

The Inauguration

by Steve Gallagher

Jesus' inauguration into his ministry as Messiah was marked by his baptism, the Holy Spirit's empowerment, and his temptation in the wilderness.

Duration: 57:14

Scripture: Matthew 4:1

Topics: "Temptation And Sin", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon delves into the temptations faced by Jesus in the wilderness, highlighting the cunning ways Satan tries to derail us from God's path by appealing to our spiritual instincts, pride, and desires. It emphasizes the importance of resisting temptation, seeking God's will above all else, and being aware of the hidden price tags attached to worldly offers. The sermon concludes with a powerful reminder of how Satan leads us astray by masking the bitterness of sin with temporary pleasures, urging us to cast ourselves down into destruction.

Transcript

Okay, today we're going to be in Matthew 3 and 4. It's been 18 years since that incident in the temple, and it's been about six months since Jesus started hearing the reports about his cousin John preaching a powerful message of repentance and baptizing his converts down at the Jordan River. But Jesus didn't go rushing into his calling. He still bided his time in Nazareth and waited for the Father to direct his steps, and finally the day came that the Lord started leading him towards his ultimate calling.

But the great question in Palestine during that time was, is the baptism of John from heaven or from men? That's what all the talk was, you know, at that time. And Jesus knew in his spirit that this was of God, and he was going to be playing a part in it. So the title of the message this morning is the inauguration.

And when we think about inauguration for us Americans, we think about the enormous to-do event in Washington, D.C. that happens every four years. And, you know, just all of the acclaim that comes with it, all the prestige, all the power of it, just everything that's involved with it. Now, here is the king of the universe, the king of heaven, coming to be inaugurated into his new office of Messiah.

And notice the difference in how his inauguration takes place compared to the world's. So let's start reading here. I'm going to kind of cut into the middle of John's message, or towards the end of it, I should say.

This is probably typical of the way he was preaching in those days. But it's tied in, and I'll show you here in a second. Let's start with verse 11.

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor, and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the shaft with unquenchable fire.

In other words, he's bringing a separation into the land of Israel. Then Jesus arrived. And, you know, don't miss that, because that word, then, you'll see it used six times in this passage we're going to be covering today.

It's showing the flow of how all these events are tied together. Then Jesus arrived from Galilee, you know, on the heels of John's proclamation of the coming Messiah. So, then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him.

Here he is, the king of heaven, not coming as some great dignitary, and not even in the fire of righteous zeal that John is expecting, but as a lowly servant, and just one of the crowd, you know, just presenting himself as nobody important, or significant, or anything. He's just coming in obedience to his father's instructions. All right, verse 14.

But John tried to prevent him, saying, I have need to be baptized by you. This is someone who's aware of his sinful nature. He lives in sight of what a failure he is.

He understands his humanity, and his need for the Savior. John sees that. It's clear to him.

I have need to be baptized by you, and by you, and do you come to me? But Jesus answering said to him, permitted at this time, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, lighting on him.

All right, now let me just make a couple observations on the other gospel writers, briefly. Matthew uses the term opened. Actually, Luke uses the same term.

It's a neugo in the Greek, and it's just a typical word you would use, you know, like we use the word open. That's the common word to express that. But Mark uses the term schizo, and by the way, you understand that Mark was heavily influenced by Peter when he wrote his epistle, just like Luke was heavily influenced by Paul.

You could almost say he called the book of Mark the book of Peter, really, the gospel of Peter. But anyway, he uses this more dramatic term, schizo. It's the same word that's used to describe the ripping of the veil when Jesus was hanging on the cross.

So in other words, what he's saying is that when this happened, God tore asunder the heavens to permit his Holy Spirit to come upon his son, and to possess him totally, and to fill him for this great work he had before him. It was a very dramatic moment, really. And Luke says that this occurred, and while he was praying, heaven was open.

