We are told that we will not be tempted beyond what we can endure and that there will be a way out provided. We need to trust in the redemptive work of Jesus; accept Him and obey Him and live in Him, trusting in His Holy Spirit to guide and lead us. We must as Heb. 12:1-2 says Heb 12:1-2 “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”