

# Victory Over Temptation

by Pat Kenney

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*Jesus' victory over temptation in the wilderness is a model for us to follow, and it shows us that we can resist temptation by immersing ourselves in the word of God.*

**Duration:** 57:27

**Topics:** "Victory"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to study and prepare ahead of time by reading and praying over the scripture passages. The sermon focuses on chapter four of the Bible, which marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The speaker highlights the importance of hearing what God has to say through the scripture and emphasizes the power of the Sermon on the Mount in chapters five, six, and seven. The sermon also addresses the topic of temptation and the need for repentance and a changed lifestyle in order to follow Jesus.

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## Transcript

As we're beginning to work our way now through this first gospel in the New Testament, where our overall plan is on Sunday mornings to go through the entire New Testament and take about a chapter a week, I think you'd probably agree that in the 50 minutes or so, or 55 minutes that we have to be in the Word on Sunday morning, we cannot exhaustively search out each nuance of every verse. So Sunday morning is not meant to be an in-depth study of each and every single verse and each and every single word. So we may at times skip over things and go, Oh, I wish that they would have talked about that.

Well, what I just encourage you to do during the week is pray that you would hear what you need to hear out of that chapter and be studying it ahead. So this week, we're going to teach chapter 4 this morning, but this week be reading ahead, particularly 5, 6, and 7 together as a unit. That's the Sermon on the Mount.

And it's powerful, and we could probably spend a whole year going through that. I don't know if I'm going to be able to do, I don't know if I can contain myself to just do an overview, but we'll see how God leads. But be in the Word, be studying it ahead, be looking through that passage.

And as you do, just ask the Lord, Lord, speak to me. When I get together with the rest of the body on Sunday morning and Pat or whoever happens to be teaching on that particular Sunday, that my heart would be ready and my heart would receive the instruction that you have for me. So chapter 4. Chapter 4, we're seeing the very beginnings of Jesus' ministry.

And we had seen at the end of chapter 3, His baptism. And the Father had spoken from heaven. The Spirit of God as a dove came down upon Him.

And this voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. What a kickoff! You know, what a start! But how many of you know that after blessings, trials often ensue? Be careful when you're at a mountaintop because you don't usually stay on a mountaintop. Isn't that the truth? And you know you really shouldn't stay on a mountaintop.

Because if you've ever been on a mountaintop, it's exhilarating and the view is wonderful, but nothing grows up there. And there's no running water on a mountaintop. Usually no food, no animal life on a mountaintop.

You got to go down into the valley. That's where most of life takes place. But when we're in the valleys, we know that we are not without an intercessor.

We know that we're not alone. We know that our Savior and our Redeemer went there as well and made it through without sin. He's our perfect advocate.

God had just borne witness of His pleasure, pardon me, in the Son's obedience. And now that witness is challenged by the devil. The name devil means slanderer, an accuser.

We're all tempted to deny the effectiveness of the work of God within us. We are. God says, God says, I love you.

The devil says, no, he doesn't. How can one so good and holy love someone who does the stuff you do? Where's that come from? That's from the devil. God says, I love you with an everlasting love.

And the enemy lies to us and says, no, he doesn't. Maybe there's other people, but not you. And that's a lie.

Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15 tells us, for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. We read in 1 John 2 kind of a summary of all of temptation. And the things that tempt us are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.

Those temptations that pull us in terms of I want it, I need it, or I'm worth it. And Jesus was tempted likewise in all of those areas, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Why? Because he already went through it for us. There is mercy. There is help in a time of need.

I don't know how many of you are in need this morning. I talked to a few of you already today and you're in need. But it's not like I'm in need and there's nobody there.

You're in need. And the one who can completely and fully meet you is here for you today. And he's given his word to us.

So we find Jesus, before the public ministry is about to begin, we find him being, in a sense, proven in his private victory. Warren Wiersbe said public ministry is always built on private victory. Want to have an effective public ministry? Your private life needs to be walking right before the Lord.