So in the midst of this whole baptism experience, Jesus is communicating with his Father. There's some kind of a communication going on between them, and we don't know exactly what he was praying, but I'm assuming he was praying that the Lord would empower him to be able to fulfill this tremendous responsibility that he was facing. John, in his gospel, would later say this in chapter 1, verses 32 to 34.

He said, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and he remained upon him. I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water said to me, he upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.

So that was John's great testimony to the Jewish people, and it's also fulfillment of a prophecy in Isaiah 11, too. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Think about Jesus, his life, and the way he interacted with people. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and strength.

The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And wow, he perfectly fulfilled all those, you know, whatever you want to call those aspects of wisdom or whatever. Okay, verse 17.

And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. So after 400 years, God breaks his silence with his people, and he speaks from heaven, and he declares that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is his Son, his personal representative there to his people. And he'll say the same thing a couple years later in the Transfiguration.

You know, he makes almost the exact same statement then. We'll get to that later. But one thing I'll just notice in passing is that this is one of the first, maybe the first, time in the New Testament that we see all three of the members of the Trinity involved in one incident.

You have Jesus being baptized, being inaugurated into his office of Messiah. You have the Father affirming him from heaven, and you have the Holy Spirit empowering him to accomplish the work that's set before him. All right, I want to read a couple of comments before we move on.

Farrar said this, there was something in the sinless beauty of his ways, something in the majesty of his aspect, which at once overawed and captivated the soul of John. To others, he was the uncompromising prophet. Kings, he could confront with rebuke.

Pharisees, he could unmask with indignation. But before this presence, all his lofty bearing falls. Before the purity of sinless life, the wild prophet of the desert becomes like a submissive and timid child.

He has baptized many, has in some sense seen through men of all kinds, but no one like this had as yet come before him. And I understand that a little bit because, you know, years of dealing with sexual addicts, and you just, you know, you develop a discernment for what people are in and just, you know, the kinds of things that's going on inside of them, all their self-life. You just, you know, years of that just gives you a discernment for it.

And so I'm sure John had that kind of discernment. It comes from living a godly life also, you know. And so John could see that when all these people would stand in front of him one after another, you know, he just could get the sense about him.

But I also know what it's like to come into the presence of someone who's really walking with God. And just, I mean, it's not Jesus, of course, and you're not feeling like you're going to fall down and worship him like John could have easily done. But you do get a sense of, wow, this is someone that I can respect.

This is someone who's really walking with the Lord, has something in the Lord that's real. Edersheim says this, the baptism was the last act of his private life, and emerging from its waters in prayer, he learned when his business was to commence and how it would be done. That one outstanding thought then, I must be about my father's business, which had been the principle of his Nazareth life, had come to full ripeness when he knew that the cry, quote, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, was from God.

The first great question was now answered. His father's business was the kingdom of heaven. It only remained for him to, quote, be about it.

And in this determination, he went to submit to its initiatory rite of baptism. And if you've seen that movie, Jesus of Nazareth, on occasion, I'll probably mention it. This is one of those times in that movie.

There's just a few. I mean, I like the movie. I really do like the movie.

It's the best depiction of Jesus I've seen. But there are certain really special moments in this movie, and this is one of them. John is baptizing people, and then all of a sudden, there's Jesus.

And they just, they got it. And not only that, but then after he baptized them, it shows Jesus walking off, going towards the wilderness, and John makes a statement. Let's see.

How does it go? There goes the lamb who bears the sin of the world. Something like that, which I don't know that it happened then, but that's how they depicted it in the movie. But it was a very moving, powerful scene in that movie, just really grasping how majestic and awesome of a person Jesus Christ was.

All right. Now, what we're going to notice as we open up chapter four is the first word there. Again, we see the word then.

And actually, well, let me just read this verse. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Let me read it in Mark 1, 12, and 13.

And also, I'll get to Luke. Immediately is how Mark says it. Again, a more dramatic term.

And you think about Peter, and he's just that kind of a guy. He probably preached like this, just had that extra oomph in his statements and so on. Immediately, the Spirit impelled him.

