

LEARNING FROM JESUS' TEMPTATIONS

Matthew 4:1-11

Introduction: "The devil made me do it.." is often heard from someone who did something wrong. All of us can identify with being tempted to do something we shouldn't and sometimes we yield to that temptation. Some temptations are not a problem, but some of them really test us for IF we yielded to the temptation, we think we'd really be better off, have more fun, or do something we've never done before and seldom do we consider the side effects or even the end result IF we yielded.

Jesus also faced temptation and the first time that we know about was when He was going to get started doing what He came to do, redeem mankind. How did Jesus handle being tempted?

I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION (4:3-4)

"And the tempter came and said to Him, 'if You are the Son of God, command these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

1. Satan always tries to get us to believe that God's Word is not always true.
 - Satan was implying that a good God would not deprive one of His creatures. Doing without food cannot be God's will according to the implication Satan was making.
 - Men only serve God and submit to His will because God bribes them with material things.
2. What could have happened but didn't.
 - Jesus would never have gone to the cross if His personal please came before God's will.
 - Jesus would never have preached the gospel as He did but would have majored on healing, feeding and doing things to gain public approval and recognition.
 - Jesus could never have spoken about discipleship and self-denial.
3. Thoughts about Jesus first temptation:
 - Jesus' physical hunger was what God willed at the time for Jesus was "led" up.
 - Doing "without" while in the will of God tests and strengthens one's faith. (*Deut. 8:2-3*)
 - The quality of a person is not found in the assertion of his/her rights, but in his/her submission to God.

II. THE SECOND TEMPTATION (4:5-7)

"Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he stood Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You; and in their hands they will bear you up, lest You strike Your feet against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord, your God.'"

1. Satan wanted Jesus to show off.
 - Everyone expected the promised Messiah to come in some sort of blaze and glory. If Jesus did this, it would show them that He was a great person.

2. Jesus could prove who He really was.
 - God's faithfulness and power is best demonstrated by doing something spectacular was what Satan was trying to get Jesus to believe.
3. What could have happened, but didn't.
 - If Jesus had done as Satan wanted, He would have immediately been hailed as the promised Messiah, but it was not the right time.
 - The Kingdom of God would have been established on the wrong basis, on "might" not on what God had in mind.
 - The spiritual foundations of the Kingdom of God would have been replaced by the spectacular, not on the Spiritual.
4. Things to remember when we being tempted.
 - Use scripture to interpret scripture. Don't pull a verse out of context to try to prove anything.
 - Divine protection does not encourage presumption. *"You shall not tempt the Lord your God."*
 - It is not faith, but failure when we demand that God prove Himself in the spectacular.
 - Faith healers' techniques; Church antics to get people's attention.
 - Jesus came to establish His Church, not a circus!

III. THE THIRD TEMPTATION (4:8-10)

"Again, the devil took Him to a high mountain, and showed Him and all the Kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if you fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

1. Satan's real intent.
 - Satan rebelled against God for the same reason he approached Jesus, to worship him, not God.
2. Satan proposes an exchange.
 - Trade your kingdom for mine, the future for the present, by bowing your knee to me said Satan.
 - If Jesus would do this, it would be the highest honor and would be worth any price for Satan.
3. What could have happened.
 - If Jesus had accepted Satan's offer, it would have been rebelling against Himself and God.
 - There would have been no Kingdom of God nor Salvation for mankind.
4. Things to remember about Satan's temptations.
 - Every Christian has the same offer from Satan, many times over, and that almost constantly.
 - Compare what Satan offers you to what God offers you.
 - Think about it! Are you going to try to get God to do what YOU want or are you going to do what GOD wants?
 - God alone is to be worshiped and to worship means to bow the knee in service.

CONCLUSION:

1. Expect to be tempted!
2. Temptation comes often after times of triumph or commitment to God for something.
3. Satan's temptations are allowed by God and tests us. We will never be tempted beyond our ability to resist or to stand.
4. Temptation often comes in the area of applying God's Word.
5. Temptation often invites us to sin by doing something that appears right, even biblical.
6. Temptation often arises concerning the will of God. Feelings, desires, or even logic are not to be used in determining God's will, only the principles of God's Word are to be used.
7. Temptation is best resisted by the Word of God, using it in context and in light of other verses.
8. Submission to God does not imply inferiority, but willful obedience.
9. Satan is always trying to overthrow God's chain of command by tempting people to throw off God's ways and follow their own ways or Satan's ways.
10. Temptation is a part of God's program in the lives of His Children (Christians) for their growth and for His glory.