

# Temptation in the Wilderness

by G.W. North

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living by every word of God, worshiping him first, and listening to his voice in our daily lives.*

**Duration:** 42:33

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-2, Matthew 4:4, Matthew 4:14, Matthew 5:1-3, Matthew 5:6, Matthew 5:11-12

**Topics:** "Temptation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by emphasizing the importance of building one's life on the foundation of God's word. He then moves on to discuss the practical aspect of living in the presence of God and being led by Him in every aspect of life. The preacher highlights the need for worship and a constant attitude of praise in all circumstances. He also touches on the temptation to assert oneself over God, which can lead to a loss of spiritual fullness. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of companionship and the longing to share one's heart with a sympathetic ear.

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## Transcript

In Luke chapter 4, three basic rules for the Spirit-filled man, and how to maintain that fullness of the Holy Ghost, the three probably most fundamental basic rules of all, brought out under severe temptation by Jesus in Luke chapter 4. The first verse says that he was full of the Holy Ghost. Amen. He was full of the Holy Ghost.

He returned from Jordan to where he'd been announced as he that was going to baptize in the Holy Ghost. And fire. That's what had happened.

He'd been announced as him that takes away the sin of the world and baptizes with the Holy Ghost. Hallelujah. This is a tremendous beginning for Jesus.

He's full of the Spirit and he's led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Now, contrary to what you may think, Jesus was not tempted three times in the desert. Verse 13 will assure you of that.

When the devil had ended all the temptation, it was one temptation. It was one temptation, not three temptations. So if you've been preaching at verse three, you'll have to revise your preaching and read the Bible properly.

One temptation. The temptation was to assert self over God. Now that was the temptation.

And it's that that brings a man or a woman out of this glory of their baptism and the fullness of the Spirit of God. If a man does that, he may be a great preacher, but he'll preach nothing and he'll bring people into nothing. Here it is.

It says he was 40 days tempted of the devil. Long temptation this. Amen.

I'm glad the Lord showed us that it's he that endures to the end of saved. He was tempted for 40 days and he didn't eat anything. And when they were ended, he would afterward hunger.

And then the devil said to him, if thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him saying, it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Now that's the basic rule for the maintenance of the life that you've received.

That's fundamental. You must live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. You're not allowed to select one word, or ten words, or choose the particular portion, section you love to read, or anything like that.

It's got to come out of the dead flat writing of the Bible. It's got to come into the place of living communion. Here was a man filled with the Holy Ghost.

And he declares quite plainly that he is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. I want you to notice this in the present tense. Not every word that has been written in the Bible, but every word that is now proceeding out of the mouth of God.

That's what he was saying. That's why this same one, in the book of the Revelation, stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks. And says, to every particular church, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the churches.

Not has said, or has caused to be written. What the Spirit is saying, present tense, unto the churches. Hallelujah.

Many people are missing the great blessing of God, you know, in these days, because they're not listening to what God is saying in the churches. They're not listening because of the tradition of the belief under which they've been brought up. So they don't hear what the Spirit is saying in 1975 in the churches.

They don't hear. Oh, it is a terrible thing if your heart waxes gross, as Jesus says, and you just don't hear. You've got to live by every word that is out of the mouth of God.

We are where we were last evening. God has designed it that you cannot live out of communion with him. You can't do it.

You could only die out of communion with him. You must live in the place where there is a glorious, intimate interchange and flow of the wonder of communion. Amen.

You must live there. God has designed it that way. There isn't any other way.

You will not succeed by trying to prop yourself up on devotional books or things like that. The world is full of them. The making of books, there's no end.

And some people don't seem to learn a lesson from it. I keep on making them. But there it is.

The, the, the tragedy is beloved, that there are substitutes. And what you're doing by taking these substitutes is turning the bread into stone. The devil said turn the stone into bread.

What you're doing is turning available bread into stone. Amen. If you break your teeth, that's your fault.

You must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. There is no other foundation upon which to build your life. You're not surprised, then are you, that following this great, uh, temptation, as it is recorded in Matthew's gospel, chapter four, you go immediately into chapter five, where you read that seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up into the mountain.

And when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth, and he taught them, saying, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed. He was just full of blessings.

I wish every preacher started off by blessing the people. I wish they did. I wish every teacher started off by lifting people's hearts up to say, no end to these blessings are there.

Hallelujah. And then he went on to say, you have heard that it was said of old time, thou shalt or thou shalt not. But I say unto you, listen, I'm speaking, I'm speaking.

