

LIFE BIBLE STUDY

SESSION OBJECTIVE: MATTHEW 4:1-25

To understand the humanity of Christ seen in His temptation, and to learn how the first two disciples were called to follow Jesus.

Taking Sides

Sundays are my favorite days for a variety of reasons. I love the church I am called to serve in. I love the time of worship, the teaching, the fellowship, and everything in between. My family has a habit of going to eat after church with people from church as well. The Lord's Day is always refreshing to me. After church, Sunday



continues with another activity I love: football. Of course, it isn't year-round, but during the football season, Sundays are that much more enjoyable. Being from Dallas, I'm a tortured Dallas Cowboys fan.

When you watch football, it is very clear which teams are which. Each team has a different uniform. If someone attends a football game without a uniform on, they're just a bystander. No one really pays any attention to them. But if they wear a full uniform, they might get tackled! Last week we talked about baptism, and in many ways, baptism is like putting on a uniform and declaring allegiance to a team. Prior to the baptism, you are more or less a bystander, but when you go under the waters of baptism you are declaring your faith and allegiance to Team Jesus, which means the other team takes notice of you.

“John the Baptist... is not the main event. But he does play a role in the main event.”

Matthew 4 begins with Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. It's a fitting segment following

His baptism. The line in the sand has been drawn. Of course for Jesus, it was already drawn. He is the Son of God. But it illustrates a common experience for Christians still today, and that is, when you put the Jesus uniform on, you put a target on your back.

40 Days and 40 Nights

Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit (v.1) and it says that he fasted for forty days and forty nights. Recall back to Session One, where we unpacked the two titles Matthew gives Jesus (“the Son of David, the Son of Abraham”). Being, “the Son of Abraham,” Jesus was a representative of all of Israel. Matthew 4 gives us a clear picture this. Just as Israel was led into the wilderness in Exodus for forty years, Jesus is led into the wilderness for forty days. Israel is led in a roundabout because of the repeated sin and rebellion against what God commanded them. An entire generation passed away prior to seeing the promised land as a result of their stubbornness. However, Jesus accomplishes what Israel does not. Jesus does not fall into sin.

The fasting for forty days also corresponds to Moses. In Exodus 34:28, we are told that Moses fasted for forty days prior to receiving the Ten Commandments. Moses is the, “law giver” of Israel, and Deuteronomy 34:10-12 tells us that, “there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.” Moses was a unique and one of a kind prophet for Israel. Yet, here in Matthew, we begin to see how Jesus is the greater Moses. Peter makes the connection as well in Acts 3:22-23. Moses was a, “law giver;” Jesus is THE law giver.

The Perfect Response

We are next brought to a series of temptations that Jesus experiences during His time in the wilderness. It’s important to note that Jesus was, “hungry” (v.2). This is an important detail to connecting the humanity of Jesus to our own humanity. We are tempted when we are at a point of weakness, and hunger is one of the primary weaknesses humanity faces. Our defenses lower, our inhibitions draw back, and we are far more likely to make decisions to do things that we would never dream of doing. Jesus was hungry, and that made the temptation all the more difficult.

It’s no surprise then, that the first thing Satan would tempt Jesus to do is turn the stones into bread (v.3). And it is here we are faced with the first retort of the Lord of Glory. How does He respond? With Scripture! Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Jesus is then brought to the pinnacle of the Temple in the holy city, and Satan tempts Jesus for a second time. Jesus once again responds with Scripture, this time with Deuteronomy 6:16: “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” The final temptation comes as the Son of God is brought to a high mountain overlooking the kingdoms of the world, and Satan here offers Jesus all of it if He will simply bow down and worship him (v.9). The use of, “all the kingdoms” along with, “their glory” stresses the earthly aspect of them. Satan could only offer earthly glory, not lasting glory. He has no authority beyond what has been given to him. Jesus responds with more Scripture in verse 10, this time from Deuteronomy 6:13: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him alone.”

A Light in Darkness

As has been very common throughout Matthew’s Gospel, we see yet another fulfillment of a prophetic passage from the Old Testament. As John is brought into custody, Jesus continues to proclaim the message of repentance and begins to travel from Nazareth into Capernaum, and this whole sequence of events fulfills

Isaiah 9:1-2. Capernaum is in region of Zebulun and Naphtali, in the northern part of Galilee, and by traveling there Jesus fulfill Isaiah 9:1. John's imprisonment represents the darkness spoken of in Isaiah 9:2, but Jesus is the dawning light.