Our Lord was not tempted so that God could examine him, for the Father had already approved him. He was tempted for our sake. Remember that.

Jesus was tempted for you and me, that he might personally know temptation and be able to help us when we are tempted. And we all are. Frequently.

Thank you. Just checking. I know I am frequently.

Hebrews 2.17 says, Therefore, in all things, all things, he had to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation or atonement, to stand in our place for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted. All right.

That's a good promise, because I know I'm tempted, but I also know that he is able to aid me. He's able to see me through that temptation. I am able to have victory over that temptation because Jesus went through it.

He knows the pressure, and he also had the victory. I want to have victory over temptation. I don't want to be beat up by temptation.

I don't know how many of you are just tired of getting beat up by temptation, but the Lord wants you to know today you don't have to be beat up by it. You can walk in victory because Jesus was victorious. Because he went through it, he is perfectly able to minister to you and me.

And what Jesus endured in the wilderness when Satan tempted him was real temptation. The sense of need, the consciousness of being urged by Satan to satisfy that need, the knowledge of having to resist the tempter, and the struggle to which this gave rise was real, even for Jesus Christ, who was sinless. So we read in verse 2, when he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, I can hardly go 40 minutes without a grumble in the tumble, you know? 40 days and 40 nights.

And it said afterward he was hungry. And it is said that when hunger pains return after such a fast, it indicates the subject is beginning to starve to death. When you and I get hungry because we miss lunch, that's not hunger.

That's appetite. It's not the same. When hungry is used here after a fast, it usually means that your body is starting to consume itself and you're dying.

Your essential organs now are now going to be eaten up. All the fat's gone. Now the very organs of life are being shriveled up.

That's where Jesus was at after 40 days and 40 nights of fasting. And then the tempter comes. Oftentimes that's when you will be tempted, at a time of great weakness, at a time when you're, how many of you when you've been really tired, you know? It seems like, man, your heart just goes off, your temper is lost, your eyes go where they're not supposed to.

And so the first temptation that we see here is an appeal to the lust of the flesh. The period of 40 days and 40 nights is a familiar period of testing in the Bible, both in the days of Noah and for Israel in the wilderness. Jesus will succeed where Israel as a nation failed, where the nation failed in their times of testing.

Jesus would not fail. So when the tempter came to him, verse 3, he said, if you are the son of God. Now, wait a minute.

The father had just said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. If you are a Christian. How many of you ever get that one? If you were really a Christian, you wouldn't do that.

You must not really be saying, you know what, you're still going to hell. Oh, the enemy loves to put that kind of trip on us. But the tempter said, if you are the son of God, command that these stones become bread.

Use your divine authority and power and let the spirit serve the flesh, the lusts of the flesh. All temptation has to do with the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit. The scriptures constantly teach us that the life of the spirit is superior to and more important than the life of the flesh and that the flesh should be subservient to the spirit.

The predominant aspect of your being should be the spirit, not the flesh. In Matthew chapter 6, in the Sermon on the Mount, verse 31, we read Jesus saying, therefore, do not worry. Man, how many, honestly, is there anybody here that has not worried about anything the last week? All right.

Now, what don't we understand about this? Obviously, there's a need. There's a congregational need because we've all worried. We worry about things.

And they may be legitimate things, at least in our thinking. We worry about being able to provide for our family. We worry about being able to provide for the church.

We worry about our kids. We worry about our loved one's health. I mean, there's sting.

We worry about our own health. That always seems to be working. And yet, as we come to the scripture and we look to the Lord, we see him saying to us, therefore, do not worry.

Do not worry. What shall we eat? Don't say, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? That's the things of the flesh. Those material things, don't worry about them after all these things the Gentiles seek.

For your heavenly father knows that you need all these things. So what are we to do? Seek first the kingdom of God. Not last, not after you've exhausted every ability of the flesh, but seek first.

That means living in the spirit. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Satan is suggesting that Jesus use his spiritual powers to take care of the needs of his flesh.