Matthew says led. Mark says impelled, driven. To do what? To go into the wilderness.

And he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts. And then Luke 4, 1 says, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days being tempted by the devil. So, you see these three different writers and how they express the same thing a little bit differently.

You get a slightly different side of it with each writer. All right. Now, I'm going to make eight preliminary observations about this temptation event before I actually cover those three.

Number one is that he was immediately directed to go on a 40-day fast. So, no sooner has he been inaugurated into this new office, and again, I can't help but contrast it with President Obama or any president who is inaugurated into office, and there's feasts, and there's all this tremendous celebration and all of that. But when Jesus was inaugurated, the first thing he's led to do is go without food out in the sparse, desolate land by himself completely for 40 days.

You know, you just, man, can you see the difference in character and what the world presents as someone noble and what God's kingdom presents. Secondly, is the Holy Spirit's involvement in this. The Holy Spirit drove him to do it, led him into this situation.

What? The Holy Spirit sent Jesus to go face the devil, to be put in a position to face all kinds of temptation? Yeah, the Holy Spirit did that as part of the ways of God that he leads us into situations, sometimes knowing we are going to it's the mysterious ways of God, and I'm telling you, just bow your knee before him and just say, Lord, some things are too great for me to comprehend. I don't understand why. Sometimes I have to face the things I have to face, but I bow before you in humble submission and say, even so, Lord, I know you know what's best and what's right.

And third thing is the location where this all transpires, out in this desolate wasteland. And the thing that really got me is Mark's mention of the wild beasts. You know, this is a kingdom that man is not in, and it's ruled by animals.

I was thinking about this for myself because I suppose I have hundreds of times been walking in the woods over the last 25, 30 years before the sun comes up, and it can be kind of spooky out there. You know nothing's out there that could do too much harm to you, but it's just a weird feeling, you know? In fact, just this morning, I was walking along, and all of a sudden, you know, it's pitch black, and all of a sudden, I hear a rustling in the bushes right next to me, and I whip out my flashlight, and I shine it, but all you can see is the bush, and I mean, it's not my nature to run, you know? I just don't, and I just, so I'm standing there, and I'm not gonna do a straight thing, but I'm just standing there, and you know, I'm shining the flashlight, but I literally feel shivers going up and down my spine. It's something weird when you don't know what's in those bushes.

I didn't know what it was. I still don't know what it was, because I couldn't see, and so I finally just kind of slowly made my way off, but I didn't go back there either. It's just like, I don't want to deal with that, you know? I'm here to pray.

I'm not here to fight with animals and stuff, but can you imagine for Jesus being out there in that wilderness in those days? I think hyenas were out there, packs of hyenas. Could you imagine him being out there, and hear those screaming devils, you know, or hearing the roar of a lion off in the distance? Man, I can't imagine, you know? I've thought about that. Could I go on my prayer walks out on the Serengeti or something? I don't think I could do it.

It'd be too freaky, you know? It'd be too, you know, just be all paranoid about what you'd run into, but Jesus did it. He stayed out there for 40 days and 40 nights completely by himself. He's amazing.

All right, the fourth thing I'll mention is how fasting affects our ability to fight. You know, we are called into battle, aren't we? I mean, that's what the Christian life is, to a large extent, is a battle, and the funny thing is, is we know that fasting strengthens us spiritually, but really, I don't think it happens until it's all over with, because when you're fasting, at least this is my experience, I don't know what it's like for you, but

when you're in the midst of a fast, your body is just weak, and I am not strong against temptation when I'm fasting. Now, afterwards, I feel like something has happened inside me.

I feel stronger, my spiritual life is more invigorated. Something like that occurs, you know, as a result of the fast, but during the fast is different. So, Jesus is out there without food for 40 days, and think of, you know, I could just see him in his weakened condition.

You know how you get cold really easily when you're fasting? So, he's out there huddled up, probably freezing at night, because out in the desert, it gets really cold, you know, and just another part of what he went through by himself. Number five, I'll just mention this in passing. I didn't want to take the time to get into this, but some of the commentators did, more so is the direct correlation between his 40 days of fasting and the children of Israel out in the wilderness for 40 years, and there are some definite allusions, you know, the one with the other.

