

Gunston Bible Church

Pastor David Bennett

Key Verse Matthew 4:1-11

How did Jesus deal with Temptation?

Good morning Gunston, this morning we are deal with the topic of What Would Jesus Do.

I know that's a broad area therefore, today we are specifically dealing with the topic of Temptation.

Temptation is something we all have to learn to contend with, and hopefully this morning you will learn, by looking at how Jesus dealt with it, how we too can be victorious when it arrives at our doorstep!

I will tell you that in my experience, that Temptation needs to be dealt with **SWIFTLY**, not allowing it to linger in your life or take root.

When you face temptation, deal with it immediately! *"It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it"* Benjamin Franklin

Temptation like bad news does not get better with time, in fact usually gets worse.

Illustration of a family photo inside my **campaign cover**, to remind me not to do something stupid but stay the course...

Do not allow temptation to **linger** in your life... when you do your chances of fleeing that temptation decrease greatly.

There was a story in the Denver Post that I ran across while doing research for this sermon that I thought was applicable.

"Like many sheep ranchers in the West, Lexi Fowler has tried just about everything to stop crafty coyotes from killing her sheep.

She has used odor sprays, electric fences, and 'scare-coyotes.' She has slept with her lambs during the summer and has placed battery-operated radios near

them. She has corralled them at night, herded them at day. But the southern Montana rancher has lost scores of lambs--fifty last year alone.

"Then she discovered the Llama, the ever aggressive, funny-looking, afraid-of-nothing Llama...'

She said, "Llamas don't appear to be afraid of anything,' 'When they see something, they put their head up and walk straight toward it.

That is aggressive behavior as far as the coyote is concerned, and they won't have anything to do with that!

Coyotes are opportunists, and Llamas take that opportunity away.'" These Llamas illustrate what James spoke of in James...

James 4:7 (ESV) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The moment we sense Satan's attack through temptation, is the moment we should face it and deal with it for what it is.

Another interesting thing I learned in my early years in the Marine Corps, while I was in the infantry, was the mission of the Marine Corps Rifle Squad, which is, "To Locate Close with and Destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver, or repel the enemy's assault by fire and close combat."

We were taught and practiced countless times that the best thing to do when you find yourself in an ambush is to rush toward it, **fight through it**, and do not allow the enemy to pin you down into an area where they have **tactical superiority**.

When in an ambush you should do the one thing the enemy never anticipated, **rush him, and take the fight to him**.

That's how the Marines earned the famous title "**Devil Dogs**".

It was during the Battle of Belleua Wood in 1918 when the Maries faced the Germans and fought with such ferocity that they earned the name "Devil Dogs" as they fought like the "**Teufel Hunden**" legendary Hounds from Hell.

Ok let me get back on topic, before I digress too much into Marine Corps History...

Getting back to temptations it has been rightly stated that “When you flee temptation, be sure you don't leave a **forwarding address.**”

I like the way Jim (big Jim, not Slim Jim) explained it in **Home Group**, he said at times we bring things to the altar and give them to God, like our **hurts, hang-ups, and habits**. The problem is we have a **ten foot rope** tied around them so when we leave, we wind up dragging them back home with us...

As stated this morning we will be digging into What Would Jesus do when dealing with Temptations, however before we do let's start off by stating up front some of the tactics the enemy **WILL** use against you, me, us...

Satan wants you to **focus on yourself**

- ✓ Satan will tempt you to doubt your **Relationship** with God
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to doubt God's **Word**
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to doubt God's **Love**
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to doubts God's **Provisions**

Satan wants you to **Focus on others**

- ✓ Satan will tempt you to demonstrate God's **faithfulness**
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to believe what **others think** is most important
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to **forsake** God's plan
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to focus on **happiness** not holiness
- ✓ Satan will tempt you to seek the road of **least resistance**

In short Satan will tempt you in three major areas

- ✓ **Self-Satisfaction**
- ✓ **Self-Accomplishment**
- ✓ **Self-Glorification**

We read that our Savior was tempted, the writer of Hebrews stated in **Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)**, **“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”**

This shows us that there is hope for us when we face temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV), “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

So take courage and see that there is a way of escape from temptation. How do you resist temptation? By simply following Jesus’ **example**

As the **Union Pacific Railroad** was being constructed, an elaborate trestle bridge was built across a canyon in the West.