And you might think, well, hey, I mean, he's been fasting 40 days, 40 nights. I mean, if he's got the power, why not turn those stones into bread so he can eat? And that was the essence of the temptation. You've got great spiritual power, access it, and whatever you can conceive, you will receive.

Oh. A lot of people mistake spiritual power and think that spiritual power is given to them that they might be rich or wealthy or powerful or successful. And we'll find that Jesus didn't buy that.

He was tempted with it to use his spiritual power to satisfy the needs of his flesh, but he wouldn't. And I think there's some example there for us as well. Since he could have, the temptation was very real.

Since he had the power to do that, and we know he did have that power. I mean, what did he do with five loaves of fish and a couple, or five loaves of bread and a couple of fish? What did he do? He fed thousands. That's all they had, and he multiplied it.

That's pretty supernatural power. We knew he could, but at this point, to meet his own need, he didn't. Instead, he answered and said, it is written.

And I love that. Because he didn't go, back off Satan, I'm Jesus. He didn't kind of do that to him or something.

He just said, it is written. He went to the word. And we're going to see that over and over again in these temptations.

He goes back to the word. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Whew.

Now, all the quotations that Jesus has in this first section are from Deuteronomy. Chapters 6 to 8. And some commentators have suggested that perhaps these were the passages that the Lord was meditating on. Oftentimes, when you are fixing on a particular section of scripture, that God will teach you through that and help you to make application through it.

Well, here, he's contemplating on this. The man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And Satan comes along and says, you hungry? Turn those stones into bread so you can satisfy your physical hunger.

And he remembers, wait a minute, there's a higher standard. Just the fleshly life isn't enough. We need that spiritual side of our nature fed.

And we all, I mean, by our potlucks and so on, I mean, we all we're pretty well fed. We eat pretty good. You know, and when we don't eat, when we don't get a meal, we get grumpy.

You know, it's just the way, that's our flesh. And we understand that we don't really grow spiritually just by feeding the flesh. You can have the best of delicacies.

You know, you can have the finest, you can eat in the finest restaurants. You can have a perfectly equipped chef gourmet kitchen. You know, all of those things.

But that doesn't feed your spirit. It'll only feed your flesh. It can never feed anything more.

And that's true with all of the lusts of the flesh. Whatever stuff you think you want or you think you need, is it to bring glory to God? Is it for the advancement of the kingdom of God? Or is it just to make you feel satisfied? Usually it's to make you feel satisfied. And that will not help you grow in the spirit.

Your spirit can remain stagnant even though you have many things. Things will not give you spiritual maturity. They won't.

In Job 23 verse 12, and we all know Job went through it. Job had a serious season of testing, but in the middle of it he said in verse 12 of chapter 23, I have not departed from the commandment of his lips, and I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. I treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Oh, I pray for that kind of hunger for God's word. Dave Guzik noted that Jesus used Scripture to battle Satan's temptation. Not some elaborate spiritual power inaccessible to us.

Jesus fought this battle as a man in this battle. And he drew on no special resources unavailable to us. Hey, if Jesus had taken those, you might say he was justified in doing it.

He was hungry, he had the power, so he turns the stones into bread. Just like that, because he's God and he's the creator. That'd be a tough act to follow for you and me, frankly.

I mean, I can't go over the church budget and go multiply. I believe today it will double. Right there, that one plate will turn to two plates.

You know? How many of you know if we had that kind of power, we'd be in big trouble, huh? How many of you could use that kind of power humbly? I don't think so. So instead of putting that as a standard, Jesus as our perfect high priest accessed what you and I have access to. The word of God.

He went to the word and he answered the temptation of the enemy with the same resource that you and I have. And I appreciate that. I'm so thankful that he did it that way.

There's no special resources, no little tricks, no special courses you have to go through to know how to perform a miracle. You have the word, I have the word. As we immerse ourselves in the word, the power of the word of God will give us victory over the attacks of the enemy.

