

FACING THE ENEMY

Series: Invisible War **Matthew 4:1-11** Bill Turner

Jesus Faced the Enemy So that We Can Face the Enemy in the Strength of the Lord

1. While working on this sermon I decided to get a coffee
 - a. Young woman working on laptop w/ sticker: Feminism, Satanism, cats, coffee
2. Looking at this sad woman I thought: **selling your soul to Satan doesn't get you much these days...** She was in pretty pathetic shape, I would think if someone was going to sell their soul to Satan they would maybe get more, but no.
3. **She happened to be sitting next to a young man who had done too many drugs**
 - a. He was chewing on his lips & mumbling under his breath and she moved to different table!
 - b. His nervous tension made her seek a safer spot—but she doesn't know her real enemy!

I. FACING THE ENEMY

A. NOTICE THE TIMING: Jesus Had Just Been Baptized in the Jordan River

1. And Notice the Contrast...

- a) From the cool waters of the Jordan – To a barren wilderness...
- b) From Being Anointed to Being Attacked...
- c) From the crowds – To Isolation
- d) From the Spirit descending on Him – To the Spirit leading Him into the Wilderness

2. This is Just Before Jesus Begins His Ministry...

- a) A Time of Preparation for the Ministry Jesus That Will Change the World!

But How Will Jesus Carry Out this Work?

- (1) The People Will Want to See Signs... —or else some won't believe...
- (2) The People Will Want to Make Jesus a King... —or else some won't follow
- (3) The People will Want to be Physically Fed... —or else they won't be interested

3. Just after His Baptism, and in preparation for His World Changing Ministry

Jesus is led by the Spirit in the Wilderness

- a) Forty Days of Fasting in the Wilderness—
- b) His impending ministry and sacrifice on His mind...
- c) The Enemy Approaches...

B. NOTICE THE SETTING: Not Far From Jerusalem is a Barren Wilderness

1. The Wilderness of Judea Between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea... (4:1–2)

a) A Bible Scholar and Traveler described this Wilderness as...

“an area of yellow sand, of crumbling limestone and... contorted strata, where the ridges run in all directions as if they were warped and twisted. The hills are like dust-heaps; the limestone is blistered and peeling; rocks are bare and jagged. It glows and shimmers with heat like some vast furnace. It runs right out to the Dead Sea, and then there comes a drop of 1,200 feet, of limestone (and) flint through crags and precipices down to the Dead Sea.” (George Adam Smith)

b) Isolation From the World is no insulation from Temptations...

Even in Solitude the Invisible War is still waging

C. NOTICE POINT OF ATTACK: After Fasting 40 days Alone in Wilderness

1. What Was Jesus Doing during this 40 day period in the Wilderness?

- a) Probably Praying, Planning, Preparing for the incredible Mission He was to begin
- b) Probably Wrestling with the Problems He Would Face...
- c) Knowing the Feelings and False Expectations of Israel
- d) Knowing That a Spiritual Kingdom—and Its King Would Suffer and Be Rejected

2. —> This is the Point of Attack When Satan Tempts Jesus

D. NOTICE THE ENEMY: Our Adversary the Devil

1. The Spiritual Enemy who rebelled against God and took some angels with him

2. Jesus called satan: ‘a liar... and the father of lies’ ‘the prince of this world’ satan is: ‘the accuser of the brethren’ ‘who accuses day and night’

- a) “Satan is called the Prince of this world, because self-interest rules the world; he is called the accuser of the brethren, because he does not believe that even the sons of God have any higher motive. He is a sceptic; and his skepticism consists in determined, scornful unbelief in the reality of any chief end other than that of personal advantage. "Doth Job, or even Jesus, serve God for nothing?" – A.B. Bruce