Wanting to test the bridge, the builder loaded the train with enough cars and equipment to double its normal payload.

The train was then driven to the center of the bridge, where it stayed an entire day. One worker asked the question, “Are you trying to break the Bridge?”

The builder responded, “No, I’m trying to prove that it won’t break!”

In the same way, the temptations Jesus faced weren’t designed by God to see if Christ would sin, but in fact to show that he wouldn’t!

In **Matthew 4:1-11**, is one of the most monumental spiritual battles of all time, where the personal confrontation is recorded between Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and Satan.

The purpose of Matthew’s recounting this event is to demonstrate the

- ✓ Pattern of **Jesus’ victory** over temptation and sin, a
- ✓ **Pattern** that we can apply when faced with our own temptations.

Jesus **exposed** Satan and his tactics, and in doing so showed us the perfect example to do the same. Because of his victory over sin we too can be victorious in him and his power!

The Devil's main purpose was to overthrow the Messiah at the onset, he knew that he had come into the world to bring Salvation, and he knew if he could get Jesus to sin, that would ruin the whole plan of Salvation.

1. The first temptation was (Physical)

It was dealing with the Lust of the Flesh, specifically the (Bread of Life) when Satan tried to get Jesus to turn the stones into bread.

Again it needs to be mentioned that Jesus had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. As a result of His fasting, HE was physically hungry.

Hunger not only makes us physically weak but also tends to weaken our moral and our spiritual resistance.

When we are tired, hungry, sick, hurting, we are usually less concerned about others needs and dangers and tend to be more vulnerable to ANYTHING that might provide relief from the present distress.

Satan attacks more fiercely during our times of

- ✓ Weakness,
- ✓ Unawareness,
- ✓ Unpreparedness.

Temptations that have been anticipated, are typically guarded against, and are prayed over which drastically enhances our chances of survival.

Jesus tells us in **Mark 14:38 (ESV)**, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

So at the end of Jesus' 40 days of fasting, when he would have been a very tired, hungry person, the Devil came after him.

He does the same with us today!

He waits until you're tired and weary or discouraged, then he pulls out the big guns.

He waits until you have had a long terrible day at work, you're tired and weary and the moment you walk in the door he hits you with _____!

You can fill in the blanks with your own personal story, but you see he knows how to hit us with it at our worst time, **his tactical advantage!**

The first temptation was **Self-Satisfaction**, or to satisfy your needs or desires. The tempter came and said to him, “**If you are the Son of God**, command these stones to become bread.

Notice the “**If you are**” which is his subtle challenge to prove himself the Son of God.

Satan wanted to twist the divine mission of the Son of God; he wanted him to use his supernatural powers to satisfy his **physical needs**.

- ✓ It was a temptation to **act independently** from God
- ✓ to act **supernaturally** to meet his needs
- ✓ Instead of **waiting** on God to meet them.

Satan tried to **raise doubts** in Jesus’ mind, he wanted him to reason, I have not eaten in 40 days, Is God going to feed me, can I trust him?

Why should I wait for him to satisfy my need when I could do it myself?

Satan very often uses a **legitimate need** however, temps us by seeking to fulfill it in an **illegitimate way**.

Satan tried to destroy the Son’s confidence in his Father; he is always trying to get people to doubt the love and care of God.

Satan tempted him to produce **instant food**, remember Jesus had the power to do this, later he would turn water into wine and multiple a few loaves of bread and fishes to feed thousands.

So, the bait is **skillfully** wound over the **barbed hook**, how will Jesus respond?

Christ’s response is found in **Matthew 4:4 (ESV)**, “**But he answered, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’**

This was quoted from - **Deuteronomy 8:3**

Jesus answered Satan by proclaiming that the **Word of God** is Sufficient to sustain and to support us in the most desperate hour of need or temptation.