So we effectively resist temptation in the same way Jesus did. By countering Satan's seductive lies by shining the light of God's truth upon them. If we are ignorant of God's truth, we are poorly armed in the fight against temptation.

And when I talk to people that are battling the lusts of their flesh constantly, I ask them, are you in the word of God? Are you meditating on the word of God? And they go, not as much as I should. I mean, I can't tell you how many times I've heard that. Well, then what are you coming to me for? I don't have any magic hocus-pocus to deliver you.

Each of us have to go the same way. We have to feed upon the word of God. Feed upon God's word.

Treasure it in your heart more than your necessary food. And you will have ample light to overcome darkness. And as you're in the word of God, you'll have that discernment when the lies and the tricks of the enemy are laid upon you.

But if you're not in the word of God, you can get snowed real easy. And so many people are. Let's look at the second temptation.

Then the devil took him up to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple. This would be in Jerusalem, in Herod's temple. Magnificent structure.

And then he says to him again, if you are the son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written. Now here's Satan quoting the word.

You better know the word. Because Satan can pull things in and out. He can take things out of context and really mess up your head.

So here he's coming to Jesus. Jesus is going to use the word. Okay, I can play that game, says Satan.

He shall give his angels charge over you. And in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against the stone. Well, the second temptation is an appeal to the pride of life.

Well, I am the son of God. Yes. And I have all of these angels at my command.

And that's right. They will hold me up. Satan is tempting Jesus.

Note this here. Satan is tempting Jesus to force the Father into a supernatural event. To force the Father into a supernatural event.

That's kind of like what the snake handlers in Eastern Kentucky or wherever they're at. But they'll take poisonous snakes and they'll put them right up to them. And they believe, they take that scripture out of context where it says, you know, that no weapon fashioned against you will prosper and, you know, that you shall tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

And so they'll take a snake, a poisonous snake, to prove their faith. That's tempting God. That's not what we find that Jesus didn't do that.

Jesus didn't need to do that and you don't need to do that. Satan is tempting Jesus to force the Father into a supernatural event. The pinnacle of the temple arose some 200 feet above the floor of the Kidron Valley.

A leap from there and the appearance of the promised angel's protection would be quite a show. What a way to introduce your ministry. Woohoo! Here I am! Son of God! Yeah! And angels appear! Whoa! And you know what? People would come for another show the next day too.

Because folks like shows. And that would be a show. But we don't grow in our faith through shows.

We grow in our faith through the Word of God. That would be very presumptuous. And in Psalm 19.13, King David said, Keep back your servant, also from presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me. In Psalm 131, Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me.

You see, Jesus understood from his knowledge of the whole counsel of God, that Satan was twisting this passage from Psalm 91 that he quoted. That Satan quoted there in verse 6. Jesus knew how to rightly divide the word of truth. And so he says to him in verse 7, It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God.

Folks, we never need to demand something spectacular from God to prove his love or concern for us. He has already given the ultimate demonstration of his love for us at the cross. He can do nothing more spectacular than that.

Romans 5.8, but God demonstrates his own love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. I had a guy once call me and say, I'll believe in the Lord if you can translate me from my house to your house right now. He was serious.

I think he was a little tweaked, but he was serious. He wanted me to perform a miracle, and if I would perform a miracle, then he would believe. Sorry, Charlie.

I don't think his name was Charlie, but I don't remember his name. But I thought, I didn't think anybody would ever really say that, but I'm hearing it right now. Do a miracle for me, and then I'll believe.

Hey, you know what? Jesus raised people from the dead. They were dead! Being carried out on a funeral pyre, out of the city of Nain, being buried four days, wrapped in the burial cloth. He was dead, dead, dead, Lazarus was.

So dead that when they said remove the stone, what did the people say? My lord, he stinketh. You know? The rotting had already taken place. And there were still, even with that, people who would not believe.

There were people who saw that and go, whoa, that's, we got a real threat going here, and they'd go back to the high priest and tell him what was going on, and then they would plot to kill him. It didn't bring people to repentance. Just because you have a show.