This was said and written thousands of years ago. It's the word that's proceeding out of the mouth of God now. He wouldn't dare have said that, unless in the temptation he could have said, I, as a man, am living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of my God, my God and thy God.

I am man for thee, speaking for thee, showing thee. Amen. That's how I'm living.

That's basic. Jesus, show us the secret of your life. All right.

Born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, lead of the Spirit, feeding on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Simple. There's no secret about it.

But God hides these things from the wise and the prudent. He only reveals them to babes. And God wants us to understand.

And so I come to the next great principle. Here it is. The devil took him up into a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, all this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me. And to whosoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, this is a very subtle one, Satan. Get thee behind me, Satan. It's written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Here's the next principle. You must only worship God first, and then serve him next. They go together.

But worship must precede service. You are not alive by feeding on the word of God, in order to serve God primarily. I don't say primarily.

I was born in an older generation. You are alive, and God will keep you alive, primarily, to worship. Amen.

If he can't have your worship, he doesn't want your service. It's nothing meaningless to him. Useless, empty exhibitionism, a parading of your own powers, intentions, dedications, consecrations, and whatnot,

that mean nothing in heaven, except you, first, spirit-filled man and woman, living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, then live by this one, worship before service.

All right. When you're living that way, this is what it will do for you. This is not only a scientific order, it is a logical procedure.

It must come this way. I bless the hand that feeds me. I bless the mouth that speaks to me.

I bless the heart that tells me how to live, what to do, where to go, when to do it, when not to do it, that supervises my days and my nights, that overrules everything, overrides everything, that leads me in glorious procession of life, into all the fullness of what he has for me. I worship him. Hallelujah.

That must come, this glorious worshiping, utter worshiping, as though you could get hold of his hand and kiss it and love it, and get hold of him and fond of him, and, Lord, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. I don't know anything more powerful than that. I don't know of any word that can excel that one.

Lord, I love you. When you say, I love you, that means you're just about finished and your stream of language has dried up. I love you.

And you say all in that, and say nothing if you can't say it. Oh, you express it in a thousand perfect sentences. I love you, Lord.

I love you. How many times, when I've been dealing with precious ones who wanted to know how to go on, I've got hold of them, I said, just tell him you love him. He's been waiting all your life.

To hear you say, Jesus, I love you. He's been waiting for that. You've discovered that, haven't you? You can't get anything out of God by promising to serve him.

You can't get anything out of God by that. It's like sort of paying him in advance, a promissory note. God doesn't want that.

He wants your present love, not your future service. Hallelujah. I love you, Lord.

I worship you. That's the second grade basic thing. You are alive to worship and love and serve the Lord.

Amen. You discovered this? This is what the temptation is bringing out. I'm ever so grateful to Jesus for being tempted, allowing himself to be tempted in every point, just like we are.

He's shown me the way through. If I remember this, that I cannot respond to any suggestions, any allurements, however well put they may be, or whatever is embraced within the scope of the temptation, anything that's said, anything dear to my heart, anything I may want, everything I would rejoice in if the whole world and the kingdoms of the world belong to Jesus and all these great visions, he takes us to mountaintops sometimes. Does this devil desire a mountaintop experience? But what did you do when you got there? Many people in a mountaintop experience throw their lives away.

What did you do? Jesus said no. I'm just here to worship God. Thank you, thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, thank you, Jesus, for my life. I didn't know until Jesus showed me. Did you? Amen.

Let's take the next one, shall we? He brings him to Jerusalem, and sets him on a pinnacle at the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee. And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

That's the third great basic rule for spiritual and spirit-filled living. That you must never tempt God. You must never take a chance, hoping that it'll be all right.

You must move in the absolute certainty of inward heart conviction, of what is right and what is wrong. Hallelujah. Bless God for adventurous spirits.

Why, when I was a boy, every tree I saw was a challenge to me. That's right. You may not have been made like that, but there you are.

I happen to breed a couple of daughters, except the same spirit. But there it is. Every tree was a challenge to me.

When I played cricket, every fellow that held a bat was a challenge to me. I didn't knock the wicket down, or else him, one of the two. I'm not advocating such barbarous methods, but there it is.

That's what I did. I didn't know Jesus then. You see, and there it is.

Beloved, you, we've got to have tremendous and adventurous spirits. But the man in the spirit never takes chances. He takes every opportunity.

That's different. You must not tempt God. Amen.

It is said, hallelujah, these great basic things by which the saints of God have lived in every age. You must make sure that you never make God say, I ought to let it happen to me. They're being naughty.

No, you must never do that. Never tempt God. Remember what happened to Israel.

