

Tested and Tempted Part #1

Focus of Series: Today we will begin a 3 part series called “Tested & Tempted.”

In this series we will be looking at the **biblical account of Jesus’ temptation** in the wilderness found in **Matthew 4**.

We will look at each **temptation Jesus faced** and then investigate how each **temptation** relates to us personally.

We will try to answer the question of:

- **Why temptation comes to us.**
- **What purpose temptation serves.**
- In the end I hope we will all:
- **Find ways to overcome temptation** by looking at how Jesus overcame.

Today we will begin this series by looking at **the first temptation of Christ.**

Before we do that ***let’s read*** from:

Matthew 4:1-11 – NIV - ***Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness***

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

² After fasting forty days and forty nights, ***he was hungry.***

³ The tempter came to him and said, “***If*** you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “**It is written:** ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

⁶ “***If*** you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. **For it is written:** “‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus answered him, **“It is also written:** ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, **“Away from me, Satan! For it is written:** ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then ***the devil left him***, and angels came and attended him.

Depending On A Dependable God!!!!

I must confess that sometimes I find myself ***struggling to trust God!***

Sometimes I am tempted to trust in my own ability and forsake my dependence on God.

There are times when I would rather depend on my own skills because ***I forget what God has done for me.***

Do you ever struggle to trust God?????

Do you ever think to yourself, “I know I am supposed to depend on God but it just seems He is not at work in my problem, so, I’ll just take care of this myself!”

Or **possibly you think**, “There are so many **other ways** to get the answers I am looking for **in this world.**”

- **If you are sick** – find a doctor.
- **If you are poor** – elect a better politician
- **If you are having problems** – find a counselor, financial, marriage...

In today’s world there are **so many other ways** to get answers that little if any thought is given to **depending on God.**

Why???????

Because we have come to **trust in the abilities of humanity** and decided that ***God may not be dependable.***

That attitude is exactly what is being **portrayed in the first temptation** the tempter brought to Jesus...let's read it...

Matthew 4:3 – The tempter came to him and said, "**If you are the Son of God**, tell these stones to become bread."

If you go back to ***the end of chapter 3*** you will find where John the Baptizer had just baptized Jesus.

After Jesus came up out of the water the heavens opened up and the Spirit of God **like** a dove descended and a voice from heaven said, "***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased***".

This event served **to confirm** that Jesus is the Son of God and **not** just another teacher or preacher – but God manifested in the flesh.

We must understand a very important fact before all of this **temptation business** makes sense.

- Jesus is both God and man.
- He has both a human nature and a divine (God) nature.

We see Jesus surrendering His human will to the will of God throughout scripture.

As a human Jesus is truly: hungry, tired, weary, angry...

As God Jesus: forgives sin, heals, calms the storms, opens blind eyes, knows the thoughts of man.....

Nowhere do we see the dual nature of Christ more openly than **in His temptation**.

His human nature is submitting itself to the will of God.

- **Do not for a moment think that God is being tempted!!!!!!**

Just as **Jesus had to surrender His will to God** in the Garden of Gethsemane

- So too Jesus (the human) is **bringing His flesh into obedience to the will of God**
- becoming the **substitutional sacrifice for the sin of ALL man-kind**.

As you read **the account of Jesus' temptation** you must bear in mind **His dual nature**.

- Otherwise we would be saying that ***somehow the devil (or you and I)***
- **Could tempt God** to do evil or sin; **this is not possible**.

Keep these things in mind as we look at our text today...

We read Matthew 4:1, "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil."

- We then see **Jesus fasting** while in the desert and - **he was hungry (4:2)**.
- It is during this **time of physical weakness** -
- **The tempter** comes and begins to work on Jesus...
- **"If** you are the Son of God,
- Tell these stones to become bread."

I want you to pay special attention to the first word the *tempter* uses – **IF**.

- Remember Jesus is hungry (**physically weak**)

He is **feeling the pains of not eating** for forty days & nights all the while being in the hot desert.

In the time of **His weakened state the enemy comes** and says, **IF...this is a word of doubt!**

- The *tempter* is **trying to get Jesus to doubt** what happened at His baptism.
- He is trying to **put doubt in His mind** that He is the Son of God.
- You see, **if the tempter can just get Jesus to doubt.....**
- Then he could get Jesus **to give in to the temptation**.

