

Facing Temptation – Discussion Notes¹

(Updated 1/2020; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: Matthew 4:1-11

Summary Highlights: Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. He is tempted, while He is fasting. He fights off the temptation of following the devil's suggestions. The devil takes Jesus to a pinnacle. He quotes scripture to get Jesus to jump. Jesus fights the temptation with the word. The devil takes Jesus to a high mountain. The devil offers Jesus all of the kingdoms, in exchange for Jesus' worship. Jesus fights him off, before the devil leaves Him alone.

Introduction: A key idea in this lesson is Jesus faithfully fought off the devil's attacks. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to develop the faith to withstand the devil's attacks.

Key Points:

1. When the Spirit leads you into hard times. Notice in vs. 1 that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness of satanic temptation. We should be aware that sometimes the problems in our lives are a product of God's plan for our lives. Just as strength comes from resistance training, spiritual strength and testimony comes from struggle. *Let's work on developing the faith to trust and obey God, when God is responsible for the trouble in our lives.* Prayerful Bible study and obedience, with the support of other believers, can help us develop this kind of faith.

2. The balance between bread and the word. Notice in vs. 4 that the people of God shall not live by bread alone. On one hand, we are not to put too much emphasis on bread or the material things of this world like food, clothing, and shelter. However, we are not to ignore them. Although we shall not live by them alone, we do need them. *Let's seek the wisdom and wherewithal to find the balance between necessary bread and obedience to God.* There are too many who have "sanctified poverty." And there are others who have a "name it and claim it prosperity gospel." Both embarrass God.

3. Seeking the greater good. Notice in vs. 7 that Jesus lives by the greater good. The devil had a piece of truth. But Jesus lived by the greater truth. It was true that Jesus could jump and not be harmed. But the greater truth was that Jesus should not jump and play the devil's game. *Let's seek the wisdom and wherewithal to live by the greater good and will of God.* For example, we may have to choose between having a right to having things done our way or giving up our right for the sake of ministering to others. Often the latter

¹ Prepare to discuss the following: What is the point, what scripture supports the point, what is the application sentence, and what is an example of living by the material? After the material is covered, be prepared to answer the following: Which point do you want to spend extra time on, why do you think this point is so important, and what tips do you have for living by this material, in spite of the challenges? **What is one thing you will take from this session and work on, in regard to your discipleship goals?**

way is the greater good and God's will for our lives. Jesus could have appealed His mistreatment at Calvary, but He did not for our sake.

4. God is more powerful than the devil. Notice that the devil has power, but it is less than the power of God. It took power to take Jesus to both the pinnacle and the mountain. However, God has more power. And God keeps the devil's power within limits. *Let's live like we believe that God has more power than the devil.* Such living is known for obeying God. When we allow fear and doubt to lead to our disobeying God and living by what seems right to us, we are not living like we believe that God is more powerful. We're not living like He will use His power to bless those who obey Him and punish those who don't.

5. Worship and service. Notice in vs. 10 that Jesus teaches that the people of God are to worship and serve God only. The one we treat as most important, by way of our words and deeds, is the one we worship. We can say that we worship God but actually worship the devil, ourselves, or others. *Let's worship and serve God only.* Notice that worship and service go together. Our worship is not for real, when we don't even try to serve the Lord. Too many come to worship but don't give any service. Consequently, when judgment comes, many may be very surprised and disappointed. A "worshipping pew member" is a contradiction of terms.

6. There is help on the way. Notice in vs. 11 that help did come. It is good to know that God knows how much we can bear, and at the right time, He will send help our way. *Let's develop the faith to keep obeying God with the confidence that God will take care of His own.* Again, this type of faith is nurtured by prayerfully studying and obeying God's word with the support of other believers.