They tempted God. He said this himself, lo these ten times. And because they tempted God ten times in the wilderness, that generation, though they were that first generation, lost the promised land.

Because they kept tempting God. Hmm. You must never tempt him.

Hmm. All right. You may not go your own way.

You may not say, amen, amen, amen. The devil is not your benefactor. I mean, it sounded all right.

Let's read it here. It says, it's written, verse 10, he shall give his angel's charge over thee. Amen.

Lovely, isn't it? To keep thee. Amen. Glory to God.

In their hands they shall bear thee up. Praise the Lord. Lest at any time thou dash thy foot against the stone.

Glory to God. I could say, amen, amen, amen. God said all that.

Yeah, but he said something else as well, you see. That's the point. The devil is never your friend.

And don't say amen to him. And don't say glory to God for him. Although all the things he said were true, it all became untrue, because he didn't say the things that went with them.

Amen. Remember that the Bible is full of glorious writings from God. It's written, it's written, it's written.

As for me, I find myself, over and over again, having to fight off these sort of, taking things out of the Old Testament, little quotes like that, so that they sound all right. And when you go back and read them, they're all wrong. Praise his name.

Never attempt him. Always open your, live your life so that, as God had previously said to Jesus when he was 30, just a few days before, he said, thou art my beloved son. Ah, in thee I'm well pleased.

You see, he pleased his father for 30 years. And in a moment or two, he was on the brink, according to the temptation of the devil, of displeasing his father. That's what the devil wanted him to do.

And all would have passed away, beloved. There wouldn't have been any record of Calvary. There wouldn't have been any record of all the glorious things that Jesus said and did.

That's tragic, when you think about it. But instead, he just said, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. That's good enough for me, Satan.

Hallelujah. Will you live your life like that? Living on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Don't live by the word that proceeds out of the mouth of the devil, even though he seems to be talking like God at times.

Live by what Jesus says. That's vivid and real. And you are to be in the place where you are hearing his voice within you.

Where you're in communion with him. So that you're not guiding your life by the general trend of things. And although there is a place, as Luke tells us as he opens this gospel, so I'm just writing things that are generally believed among us.

Amen. He wasn't writing any cranky theory. You have to go by what is generally believed.

That's a pretty good guide. But there is this place also, where you yourself are in life with God. And you're feeding off what he is saying to you.

Now beloved, when God speaks to you, he will talk to you very practically. It won't always be quotes from this, and quotes from that. He just talks to you as though you're a normal human being.

He won't talk to you as though your name's Gabriel, or something like that. He will talk to you just like a normal human being. So don't listen for specially intoned words, or something like that.

Know that when God speaks it's power, and unmistakable, and will be a certain knowledge in your heart. And you will know that to deviate from it will be wrong, and dangerous. God's very good.

And he wants to keep you just filled with himself. He knows that if he can talk to you, and you listen to him, you'll keep filled. He knows that.

And of course if you keep talking to him, he'll be filled with you. You'll know just what you think. You say, well I always thought God didn't know what I think.

I know that. I know all about that. But he'd rather you talk to him.

He doesn't want to have to exercise special powers of penetration and understanding. He just loves a simple love relationship. He just wants you to treat him like a normal God.

That's all he wants. He wants a proper relationship between you and him. Give anything for it.

Gave his son for it. We're going to eat the bread. We're going to drink the wine very shortly.

I expect everything he gave for it, just to bring you into a normal relationship with himself. Hallelujah. Where you can talk and share.

And you know beloved, don't you? There are people sitting beside you, or just in front of you, or behind you, who would be able, who would give everything to have someone with whom they could share. That's right. I'll tell you this, you young people.

I don't speak as an old man, but I'm slightly older than some of you. The older you get, the more you long for companionship. Oh yes.

It's far deeper than these budding desires you have as young people. I tell you that. As you get older, the lonelier you get, unless you can have heart sharing.

Hello. Did you know that? The longing comes to be able to say all that's in your heart to a sympathetic, understanding ear. See? That won't blame you, even if you've been wrong.

That won't condemn you, even if you've fallen into sin. Did you know that? If you didn't know it, you only need to keep getting older, you'll know it. There are some great advantages in life.

Take full hold of it, and lay hold of it. Someone who can listen. Oh, the tragedies poured into my ears.

You know what the trouble is? A solitary confinement. I don't mean in prison, but in a prison that's absolutely deeper, much more rigid than the pit into which Joseph was lowered and left for dead. Amen.