We must **feed** upon the Word of God if we are going to sustain our spiritual life.

Psalm 119:11 (ESV), “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

John 6:35 (ESV), “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

Matthew 5:6 (ESV), “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

God said that if we follow him completely; he will take care of our physical needs.

As the Son was obeying the father by being in the wilderness, he knows that Father will supply his needs.

So Christ **waited** for the Father to provide the provisions needed, Christ had won round one!

2. The second temptation was (Mental)

It was dealing with the Lust of the Eye (**Jump from Pinnacle**)

Satan’s next strategy is to try and get Jesus to focus the attention on himself, instead of on God.

This may have been an attempt by Satan from the first temptation where he said something like, “**So you trust your Father**, so let’s see how much you trust him.

- ✓ If you will not work a miracle for yourself,
- ✓ Then let God work one for you.

He wants Jesus to rationalize and compromise and attempt to complete God’s purpose in the wrong way or in the wrong time.

We can see in **Matthew 4:5-6 (ESV)**, *“**5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, and On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”**”*

You can see once again how Satan takes a beautiful verse about trusting God, and **twists it** into an invitation to test God!

Basically he say...

- ✓ Come on Jesus by not turning the stones into bread you are trusting God,
- ✓ So publically demonstrate that trust by jumping and letting all the people see that you place your complete trust and protection in God!

You see Satan takes a portion of the verse about God’s protection, **“To guard you in all ways”** (Psalms 91:11-12) and twists it to say and mean something God never intended.

Jesus could have made a huge spectacle of Angels bearing him up in the site of everyone at the temple, however that was not God will for his life.

It was God’s will that he take the nature of a servant, not that of a charismatic celebrity.

Matthew 6:33 (ESV), “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

The second temptation was all about the Plan that God has for you, and his purpose for your life.

When we follow his word and his plan for our life, things typically turn out better, it is in times when we take matters into our own hand that we run into trouble, when we try to help God out, and speed things along for him. That is typically when we cause a lot of hurt and pain in not only our lives but those around us as well.

We could look at examples like Abraham told to trust and wait for the promised son, and you know the rest of the story where they (both him and his wife) decided that it was best for them to help God out by the use of the maidservant and give him a son (Ishmael).

This seems like a perfect plan at the time however we are still feeling the effects of that decision today!

When Jesus was confronted with Temptations **he quoted scripture**. It was not his ability to quote scripture that gave him victory over the enemy.

He quoted scripture to let Satan know, that he was **committed to God!**
Jesus was **committed to obeying the Word of God!**

What good does it do for you to be able to quote the whole Bible, but still live a defeated life because you do not follow it!

The **power** is in the **application!**

It is our commitment to obey the Word of God that gives us victory over temptation and sin.

Saints please listen to me; you cannot go around **compromising** the Word of God and expect to walk in victory over temptation.

Jesus' Response To the 2nd Temptation - When Satan tried to get Jesus to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple

v7 - This was quoted from the below verse in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 6:16 ***“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”***

Round two is over, Jesus had another victory over Satan and his temptations. Now Satan is **desperate**, the mask is off its all or nothing; he had failed miserably in the first two attempts to conquer his enemy, so he holds nothing back in a final attempt to lure Christ into sin.

3. The Third temptation was (**Spiritual**)

It was dealing with the Pride of Life (**Kingdom**)

Satan after failing the first two attempts came blatantly at Jesus in **Matthew 4:8-9 (ESV)**, ***⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”***

From this vantage point Satan shows Jesus all the glorious kingdoms of the world.

Remember all the kingdoms of the world would eventually be Jesus' but this way would forgo the cruel crucifixion on the cross.

Jesus is faced with the age old temptation that, the **end justifies the means**.

- ✓ The way of obedience is long hard and extremely difficult to endure,
- ✓ Why not make a deal with the prince of this world and cut through the chase,
- ✓ Why not compromise to obtain the desired end immediately?

