

Sermon Outline

“The Temptation and Victory of Christ,” Matthew: The Life and Words of Jesus, Part 5 – Matthew 3:13-4:11 – Robin Boisvert – June 3, 2012

Introduction

1. The purpose of our study of the gospel of Matthew is to answer a question: who is Jesus? What we know about him comes mainly from these first century writings we call Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They represent the eyewitness accounts of the apostles, those men who walked with Jesus.
2. In Matthew 3:15, Jesus explains the necessity of his baptism to John, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness.” These two words—fulfill and righteousness—set the agenda for Jesus’ life. He fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament and he lived a perfectly righteous life. He never sinned.
3. If all that was necessary was for Jesus to die for our sins, he could have showed up on the scene on Good Friday, died to rise on Easter Sunday. But that would not have provided righteousness for us. Jesus’ life of perfect righteousness, culminating in his death on the cross was absolutely necessary for our salvation.
4. It is an essential part of his perfectly righteous life, which is on display in this section of Matthew.

Key Idea: Jesus overcomes the devil’s temptations on our behalf by passing the test that Israel failed.

Temptation Reveals Two Kingdoms in Conflict

1. Temptation has been a part of the fabric of human life since the fall (Genesis 3). Temptation promises great results but inevitably results in bitter consequences. We are like fish being bated by a worm strung on a hook.
2. The fact of temptation reveals that there are two kingdoms and they are in conflict – the kingdom of God and a rival kingdom, the kingdom of Satan (see Matthew 12:25-28). Temptation is an assault by demonic powers on the rival Kingdom of God.
3. Matthew says, “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.” These temptations by the devil were permitted by God. God is sovereign over all temptation. God is sovereign over the devil.
4. God never tempts anyone with evil (James 1:13). But he does allow temptation. He has a purpose in it. The devil also has a purpose in temptation. He tempts in order to steal, kill and destroy. But in the same event, the Father is testing so that the genuineness of faith can be shown.

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Jesus Demonstrates Faithful Allegiance to God

1. Jesus overcomes the devil's temptations on our behalf by passing the test that Israel failed.
2. Matthew tells us that Jesus was fasting for forty days in the wilderness (4:1-2). The number forty is significant because it signals to us that Jesus is reliving the history of Israel. He is declared God's beloved Son, he passes through water, and is tested for a period of forty days.
3. Both Israel and Adam failed the test. Both succumb to temptation. Jesus, however, passes where both Adam and Israel failed.
4. The first temptation: stones to bread. The nature of all the temptations—and this one in particular—is to try to get Jesus to use his status and his power to serve himself instead of God. Jesus, though, remains faithful to God by trusting in his Father's goodness even in the midst of temptation. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, demonstrating his trust in God's word that man, indeed, does not live by bread alone.
5. The second temptation: the Temple pinnacle. Satan tempts Jesus to put the Father to the test. The devil was suggesting Jesus act presumptuously: "Expect God to jump through some hoops for you. Do some tricks for you. Jump off the precipice. He'll catch you. You are the Son of God, are you not?" The Devil even quotes Psalm 91 as a proof-text. Jesus, however, stands firm on his Father's word and quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." This stands in stark contrast to the Israelites who demanded a sign from God— a sign greater than God was pleased to give.
6. The third temptation: the kingdoms of the world. Here, all subtlety is gone. This is a crass attempt to get Jesus to gain the kingdoms of the world and their glory by worshipping Satan. Instead of allegiance to God, allegiance to Satan. This temptation attempts to persuade Jesus to achieve power and glory by avoiding sacrifice, avoiding the cross. Jesus would have none of it.

He Does This for Us as the True Israel, God's Son

1. Jesus passed the test. For us! It is in him that we have victory over the devil. He did this for us. God the Son became a man for us.
2. His life was exemplary. It is an example for us so we can learn from him. And what do we learn?
 - a. Be radical in your allegiance to God.
 - b. Learn the word of God. Learn to use it as a sword. Lean on it for truth to live by. Jesus did not get into philosophical arguments with the devil. Neither should you. He has thousands of years of experience in dealing with human beings. Jesus met him with God's eternal, abiding, ever-proceeding Word.

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3. Realize Jesus has been tempted in all points like us, but that he is without sin. Therefore he is able to help us when we turn to him.
4. Hebrews 2.14-18 is a commentary and summation of Matthew 4.

Fellowship Starters

1. Robin explained, "If all that was necessary was for Jesus to die for our sins, he could have showed up on the scene on Good Friday, died to rise on Easter Sunday. But that would not have provided righteousness for us. Jesus' life of perfect righteousness, culminating in his death on the cross was absolutely necessary for our salvation." Have you considered the significance of the life of Christ for our salvation?
2. The Scripture tells us that all are under sin (Romans 3:9). Adam, the head of humanity, failed. Israel failed. Each one of us has failed before God. Christ, however, our representative, the God-man, has not! He was made like us in every way, except without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He now lives before the Father as our advocate (1 John 2:1). Believer, do you find rest in the fact that Jesus Christ, the one who perfectly obeyed even in the face of the most powerful temptations, pleads for you before the throne of God?
3. Temptation is like a worm on a hook: it promises life but inevitably results in bitter consequences. What worm draws you in? Can you see the hook that goes with it?
4. The devil tempted Jesus to doubt his Father's love and care. Are there any circumstances in your life that tempt you to doubt God's goodness toward you?
5. Jesus is our savior—he lived the life none of us could live, and he lived it for us. He is also our example. He stood up to the temptations of the devil by quoting Scripture. He understood his place in the story of redemption. How are you seeking to immerse your mind in the Scriptures like your Lord?