

Matthew 4:1-7. the Temptation of Christ.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon explores the temptations of Christ, emphasizing the importance of reliance on God's word and vigilance against spiritual deception.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:16, Deuteronomy 8:3, Psalm 91:11, Mark 1:13, 1 Corinthians 10:12, Hebrews 2:18

Topics: "Temptation Of Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delves into the account of Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil after His baptism, highlighting how God often prepares His people for great sufferings by granting them great consolations beforehand. Jesus faced terrible temptations from Satan in the wilderness, showing how the enemy tries to draw away those who have escaped his chains. By examining how Jesus overcame each temptation with the Word of God, we learn valuable lessons on trusting in God's provision, avoiding presumption, and not testing the Lord.

Transcript

We have read of the great honor that Christ received at his baptism. Immediately afterwards, he was exposed to terrible sufferings and temptations. It is God's method often to prepare his people for great sufferings, by granting them great consolations beforehand. Jesus was "led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." He fasted forty days and forty nights. He was alone amid the wild beasts of the desert; as it is written in Mark 1:13, "he was with the wild beasts." This wilderness was probably the same as that through which Moses led the Israelites. We are told in Deut. 8:15, what kind of a place it was; a place "wherein were fiery serpents, scorpions, and drought, where there was no water." The prophet Jeremiah calls "it a land of deserts and pits; of the shadow of death, that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt," (2:6.) But what was more terrible than all, when Jesus was there, Satan came to assail him with temptations. He had just heard the Father's voice; he had just been anointed by the Holy Spirit! Behold him now in this horrible place, with his more horrible enemy, Satan.

Now observe, that it is said that he was led up by the Spirit. It was his Father's will that he should meet Satan as an enemy in battle. He had come into the world to destroy his works, and to bruise this serpent's head, according to God's threatening to Satan in paradise. "The seed of the woman shall bruise your head." Satan probably hoped to overcome Jesus, as he had overcome Adam and Eve; but though he could not overcome him, he did give him pain; for it is written, concerning Christ, "He suffered being tempted," (Heb. 2:18.) It will be very interesting for us to consider his temptations, especially as Satan still

offers the same temptations to Christ's people that he once offered to Christ himself. These temptations will show us how he tries to draw away those who have escaped from his chains.

The world in general are led captive by him according to his will; he finds it easy to keep them in his power; but O! what pains he takes to regain his sway over those who have left his service!

Let us consider the first temptation that he offered to our Savior. He said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Observe the time at which he made the proposal; when Jesus was hungry. Why did Jesus refuse to turn the stones into bread? Because his Father had engaged to provide him with bread; therefore he needed not to use his divine power in supplying his own needs.

Satan often attacks the people of God in times of deep affliction. When they are severely diseased, or when their children are dying, or when they know not how to provide themselves with food, or when they are disappointed or unkindly treated; then the malicious fiend insinuates hard thoughts of God into the mind. He would gladly make them believe that God has forgotten them, that their troubles will never end, that there is no way of escape, and that they must try to help themselves, even by some wrong means. If there seems a way of helping themselves by doing something not quite upright, not quite open, or honest, not quite according to the commands of God, Satan advises them to take that way, assuring them, that if they are too conscientious, they will never get out of their difficulties.

But how did our Savior overcome this temptation? He referred to the word of God, and answered from Deut. 8, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." What is the meaning of this passage? It declares that the word of God is more than bread; bread cannot keep us alive, when God chooses that we shall die; but God can keep us alive without bread, when He chooses that we shall live. We know also that God can make us happy in the greatest affliction; but nothing can make us happy, if God wills that we shall be unhappy. Have we not seen people miserable in the midst of abundance, and happy in the midst of pains and losses? Let us never listen to Satan's wicked counsel, when he would induce us to sin that we may escape from suffering. He is deceiving us. When the sin is committed, we shall find ourselves in a far worse case than we were before.

The second temptation was exactly the opposite of the first. Satan took Christ to the pinnacle, or high tower of the temple in the holy city of Jerusalem. He there tried to deceive him by quoting Scripture; he referred to a passage in Ps. 91, "He shall give his angels charge concerning you;" but he left out the words, "To keep you in all your ways." Yet these are very important, and ought not to be left out. God will command his angels to guard the Christian from harm in all his ways, that is, in all the ways in which he ought to walk. Had Jesus cast himself down from the temple, he would not have been walking in God's ways, but in Satan's ways.

This is the manner in which Satan tries to deceive the Christian, when he sees him full of confidence in God. He then tempts him to presumption--he would persuade him that he need not watch and pray, but that he may go into worldly scenes, and receive no harm. He says to him, "Has not God promised to keep you from falling, and to preserve you to his heavenly kingdom? Has he not said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you?'" Thus he perverts the word of God.

This is a very dangerous moment for the Christian. Let him then remember what his Lord replied to Satan; these words from Deuteronomy, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." We tempt God to forsake us, when we thus presume upon his promises. The apostle says, in 1 Cor. 10, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." We have heard of Peter's sin--he ventured to follow Jesus into the palace of the

High Priest, and to warm himself among the ungodly servants, thinking that he could never deny his Master; thus he tempted the Lord, and he did deny him.

What dangers there are on the right hand and on the left! One moment we sink into distrust; the next, soar into presumption. Let us watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation!

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