

MATTHEW: sermon study guide

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Sermon Title: Tempted: What's at Stake? - Matthew Series Sermon 7

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your favourite "comfort food"?
2. Pastor Ashwin said, "Testing and temptation are two sides of the same coin." How can both God and Satan be at work at the same time?

UP - PURSUE GOD

3. How does Jesus' baptism and temptation parallel the story of Adam and Eve? The story of Israel?
4. What was at stake when Jesus was tempted? What are the implications of Jesus' victory for us?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Ashwin said, "Temptation in essence is a battle between two voices." How can recognizing these voices help us stand up against temptation? How can we help others discern between these voices?
6. What temptations or testing are you facing in this season? How can recognizing what's at stake help you during this time?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

What was the strongest temptation or testing I have faced in the past? What was and is God's voice? What was the enemy's voice? What was at stake? How can I rely on Jesus' victory when I am tempted?

This week's writers: *Edi Dygert, Deb Matiko and Jared Harrison*

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 3:16-4:1

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

James 1:13

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

Genesis 3:1-5

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.

⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Deuteronomy 8:2

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

MATTHEW: sermon study summary

Tempted: What's at Stake?

Matthew 3:14 – 4:1

Pastor Ashwin

This second mini-series from the Gospel of Matthew revolves around something we all face: Temptation. Temptation is defined as 'an enticement to act in disobedience to God's will'. While temptation is not a sin, by giving in to it we consent to meeting our needs our way as opposed to trusting God's way. The battle is serious and ongoing. We as Christians have been set apart to represent Jesus, and Satan's primary weapon is temptation.

The temptations of Jesus give us many lessons. First, Jesus was victorious over Satan and his kingdom of darkness; conquering the enemy on our behalf. Second, Jesus shows us how to battle and overcome temptation in our lives. No one is free from temptation, not even Jesus. These lessons are foundational to this series.

Jesus' baptism and temptations are closely linked. At his baptism, Jesus hears God's voice, affirming and confirming him (Matthew 3:16-17). Jesus' baptism is not to display repentance, but is his public revelation as the beloved Son of God, filled and empowered with the Holy Spirit for the start of his Messianic ministry. Yet immediately after, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, (Matthew 4:1) where Jesus hears the enemy's mocking, questioning voice.

The Greek word for 'temptation' is the same as 'testing': Context determines the meaning. The devil tempts us to disobey God. Even so, what the devil uses to make us fail, God can, and does, use to test and strengthen us.

The stories of Adam and Eve and the nation of Israel help us to grasp the significance of Jesus' temptations. Adam and Eve were blessed in every way; God spoke and walked with his beloved children. God was generous. They could eat of every tree but one: a small test of obedience. Then they heard another voice (Genesis 3:1-5) and were deceived into the lie that God is not a good Father. They questioned God's love and lost it all when they gave in to the temptation.

As God's chosen people, the nation of Israel had many privileges. God delivered them out of slavery in Egypt, dividing the Red Sea so they could reach the Promised Land. But they failed to trust him and a journey that should have taken only a couple of weeks took 40 years (Deuteronomy 8:2). There are similarities between Israel's and Jesus' stories. Both spent time in Egypt: Israel as exiles, Jesus for protection. Jesus was baptised in the Jordan; Israel by walking through the Red Sea. Both were led into the wilderness for testing. But where Israel failed, Jesus prevailed.

Everything hinges on Jesus' response to the testing. Had Jesus succumbed to the temptations, he would have been disqualified from his mission as the Saviour of the world. At his weakest moment, he hears two voices: one affirming, one questioning and mocking. Jesus fights this battle as a human being, not with his divine privileges. He uses the same resources we have to overcome the devil's lies: the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the word of God. We also know we belong to a victorious Saviour. We are imputed with His righteousness. Our true identity is not earned but received by faith. Jesus intercedes for us, (Heb 4:14-16.)

How can we resist temptation? Pause and ask, "What's at stake? What will I lose?" Reflect carefully. Temptation deceives: what you see is not what you get; you lose much more than you gain. The purpose of every temptation is to keep you from Jesus. When we turn to Jesus, we defeat temptation.