Then the tempter says, "...tell these stones to become bread."

- The devil is trying to get Jesus to use His divine power to satisfy His natural hunger.
- The devil was *trying to tempt Jesus* (the human) into believing that God was not dependable.
- This is not a new tactic used by the tempter.
- *“Why would the devil tempt Jesus with bread?”*

In the flesh we could say it is because Jesus is hungry and we would be right.

But the real answer is found in Jesus’ response to the temptation...

*Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ **Matthew 4:4***

Look at the words, “It is written...” Jesus takes the seed of doubt the tempter is trying to plant in His mind and battles it with an absolute fact!

Notice He does not say,

- “Well, I think somewhere in the scriptures it says something about not living on bread alone?”

NO!

- He rebukes the devil with an emphatic – absolute truth from the scriptures.
- Jesus’ answer to the tempter from the Old Testament book of Deut. 8.

The book of Deuteronomy was written primarily by Moses reminding Israel of the great things God had done for them (deliverance, provision)

It is a chapter that calls God’s people to never forget what God has done for them.

Moses reminds them why God had to take them into a desert for 40 years...

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NKJV

“...**to humble you** and **test you** in order **to know what was in your heart**, whether or not you could keep his commandments. He [God] humbled you, ***causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna*** [bread]...**to teach you** that ***man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord***”

My Church - I want you to get this today!!!!!!

Moses had been hearing the word of the Lord and recording it for the people to hear.

God had taken Israel into the desert **and humbled them** through hunger then **God provided** for them a thing called, manna [bread].

- Every morning the people would step out of their tents and this **manna [bread] would be waiting on them.**
- There would be enough bread, every day, for every person.

God used this experience to teach Israel that ***in their hunger they must depend on God!***

- God gave the manna and the **manna gave life** –
- The gift of God [bread] was the source of **keeping them alive** –
- **God then is the source of life!!!!!!!**

Every day when they woke up and found bread on the ground **they realized two things:**

1. They must **depend on God!!!**
2. That **God is dependable!!!**

When **Jesus is being tempted** to turn stones into bread ***He is reminded of these two absolute facts.***

The **tempter** tries to convince Him that God has abandoned Him, forsaken Him, and left Him to die in the desert.

Jesus rebukes the devil

- Because **He knows the same God who provided** bread for Israel in the desert...
- **Is also dependable** to make a way for Him to **escape this temptation!**

As a church **we cannot forget where God has brought us from** and **how God has provided for us** every step of the way.

We have a dependable God who will sustain this church by His Word.

We will be tempted to trust in our flesh and forsake the Spirit's power.

I have come to tell you this morning no matter what the **tempter** says, **"You can depend on this dependable God!"**

Even when the tempter comes and says,

- "God is not with you!
- God has forsaken this church!
- You are walking **through a desert** and God is no longer on your side!"

The tempter tries to paint a picture of compromise and satisfying the opinion of the day but I say to the enemy –

- **WE WILL LIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD** –
- **WE WILL DEPEND ON A DEPENDABLE GOD!!!!**

Close:

What about you this morning?

What is the tempter **trying to convince you to do** in your own power **instead of depending on God?**

- **Young man** –

- Is the *tempter* telling you to trust in your strength and personal power to make it through life.
- (Your power is not dependable but God's power is...)
- Young lady –
- Is the *tempter* trying to convince you to surrender your life to the will of others who do not have your best interest in mind?
- (God will be dependable to take care of your future...)
- Mom's and Dad's –
- Is the *tempter* whispering in your ear, "Let your kids do what they want, after all, that's what other parents are doing. Raising your kids in church and expecting them to act right is so out dated"
- (God is dependable to help you stand for what is holy and right – God's word is dependable)

Speak **THE WORD OF GOD** out loud and claim this promise of **a dependable God!**

Hebrews 13:5 – 6 - ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

⁶So we say with confidence, "**The Lord is my helper**; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?"

Is the tempter trying to convince you today that **God is not** dependable?

- You may feel like you are in **a dry or forsaken place**.
- You may feel like **God is not at work** in your problems but
- I have come this morning **to remind you** –

YOU CAN DEPEND ON A DEPENDABLE GOD!!!!!!