And I don't know how many people at one particular time in their life or other have gotten mad at God because they wanted God to do something, and God didn't do it the way they wanted them to do it, and they've held a grudge ever since. God has demonstrated his love towards you and me. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let's get back to the cross. When you get back to the cross and you realize what Christ has done for you, you don't have any beef. You don't have anything to complain about.

And we rest in that, and then that peace that passes understanding helps us to discern the situation that we're in. We all go through tough things. Some of us, some really, really, really tough things.

Life and death tough things. But God is still faithful. So don't tempt the Lord.

Don't say, I wonder how far I can go and not get hurt. Some people do that too. You know, I've heard young people ask the question sometimes, how far can I go and not sin? In terms of my relationship with my boyfriend or my girlfriend.

How far can I go? Don't even start, man. How far can you go? That's feeding the flesh. You feed the flesh a little.

The flesh is insatiable, folks. It's never satisfied. You give it a little, the next time it's going to want a little bit more.

You think you can control that? You're a fool. You can't. That's why Jesus said, deny yourself, take up your cross, follow after me.

And I'll tell you what, that is far more fulfilling than a little buzz we might get physically. Don't tempt the Lord and think, how far can I go without getting hurt? Sometimes people wonder, how much can I be like the world without really being in the world? How worldly can a Christian be? I'm sorry. We need to be like Jesus.

Your question should be, how much like Jesus can I be? How much more like Jesus can I be? Not, how much can I get away with and still be a Christian? I wonder, do you really know the Lord? If you're thinking

that way. It might be, I'm wondering how much I can still be accepted at the church? You know, how much will the church put up with? But the Lord says, be holy. For I am holy.

Where's your standard? Is it holy? Or is it kind of just where you can reach? Because I can't reach holy with my own strength. I've got to die to myself and trust the Lord and His work in me to be holy. If it's up to me to be holy, forget it.

I can't. I'll fail. It forces me.

God's standard forces me to trust Him and to lean on Him. And anything less is purely subjective to what you feel comfortable with. That's the flesh.

Don't settle for that. Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. And here the lust of the eyes is being tempted.

Oh, and how many of us look at stuff and read things and see things on TV and read stuff in magazines or hear what our neighbors have or our friends have and we lust for it. We want it too. You know, I want to have the same toys you have.

I want to have the latest and the greatest. But Jesus said in Matthew 16, 26, For 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? So Satan says to the Lord, All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me. Satan's boasting that he's in control of the kingdoms of the world.

And in a sense he was and he is. This is his realm. In 2 Corinthians 4, Jesus or the Holy Spirit is talking through Paul of those whose minds the God of this age has blinded.

There is a power at work in our day. And it is a wicked power. And as you look at the things that are going on in the world, it seems like he's having his way in so many places.

This is a very strong and difficult temptation because Jesus came to redeem the world back to God. Note that the purpose of Christ's coming in Luke 19, For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. That was the purpose of his coming.

1 John 4, 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Jesus' purpose in coming was to die in your place, in my place, that our sins could be taken away. You see, the world was in rebellion to the authority of God and God desired the world again to be in the kingdom of God. We pray the Lord's Prayer.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus came that the world would be redeemed.

Now here, the issue is to Jesus, really the temptation to Jesus is you don't have to go to the cross. You want all the kingdoms? I'll give them to you, just bow down to me. See the deception? I know you came to redeem the world, but you don't need to go God's way.

You don't have to follow God's plan. Bow down to me and I'll give the kingdoms of this world to you apart from the cross. It's an important warning to us today, because Satan always tempts people with this deception that you can find fulfillment, the realization of your heart's desires apart from the cross.

But as I said earlier, quoting Luke 9 23, if anyone desires to come after me, Jesus said, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. First Peter 4 1, therefore since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself also with the same mind for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. That's how we should be living.