E. NOTICE THE TEMPTATIONS

1. THE 1st TEMPTATION (Mt 4:3–4) —An Appeal to LUST OF FLESH

a) THE TEMPTATION: To prove His deity by using His power for personal reasons

- (1) Hunger is the First and Last appetite of the Body
 - (a) And is a Legitimate Need! Many Temptations Fulfill a Genuine Need...
 - (b) Didn't Jesus Feed 5,000 People Miraculously? Was that Wrong?
- (2) The Question is Not Should a Legitimate Need be Met but How?
 - (a) Implication: You're the Son of God - You Don't Need to Rely on the Father
 - (b) The Temptation is To Not Submit to God but Submit to Self
 - (c) To Use His Power for SELF–GRATIFICATION Rather than TRUSTING God

b) THE RESPONSE: Jesus answers the LIES with TRUTH (4:4)

- (1) Jesus Quotes (**Deut 8:3**) Showing He Will Not Make the Same Mistake Israel Did in the Wilderness.
- (2) If anyone does not feed upon God's Word, that one will not live.

c) THE LESSON: God will Provide For Our Physical Needs... but...

Our Spiritual Health is More Important Than Our Physical Health!

2. THE 2nd TEMPTATION (Mt 4:5–7) —An Appeal to VAIN PRIDE of LIFE

a) THE TEMPTATION: To prove His deity by a spectacular display of Power

- (1) If You're the Son of God—Show Your Power to Everyone... with Signs & Wonders
- (2) No one Impresses the People with Humble Trust and Obedience!
- (3) Make an Artificially Created Crisis and force God into a supernatural event to Show Everyone Who You Are!
- (4) The pinnacle of the temple arose some 200 ft from the floor of the Kidron Valley. A leap from there, with angelic protection, would be a remarkable spectacle.

“This was the very method that the false Messiahs who were continually arising promised... These pretenders had offered sensations which they could not perform. Jesus could perform anything he promised. Why should he not do it?” (Barclay)

b) THE RESPONSE: Jesus answers the LIES with TRUTH (4:7)

–This Would Be Setting Conditions On God...

I'll Do What You Want God, IF You Prove Yourself to Me First

–People Do This Even Today... I'll Be Obedient IF You Give Me What I Want

–I'll Go to Heaven - As Long as I Don't Have to Do Anything Difficult

c) THE LESSON: Will We TEST God by Following Our Plan—

or TRUST God and Follow His Plan?

—Are we Impressing People—or Pleasing God?

3. THE 3rd TEMPTATION (Mt 4:8–10) An Appeal to the LUST OF THE EYES

a) TEMPTATION: To Win the World by Compromise—a Crown without the Cross

- 1) Don't You Care About All These People? Don't You Want to Save Them?
- 2) I'll Give You a Crown Without a Cross—to Rule All the Kingdoms of the World
- 3) with One String Attached... IF You Fall Down and Worship Me
- 4) This Final Temptation Reveals What Satan Wants: POWER

b) THE RESPONSE: Jesus answers the LIES with TRUTH (4:10)

c) THE LESSON: No one can serve two masters

- (1) You Can't Serve God and Serve Idols in your Heart
- (2) You Can't Gain the World and Gain Heaven as well

Satan Wants to Give You a Short-Cut: A Crown Without a Cross

You don't need to carry a Cross, Just worship me and I'll give you Heaven on earth

F. NOTICE THE HELP AFTER THE TEMPTATIONS (4:11)

1. Satan Offers Lies and Deception...
2. But God Provides! God Comforts, God Strengthens, God Cares!
3. Jesus Overcame the Lies by Trusting in the Truth! — God's Word!

II. FACING THE ENEMY IN THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD

A. WE FACE THE SAME BATTLE: The Battle of Temptation

1. Temptation is anything that throws our character into a crisis of choice...

—a Conflict of Loyalties

- a) Everyone Faces Temptation—Even Jesus Had to Face Temptation
- b) There is a Battle for Your Mind and Your Soul—A Spiritual Battle

2. Temptations Fall into 3 Strategies—but 1 Aim...

- a) To Cause You to Choose Your Will Against God's Will (**1 John 2:15–17**)

3. The devil knows just where to tempt a person.

- (1) **In the wilderness**: when a person is without bread, when he really has need.
This is the temptation that appeals to the lust of the flesh.
- (2) **On the pinnacle**: when a person is before multitudes.
This is the temptation that appeals to pride—the pride of life (fame).
- (3) **On a high mountain**: when a person sees what is available to them, sometimes rightfully his, sometimes just desired. This appeals to the lust of the eyes.

B. WE HAVE THE SAME CHOICE: To Fall for a Lie—or Trust in the Truth

1. Temptation is Multi-Faceted—Hitting us from different angles...

But All Temptation is Based on Lies

- a) Satan Promises Freedom—but it turns to Slavery
- b) He Promises Happiness — it turns to Sorrow
- c) He Promises you'll feel good about yourself—it turns to Despair
- d) He Promises Sin will Taste Sweet—When in reality it's licking the dust of the earth
just like he does

(Prov 20:17) Bread gained by deceit *is* sweet to a man,
But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

2. SATAN IS A LIAR AND HE IS THE FATHER OF LIES...

“How many have stood upon those Bethel heights...

Age after age has poured forth its crowds of young hearts,
to stand upon an exceeding high mountain,
while all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; are spread before them.
The Tempter Whispering—Just one small act, Just One Switch of Loyalty
to Serving Satan rather than God — All This Will Be Yours...
And in Self-Confidence; Eager to do the Very Best for Themselves...
Prepared to Pay the Price for Success—Looked towards the plains of Sodom from afar.
And, like Lot, they Tried to Make Stones into Bread;
They cast themselves down from the mountain side, for angels to catch;
they knelt before the tempter, Only to find his promise broken,
the Vision of Power an Illusion—While the Tempter Laughs & Disappears,
Leaving you Standing Alone in the Midst of a Desolate Wilderness.” (Adapted F.B. Meyer)

***Jesus said, “what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt 16:26)***

C. WE CAN HAVE THE SAME VICTORY

1. Jesus Chose the Truth Instead of the Lie—That is How We Have Victory —You can use this Framework to examine every temptation...

- a) **THE LIE:** Every temptation has a lie—you have to find it...
 - (1) Lies that promise the world but steal your soul
 - (2) When I see Those who sold their soul to satan...
—I don't see satan doing much for them! They look pretty sad to me!
- b) **THE LONGING:** Behind every temptation is a legitimate longing...
 - (1) The Longing to Be Loved, Fulfilled, Happy, Content, Hope, Meaning, Purpose
- c) **THE LIGHT:** God provides for all that we need. (Psalm 37:4-5)
 - (1) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights!

2. God is Faithful—He has promised that He will not allow us to be tempted more than we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:12–13)

D. WE CAN HAVE THE SAME BLESSINGS WHEN WE OVERCOME

- 1. Each Temptation was a Lie to GRATIFY SELF—Rather than TRUST God
But Notice How God Provides All We Need and More!**
 - a) 1st: (4:11) After the Temptations, Angels Ministered to Him
—He didn't need to turn Stones into Bread! God Provided!
 - b) 2nd: After Jesus went to the Cross, God Raised Him from the Dead!
and Now He is Alive Forevermore Crowned as King!
—He didn't Need to Impress the People, God Provided!
 - c) 3rd: **(Rev. 11:15)** Jesus is Crowned King & Now All Kingdoms of the Earth Are His!
—He Didn't Need to Trade the Cross for a fake Crown, God Provided!

- 2. And When We Live By Truth and TRUST and OBEY God—we also will be
lifted up and given an eternal life in glory**

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (JAMES 4:7)

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Jesus Helps us when we're tempted because He himself was tempted
(Hebrews 2:18)**
- 2. Jesus Shows Us How to overcome Lies with Truth!**
- 3. We See How Jesus is a Perfect High Priest Who Sympathizes with Us
(Hebrews 4:15–16)**
- 4. Because of What Jesus Did For Us at the Cross—**
 - a) We Can Go Boldly Before the Throne and ask for grace and mercy
 - b) to help us in time of need

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