Microwave mentality. We want it and want it **right now...**

Satan tempts each of us in the same way.

- ✓ Why are your standards so high?
- ✓ What's the use?
- ✓ You can get what you want by cutting this corner,
- ✓ Or by simply omitting this truth, (little white lie).

Why wait for our heavenly reward, when you can have what you want right **NOW!**

- ✓ Satan appealed to **personal ambition**, how appealing would it be to rule the world?
- ✓ He appealed to **instant gratification**;
- ✓ He knew that the Son had been **promised the kingdom**.

Jesus would only receive his kingdom after suffering on the cross, and giving his very **last drop of blood** for a people that spit on him.

If Christ has fallen for Satan's tricks to self-satisfy or take the shortcuts how mocked would he be at the cross?

You could hear them say, He saved himself, and yet others he cannot save! Instead of redeeming the world, he would have become part of the world!

Jesus' Response to the 3rd Temptation, **Matthew 4:10 (ESV)**, ***"Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."***

This was quoted from - Deuteronomy 6:13

there can be **NO COMPROMISE** with the Devil!

Satan uses the same kind of technique today; he is always offering instant gratification, promising what God has already promised us, however not on God's time but his.

The reason this story is recorded for us in the Bible is because the same way Satan attacked Jesus is the same way he attacks us.

The way that Jesus responded to his attacks is the same way we should respond!

The Bible is the **only Authority** for right living!

1 John 4:4 (ESV), “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

2 Peter 2:9 (ESV), “Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment.”

Saints remember every time Jesus responded to the temptation, He did so by using scripture!

The same is true for us today! If we are going to overcome temptation we must study the Word of God!

- ✓ This requires **Reading** the Word
- ✓ This requires **Understanding** the Word
- ✓ This requires **Using** the Word against Satan!
- ✓ This requires **Applying** the Word of God in our lives!

Satan knows the Word and **will twist it** and turn it to fit his agenda. The only way to know how to recognize this is to stay in the Word!

The Word is of the **utmost importance** when combating temptation.

Another way to resist temptation is to **guard yourself**.

On the TV show "Hee Haw," Doc Campbell is confronted by a patient who says he broke his arm in two places. The doc replies, "Well then, **stay out of them places!**"

You cannot continuously put yourself in places where you will be tempted and not be affected. What situations are you in when you fall?

Avoid them!

1 Peter 5:8-9 (ESV), ⁸“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”

Satan has a strategy concerning your life. He wants to **trap you** and **destroy** you, and your **family as well!**

Satan attacked Jesus the same way he will attack you,

- ✓ physically,
- ✓ then mentally,
- ✓ And finally spiritually.

A woman was laying on a float in the Gulf of Mexico. She was enjoying the comfort of relaxing on an inflated cushion that kept her afloat. When she realized that she had been swept about a half mile out from the beach, she began to scream, but no one heard her. A coast guard craft found her five miles from the place where she first entered the water.

She did not see her danger until she was **beyond** her own strength and ability. The same will happen to us if we do not take temptation **seriously**.

- ✓ Sin will take you **farther** than you want to go
- ✓ Sin will keep you **longer** than you want to stay
- ✓ Sin will **cost you** far more than you want to pay

Sin begins with temptation. **So guard yourself**

James 1:14-16 (ESV), 14 “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.”

The Strategy of The Enemy, **1 John 2:16** says...

1 John 2:16 (ESV), “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life is not from the Father but is from the world.”

When a hawk is attacked by crows, he does not make a counter attack, but soars higher and higher in ever widening circles until his tormentors leave him alone.

Against the flesh the weapon is **FLIGHT!**

Against the Devil the weapon is **FIGHT!**

Carry your sword not just on Sunday, to church, but in your **heart!**

No wonder Satan tries to de-emphasize the Word of God in our church and in our Home and in our lives!

What Would Jesus do when confronted with temptation?

He would talk about what the **Bible** said about it, and then **act accordingly!**
Jesus would do what God wanted, not what anyone dared him to do!

Jesus would do the right thing even if it was not the easiest thing!

Let us Pray...