The idea that Satan waves before us is that of immediate fulfillment of our desires or short-term gratification. I want it and I want it now and I don't want to wait for it. That's why people get in so much trouble, rather than waiting for marriage.

How many young people have gotten venereal diseases or pregnancies and their whole lives are changed because they wanted it now. I just want it now. And if you love me, you'll give it to me now.

You know, this kind of nonsense. You don't need to trust God. You don't need to wait until marriage.

You can have it now. You don't need to trust God with your finances. After all, you received four credit card applications this week, telling you what a wonderful thing it would be to serve you with an 18% credit card, but by the way, if you're late once, it'll jump to 29%.

And you'll never pay it off. And you'll be subject to the lender for the rest of your days. Oh, but I want it.

And I got it. You know? What do you mean I'm overdrawn? I still have checks. You know? You don't need to trust God.

You don't need to wait upon God. You can have satisfaction and happiness right now. And the Lord is showing us how false and how deceiving that is.

The cross was not a pleasant process to look forward to. And yet Jesus endured the cross to give his life, to pay the price, to redeem this lost world back to God. You know, when you're reading the Gospels, and they're all excited, and there's great miracles that happen, and Jesus pulls his disciples aside and says, let me tell you, you know, the high priest and so forth, the Son of Man is going to be arrested and tortured and killed, and three days later, he will rise.

And they went, huh? They just didn't get it. Went right over their heads. Because they were in the moment.

They were in the moment, the excitement. But think about what Jesus must have had to endure. He knew what was ahead.

He was in a human body, and I'm sure a normal process of a human mind as well, but he knew the purpose, and as he came closer and closer to it, it was very clear that he would have to give himself as the sacrifice for the sins of mankind. That meant the cross. Not bowing down to Satan.

Not a shortcut. It meant going all the way. Satan is suggesting that you can have these shortcuts apart from God's will.

And how did Jesus answer him? Verse 10, Away with you, Satan, for it is written, again, he goes right back to the word, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve. Worship the Lord your God. Him only shall you serve.

James 4, 7 says, Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Resist him, he will flee.

John 16, 33, Jesus said, These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

And because of Jesus' victory over the enemy, in him we have victory. The devil left him, we read in verse 11. That means Jesus won.

The devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him. Remember this always. Satan is subject to the authority of Jesus, and not the other way around.

This was not the first or the only encounter with the powers of darkness. The New Testament records many, but in each case, Jesus overcame them. And he overcame them by the power of the Word.

And you and I can overcome by the power of the Word. John Corson notes this, if I could quote him for a minute. First and foremost, Jesus quoted Scripture.

Whether he was dealing with questions of provision, or protection, or promise, in all three cases Jesus quoted Scripture. And that encourages me, because I can do the same thing. When the enemy attacks, I can quote Scripture, and so can you.

You can do exactly what Jesus did. There's a little book you can get called the Jesus Person Pocket Promise Book. It's got 800 promises from the Word in categories for every situation.

800 promises to utilize when the enemy says the Father's not providing for you. He's not really going to protect you. But that promise isn't going to come to pass for you.

You can come back with Scripture. But notice also, when Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone, he was saying I am not going to live by bread alone. The material realm is not going to have priority for me.

When he said thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God, he was saying I am not going to do it, because the Word forbids it. When he said you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve, he was saying I will serve my Father in Him alone. A lot of Christians are under the mistaken impression that by simply quoting a Scripture, Satan is going to run away.

But Satan himself can quote Scripture, and so can the demons, and so can agnostics, and so can atheists. No, the power lies not in the quoting of Scripture, but in submission to the Word, not in recitation of it. Satan flees when he hears us say I will do it, not I can quote it.

It's good to learn the Word of God, but remember your life needs to match up with it. Again, Jesus was meditating on the Word, and as he was thinking about these principles in Deuteronomy, he was saying I am submitted to these principles. I am living according to these principles.

And meditation on the Word is crucial, because Satan comes to us when we least expect him. He doesn't say like, Pat, I'm going to meet you in three days, get ready. I'll beat you up, three days.