Now God is longing for you. He's open, wide open. Memory of him this morning, though not in any ritualistic manner, is of him staked out wide on a cross, wide open, torn almost limb from limb, that you can get right into his joints, into his bones, and into his marrow, pierced right through here into his heart.

Amen. That you can get right in. He wants to come into this glorious communion with us.

That's what he wants. And I'll give some advice to some of you young people. For romance visits us when we're young.

Don't you link up with anyone of the opposite sex with whom you cannot share everything. That's the throne upon which marriage will be most surely built. Nothing of physical attraction, though it may be there.

In the end, it's whether you can share the depths of your being. But to leave that and come back to God, he just wants you to integrate with himself. He wants you to listen to him.

He wants you to walk with him. He doesn't want you to get into some kind of fantasy realm, where you become a listener with a pencil in one hand and a paper in front of you. He doesn't want that.

If you've got that book, burn it. It didn't come from God. It came out of the pit.

It's been written by psychic mediation. It didn't come from God. Burn it.

All right, if you're looking blank, that means you haven't got it. That's as nothing, all you need to know. Them.

I've been corrected. Don't listen to them, not it. Oh, all right, all right.

If you can sort that out in French, you do. The wonderful truth of it all, beloved, is that we're to be in this realm of just practical living. Go about your daily duties.

Go about everything knowing that God is going to suddenly sort of talk to you somewhere. He's going to sort of just come in, and he's going to say something there. He's going to withhold you there.

He's going to promote something somewhere else. He's going to lead you. Hallelujah.

That's the best part I know about God, since I've really come to know this moving in the glory that all my life is in his hands. Now you've got to live like that, and worship him. Every point of your life must be a point and place of worship.

Everything. This is what is behind this great text, that all things work together for good to them that love God. That leads you into an attitude of worship about everything.

Praise him. Praise him. Do you believe that? If not, you revise your thinking.

You must be glad of the circumstances that seem to have come from the devil, and to be all wrong. You must be glad of them. Didn't all these temptations come from the devil? These things in which Jesus stood? Thou test you out.

Thou prove what you are. You know what you have. It's glorious that God takes you this way.

Worship him. Serve him. No limits.

Hallelujah. Abandon yourself unto God. Will you do that? Never tempt him.

Never. Say no. Turn your back on this.

On him. On her. On those.

On these. Never tempt him. Move always on the line of true faith.

Hallelujah. And you know the result of this temptation, don't you? It's a little lower down in the same chapter. Verse 14.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. You see, you may be full of the Spirit, but you have to go in the power of the Spirit. And this is why so few people have power.

This is your source of power. He didn't say, Oh Lord, I need another anointing. He just simply took his daily food, living by every word that proceeded out of his father's mouth.

He just worshipped and served the Lord. And he never tempted his father. So he had the power.

Amen. So many young people, and elderly people too. Perhaps when I use the term young, I mean those who are young in the faith.

Who are in the things of the Spirit. They tempt the Lord, because they think they're doing something in faith. And they step out so they say in faith, and they finish up absolutely defeated and in confusion.

They've tempted the Lord. Jesus wouldn't dare to have done anything unless his father had showed him. And told him.

What? He said so. He said so himself. He never stepped beyond, because there was somebody exhorting him to live in faith.

Though we need to exhort one another to live in faith. But this is living in faith. Taking the words that proceed from the mouth of God in your daily life, living by those.

That's faith. That's the faith life. The rest is nonsense.

Amen. It's so simple. The pattern is showed us by Jesus.

Live like that man. Live like that woman. Dare to come off the other realm, even though in the eyes of your company you seem a great person of faith.

This is the secret of faith. Hallelujah. Jesus would have tempted his father to lead him.

Of whom he said, I am the father of one. I'm not alone. My father is with me.

He would have tempted the father to leave him, if he had dared proceed beyond the words that proceeded out of his father's mouth. Perhaps some of the secrets of failure have been unfolded to you this morning. Not that I want to be negative, but rather positive.

Hallelujah. Don't seek to turn stones into bread. Have pure bread straight from God.

Hallelujah. Don't try your skill on stones. Be simple and eat your food.

Hallelujah to God. Amen. You remember even Jesus said once, take the stone away.

He didn't say, turn the stone into bread. He said take away the stone. And then he showed you how a dead man lived by the word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

Amen. Isn't God simple? And isn't he lovely? And isn't it all so natural? What we must never do is think that by becoming unnatural or super this or hyper that, we're pleasing God. Let's live with him in this utter simplicity.

Glory to his name. Are you living like that? Well, I think I'm going to stop there.

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