A Significant Calling

Once Jesus arrives, He calls His first four disciples by the sea of Galilee. Simon, who we eventually come to know as the Apostle Peter, and his brother Andrew are both fishing when Jesus ironically tells them to, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (v.19). These were skilled fishermen. There is no hesitation in their response to Jesus, or at least the text doesn't indicate such. The two immediately follow Him.

Next, he calls two more brothers, this time James and John, "the sons of Zebedee" (v.21). This James mentioned is not the same James who wrote the Book of James. That is the half-brother of Jesus, and the leader of the New Testament church in Jerusalem (Acts 15). James' brother John on the other hand, is in fact the John who wrote not only the Gospel According to John, but 1, 2, and 3 John as well as Revelation. The early church often referred to him as, "John the Evangelist," "John of Patmos," and, "the Beloved Disciple." James eventually was killed as a martyr (Acts 12:2), while John was the last of the apostles to die. These two were affectionately referred to as, "the sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).

James, John, and Peter all three became a part of what is often called, "Jesus' inner-three." Jesus often taught the crowds, but on a more intimate level He taught the 12 disciples. He would teach in parables in the crowds, but then explain the parables to the 12 disciples. At the most intimate level, however, He taught the inner-three. They were there at the Transfiguration in Matthew 17, as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:37. The fact that Matthew lists the way they were called to follow Jesus illustrates their significance.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Matthew 4:1-11. Identify the three ways Jesus was tempted and list the verse reference next to it. How does Satan's temptation of Christ illustrate the way Satan tempts modern Christians?
2. Read Deuteronomy 6:13, 6:16, and 8:3. Compare those two the quotes in Matthew. How are they the same and how are they different?

Day Two

1. Read Matthew 4:12-17. Why do you suppose Matthew included this? There is both a practical and theological reason.
2. What is the significance of verse 17 (Hint: Read Matthew 3:2)?

Day Three

1. Read Matthew 4:18-22. Write down all of the names of the individuals listed here, and summarize in your own words what happened. Who all followed Jesus?
2. Imagine you are Simon (Peter). You are a skilled fisherman, and you fish to support yourself and your family. Imagine that you see Jesus and He tells you to follow Him. *Really* imagine this for a moment: the boat you are in, the smell of the sea, the surroundings, and as the events unfold, paint a picture in your

mind. Now, write a few sentences about how you feel when Jesus says to follow Him. What are you thinking? What are your worries? What are your objections?

Day Four

1. Read Matthew 4:23-25. What three things was Jesus doing in Galilee? What is the point of each of them? Why were there so many people wanting to come to Jesus?
2. Why was healing such a big emphasis here? Why is Jesus as a healer an important detail to Matthew's Gospel? What does it show about Jesus?

Week 6 Discussion: Scripture for Temptation

In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus is tempted three times by Satan, and in each temptation the Lord responds with Scripture. In order to do such a thing, He had to know the Scripture, and have it committed to memory. As Christians, we would do well to take note of Jesus' actions. Scripture is still the best way to fight the spiritual battle. After all, it is the, "double edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Discuss as a group the importance of memorizing and meditating on the Word of God.

1. Icebreaker: Do you have any verses of Scripture memorized currently? Be honest, there is no shame in saying no. An honest assessment is the first step to growth.
2. What are some of the reasons you don't memorize more Scripture? What would make you more successful at memorizing God's Word?
3. What do you think of when you hear the word, "meditate?" How does meditating on the Word of God benefit your life? Read Joshua 1:8. What are the benefits described here in meditating on God's Word?
4. Read Psalm 1:1-6 and Philippians 4:8. What are the negative effects of not walking according to the Word? What are the positive effects? How does meditating on God's Word practically keep us from sin?
5. Spiritual warfare is real, and Christians should be aware of the imminence of Satan's attacks on them at any moment. Think of a time when you have been under spiritual attack, and talk about how memorizing Scripture might have helped you in a time of temptation.
6. Jesus is tempted in three ways that we are still tempted: to be self-sufficient, to be self-preserving, and to be self-satisfying. The Scripture however, speaks against these actions, and Jesus quotes verses to counter the enemy. As Christians, we are to trust in the Lord for our provision (Exodus 16; Matthew 6:25-34), for our lives (Psalm 25:1-3; 1 Timothy 6:13), and for our contentment (Philippians 4:10-13). Which of these three areas do you do the best? Which of them do you struggle with? Share details.

Takeaways:

1. Jesus is tempted by Satan, and in His temptation He sets the standard for how we as Christians should respond: Scripture!
2. Special attention is drawn to the inner-three's call to follow Jesus, and to the fact that Jesus and John the Baptist proclaimed the same message: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

PRAYER REQUESTS: