

RECAP

This week's focus: Jesus resisted temptation to be our substitute.

Following His public baptism and the heavenly announcement that Jesus was the Son of God, the Spirit then led Jesus to a lonely wilderness. There He spent the next 40 days in one-on-one combat with Satan, the enemy of God. He confronted Satan's evil allurements and proved Himself obedient to the Father and triumphant over sin.

This was a triumphant victory that would set the stage for the rest of Jesus' ministry on earth. Fully God, yet fully man, Jesus withstood the test to fulfill His heavenly call. This victory over the tempting influence of Satan is what we all long for and desperately need.

What Adam and Eve were unable to do in the Garden of Eden, Jesus was able to achieve in the wilderness. Adam and Eve gave into the tempting lie that God was holding out on them. Jesus on the other hand resisted temptation and didn't believe the lie. He proved there is truly only ONE God, and He was His Son.

Yet even in this victory over the enemy, we must be careful not to skip directly to application and miss what's really going on in this part of the story. The failures and judgments from the Old Testament that made us long for this passage are also what give this story greater meaning. Jesus was not in the wilderness and without food by chance. He was intentionally in the same position as Israel after the Exodus when they were lost in the wilderness and hungry. Jesus, however, did not let His hunger lead to doubt in God, but trusted that the Father would sustain Him. It is no accident that Satan shows Jesus the land and tries to entice Him with power and avert His Worship from God.

Jesus stood with the same choice as the nation of Israel when they took the Promised Land then slowly turned away from God to the idols, but Jesus did not turn away from the Father. Jesus personally underwent and overcame the same temptations that had plagued God's people for generations. He proved He could be the King that held the law. He was showing us He could be the Judge that did not bow to foreign idols. By proving Himself in the face of temptation Jesus revealed that He could stand in the presence of God on our behalf.

This narrative was recorded so that we could understand who Jesus is and what He came to do. He was the sinless substitute taking our place before the Father on our behalf. This is an important key we must remember again and again as we grow in understanding the life of Jesus. He was sinless in our place. He stood before God in our place. He died in our place. He rose from the dead in our place. Jesus did more than give us an example of how to overcome temptation, He revealed that He was the only Hope to rescue mankind.

Matthew 4:1-11

SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: In your life, where have you experienced spiritual warfare or specific attacks from Satan?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. How many times does Jesus quote the Scripture in this passage? What passages from the Old Testament does he quote? How many times does Satan quote Scripture?
2. What is the difference between the ways Jesus uses the Scripture and the way Satan uses it? Read the quoted passages and spot the differences.
3. Describe Jesus' physical and mental state when this temptation occurred. Why is this important?
4. Why do you think Satan starts his attack with, "If you are the Son of God..." (His identity)?
5. What does this passage tell us about Jesus and what He came to do for mankind?
6. What does the temptation of Jesus reveal about the enemy's tactics at work in the world today?
7. Knowing God's Word is good. Submitting to God's Word is life changing. What does it look like for you to hide the Word of God in your heart and live in submission to it?
8. When should you resist the enemy and when should you run? Read James 4:7, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Timothy 6:10-11. What strategies do you use to resist temptation?
9. What has God declared about you? What does it mean to trust what He has declared over you?
10. In what way's do you see the enemy attacking your identity and undermining your confidence in God?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Share with one another the struggles and strategies you use to resist temptation and pray that God will provide a way out for you when temptation comes your way.