No, he watches and waits until he sees I'm in a place of weakness or frustration or tension or fatigue or transition and boom! He strikes. But Ephesians 6 says that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. Learn the Word, meditate upon the Word, stay in the Word, and like Jesus, in submission to the Word, you'll beat back the enemy.

That's part of what we're doing this morning. But not just for head knowledge, but for life change. So how will you respond to testing? According to the flesh, or by the Spirit according to the Word? I pray it's the latter.

By the Spirit according to the Word. Now, as we move to verse 12, there's a gap, maybe, of a year. John's gospel fills in the details from the baptism of John up until John the Baptist's imprisonment.

So verse 12, when John heard, when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he departed to Galilee. So John's imprisonment marked the beginning of that public ministry. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea.

That's up in the area of Galilee. The regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, where a couple of the tribes of Israel had settled. And that it might be fulfilled, this is interesting, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region, and shadow of death, light has dawned.

Isaiah chapter 9, the first couple of verses. Even his moves around the land were fulfillment of prophecy. And in the darkness, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.

Many are still in great darkness today. The shadow of death is gripping them. No hope, no peace, no purpose.

And to those folks, Jesus still shines his saving light. And that might be some of you today. Jesus is shining his light to you today.

And what does he say, as he begins his ministry? From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The first word of the gospel of Jesus, repent. You know, there was a problem of fake conversions.

There's a problem of fake conversions today. Making an outward confession without an inward change. Saying yes, when you're really saying no.

That's a fake conversion. Remember, John came baptizing in the wilderness, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And he saw a bunch of the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to be baptized, and he said to them, brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come, therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.

We learn that having remorse is not repentance. Having penitence is not repentance. Reforming is not really repentance.

Heathens can reform somewhat. Doing penance is not repentance. What is repentance then? It is simply a change of mode of thinking, a change of mind that results in a change of direction.

Repentance makes inward change a visible reality. In Ezekiel 18.30 the prophet was speaking, therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn

from your transgressions.

Repentance in the Bible alludes to a change of mind about self, about sin, and about God. It is a turning around from self and a turning to God. Handbook of Bible application says repent means to turn, implying a change in behavior.

So we can't say we're spiritual without a change in behavior. Makes sense, doesn't it? I mean you think, well yeah, that's logical, but it's amazing how many people struggle with that. A changed life with new and different behavior makes your repentance real and visible.

Have you repented of sin in your life? Can others see the difference it makes in you? The great essential is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior from sin. Amen? That's the essential. That faith will lead to repentance.

But repentance is a step toward faith too. In Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God is seen the truth that repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. By repentance one turns away from sin.

By faith one turns toward God, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ. So to be truly repentant, we must do both, turn from sin and turn toward God. We can't just say, follow me here, I know we talked a little about this last week too, but since Jesus said it, we need to talk about it.

We can't just say that we believe and then live any way we choose. Did you get that? Neither can we simply live a morally correct life without a personal relationship with God because this cannot bring forgiveness of sin. Determine, folks, to rid your life of any sins God points out and to put your trust in Him alone to guide you.

Repentance, I believe, demonstrates real faith. Confession of sins and a changed life are inseparable. Now I'm not saying that, you know, you have to have your polished halo and never blow it again before you can come to Christ.

But you need to understand that in coming to Christ, Christ is going to change you. And you need to be willing to let Him change you. James said, faith without works is dead.

And Jesus' hardest words, harshest words, were to the respectable religious leaders who lacked the desire for change. The Pharisees and the Sadducees. They wanted to be known as religious authorities, but they didn't want to change their hearts and minds.

Their lives were unproductive, barren of godly fruit. Repentance must be tied to action or it isn't real. And this is true not only of religious leaders, but of regular folks who just want to be accepted in the church, but don't want to change their lifestyle.