I'm not going to get into them, but I'll just mention in passing. Number six is the three temptations, how much they align themselves with what John, the apostle John, would later say about the way that the spirit of the world attempts to draw people into the devil's mindset, and we all know this passage out of 1 John 2, do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, all that is in the world, and the way he says it here, you know, if I was writing the amplified, Steve Gallagher amplified version, maybe I would have said it a little different. All that is in the world will appeal to either the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes or the boastful pride of life. You know, these three passions or areas of vulnerability within every human being, every temptation of the world is going to appeal to one of those areas in your life.

All right, and then also you can notice these same three things. If you study the temptation of the serpent with Eve in the garden that brought about the demise of mankind, you'll see those three same things represented there. Number seven, I'll mention that it's the humanity of Jesus that is being subjected to temptation here in this whole event.

In other words, he was tempted in all ways as we are tempted, but the only difference with Jesus, well, maybe not the only difference, but definitely maybe the biggest, is that he didn't have that fallen nature in him, that natural inclination to go after sin. He didn't have the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride that's innate part of who we are. He didn't have to deal with that, you know, and he was empowered by the Holy Spirit, but he did have natural passions.

He was a young man who knew how hormones inflame the passions of a young man. He understood that. He knew the great desire of hunger for food and so on.

He felt with all those things and he was really tempted. It's not that he wasn't tempted or that he was a machine, a robot that just kind of went through all the actions and stuff. No, he was a human being and he was tempted with these things and all the, you know, during his whole time on earth.

All right, lastly, the question has been raised of, did Satan appear bodily, you know, in bodily form to him, or did it just come, these temptations just come into his mind? And, you know, we have to, on the one hand, you have to consider the fact that it says Satan took him to the temple and took him to the mountain. That's their words, and the whole incident is recorded as a conversation, you know. So, on the one hand, it

certainly looks like, well, Satan actually came in some kind of bodily form and presented himself and made these statements or these temptations, but on the other hand, the biblical expositor really presents a strong case that Satan came spiritually and invisibly into his mind and presented these things.

And the way he explained it is that Jesus has just been baptized, initiated into his new office. He's out there on the wilderness for 40 days, and, you know, he's contemplating what he's going to be doing with this new office. He's thinking about all that's involved and so on.

But, you know, you guys know what it's like when you first come into ministry. You have a lot of self-doubt, and you're struggling with, well, you know, am I really ready for this? Can I handle this? And just all those kinds of things. And he presented it like the enemy was coming to Jesus with these strong inward impulses to handle things differently than God would have him handle them.

You know, and as he said, you know, it says that he was tempted in all ways as we are tempted. Well, Satan doesn't come bodily to us. The enemy comes to us in our minds and just presents these thoughts he puts in our minds.

So, but, I mean, I can't get away from the way the story lays out. To me, it just looks like it's very clear that something very, you know, demonstrative happened. But I do believe that probably preceding this and after this, in the next three and a half years of his ministry time, that when the enemy came to him and did come to him, it was through people or it was through inward impulses and so on.

So, this is 40 days. It says that Mark or Luke says that during that whole 40 days he's being tempted. So, I think that probably it was more like those inward temptations leading up to this and then this was kind of like the finale.

Satan comes right in front of him and just presents these three temptations. That's just my take on it. I don't know if that's true.

But let me read a couple of quotes here that are both interesting in their own way. Edersheim says, Moses fasted in the middle, Elijah at the end, Jesus at the beginning of his ministry. Moses fasted in the presence of God, Elijah alone, Jesus assaulted by the devil.

Moses had been called up by God. Elijah had gone forth in the bitterness of his own spirit. Jesus was driven by the spirit.

Moses failed after his 40 days fast when in indignation he cast the tables of the law from him. Elijah failed before his 40 days fast. Jesus was assailed for 40 days and endured the trial.