I pray that if you're coming to Christ and coming to this church, you understand that that means a lifestyle change as well. If you were living a worldly lifestyle and a fleshly addicted lifestyle, God expects change. And He is able to see change in your life.

He's promised to supply, to give you all that pertains to life and to godliness. But you've got to come to understanding. I'm turning away from that lifestyle and I'm turning to God.

And that turn to God will be evidenced by I'm not showing that stuff anymore of my old lifestyle. That's repentance. Following Jesus means more than saying the right words.

And believe me, I've heard plenty of them. But it means acting on what Jesus says. He said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

True repentance then is not something you do once. It's how you live the rest of your life. Do you understand that? So, repentance is almost, almost more a message to believers than it is to unbelievers.

In that sense. Yes, an unbeliever needs to recognize that they have sinned and that Jesus has died to save them from sin. But believers need to understand that as we walk with the Lord, our lives aren't going to look back.

You know, we're not what we used to be. We've been changed by the Lord. And we're never going back to that old lifestyle again.

We need to pray. The chapter wraps up with Jesus calling Simon and Peter and Andrew and he says, follow me and I'll make you fishers and men. And the call was immediately responded to.

Lots of times people make excuses when they're called. But notice Jesus didn't say, take a course in evangelism. Study this book.

Go to this seminar. Practice this technique. Rather here's in essence what he said.

Listen carefully. If you hang out with me I'm going to be changing you. And inevitably you're going to become more like me.

A fisher of men. You know, the apostles you know, after Jesus had died and rose again and persecution started coming on the church, what did the magistrates have to say about the disciples of Jesus? They recognized that they had been with Jesus. They hadn't graduated University of Jerusalem, you know, School of Theology.

They'd been with Jesus. Be with Jesus, folks. That's where real discipleship happens.

And I think it's a good way to teach someone in ministry. In an apprentice fashion rather than through formal education as was the customary method in Jesus' day. You know, you can get your degrees, you know, you can go to Bible college and get your degrees and all of that, but that is not going to make you a man or woman of God.

It'll give you some head knowledge and sometimes you'll learn some things that might be applicable. But a lot of people go to there, get their paper and think, now I'm a minister because I've gone through this. That's not what makes you a minister.

What makes you a minister is following Jesus. Follow Jesus. And hang around with other people who follow Jesus.

And be in the Word and God will make you a disciple and He'll use you. And that's how all of our pastors here and our missionaries were trained. Hands on, doing the work of the ministry, sitting under the regular verse by verse instruction of the Word of God.

That's what you're doing this morning. And as you hang out with each other, you're talking about how God is at work. And you look for opportunities other than just here on Sunday morning in the big church to get together with two or three or four other believers and be going through the Word together.

You're following Jesus. You're learning to walk in His steps. And I'll tell you that's when the power of the Spirit of God moves so mightily.

As God uses regular people like you and me to learn of Him and to grow and be used for Him. So press on in the good work that God has before you today. And so going from there he saw a few others James, John calls them.

They immediately follow Him and Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments and those who were demon-possessed and epileptics and paralytics and He healed them. And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond the Jordan.

And Jesus did all these things with one person, with a specific purpose in mind. That the people were like sheep without a shepherd and the miracles brought great multitudes who needed to be taught. He didn't just do one show after another.

Whenever a miracle was done, it was just to give opportunity to teach them the Word of God. So good lessons here in this chapter. Are you tempted? We've got the Word of God, the same Word that Jesus had.

And we have a great advocate to give us victory in temptation. Have you been messing around with a lifestyle that doesn't please the Lord? Then God would call you to repentance. Well, I'm already a Christian, so you need to repent.

You need to turn from that way and follow after the Lord and let your lifestyle be showing that change. And you do so by following Jesus. By staying close to Him.

And as we go from this place this morning, may that mark our week. Amen? That we are walking close with Jesus this week. Letting His Word be in us.

And just like Jesus did, saying, I live by this truth. I live by this truth. Not I just quote this truth, but I live by this truth.

Praise the Lord. Let's stand together, shall we?

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