Moses was angry against Israel. Elijah despaired of Israel. Jesus overcame for Israel.

So, it's kind of like what I was saying, wasn't it last week when I was saying comparing Jesus to Moses, you can't compare the two and so on. Biblical expositors talking about the fact that this isn't the only time Jesus was tempted. Let me read this quote.

Our Lord was all his life exposed to the assaults of the tempter, which seemed indeed to have increased in violence as he approached the end of his life. Why then is this attack singled out for special record? The reason seems obvious. It marks the beginning of the life work of the Messiah.

In his quiet home at Nazareth, Jesus must have had the ordinary temptations to which youth is subject. That was the time of quiet preparation for the great campaign. Now, the war must begin.

He must address himself to the mighty undertaking of destroying the works of the devil. The great adversary, therefore, wisely endeavors to mar it at the outset by a deliberately planned series of assaults directed against all the vulnerable points of Jesus' human nature. From this time onward, our Lord's whole life was to be a warfare, not against the rage of wicked men only, but against the wiles of the unseen adversary, whose opposition must have been as bitter and relentless as that of his representatives in flesh and blood.

Man, that really captures Jesus' three and a half years of ministry. Just relentless, constant warfare, most of it completely unseen, even by the disciples. The disciples were pretty much out of it.

They were pretty much just out of it, just unaware of the reality of the great battle that Jesus was involved in. He's nurturing them and caring for them because they're spiritual infants. He understands and he's trying to help them and so on, but no one really got it, what Jesus went through.

All right, let's look at these three temptations. Start here with verse two. After he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, he then became hungry.

Well, we know that's not true. I mean, not like that. I think what Matthew is meaning to say is that the hunger reached a crisis point.

Because if I understand correctly, you can go 40 days without food, but then you start literally dying from starvation at that point. So I think that what he's saying is that the hunger increased to the point of it being a crisis. So anyway, I don't mean to say the word of God is not true.

I've got to be very careful with the way I say things, but I'm just trying to breathe a little more clarity into what he's saying. And the tempter came and said to him, if you are the son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he answered and said, it is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

All right, and then let me read Mark and Luke. Mark 1.13 says, and I've already mentioned this, he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan. All right, so this is just kind of the culmination of it all.

And Luke says basically the same thing, that he's being tempted that whole time. All right, on this first temptation, I'm just going to read these quotes because they really capture the whole thing, and we were kind of running out of time, so I need to get moving along here. Farrar says this, the first temptation was an appeal to the appetites, an impulse given to that lower nature which man shares with all the animal creation.

Man has higher principles of life than material sustenance. He who thinks that we live by bread alone will make the securing of bread the chief object of his life, will determine to have it at whatever cost, will be at once miserable and rebellious if even for a time he be deprived of it. But he who knows that man does not live by bread alone will, when he has done his duty, trust God to provide all things needful for his body and will seek with more earnest endeavor the bread from heaven.

You know, it really is what Jesus will say not many days hence after this, that seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. I mean, that's really what he's saying here. It's the same

mindset, is that you put the things of God first no matter what.

You know, you just have that resolute determination in your heart, God is first. The things of God are first. The kingdom of God is first.

And you just kind of have to leave the rest in God's hands and he just will abundantly provide and take care of your needs. All right, Jameson Fawcett Brown says here, It is clear from Mark and Luke that there was a 40-day temptation before the three specific temptations afterwards recorded. But further, the tempter's whole object during the 40 days evidently was to get him to distrust the heavenly testimony born to him at his baptism as the Son of God, to persuade him to regard it as but a splendid illusion, and generally to dislodge from his breast the consciousness of his sonship.

You know, so he's getting at the crux of what this whole thing is about from Satan's standpoint. What Satan was trying to accomplish was to throw him off the call upon his life. And Edersheim says this, The essence of his last three great temptations resolved themselves into the one question of absolute submission to the will of God.

If he submitted to it, it must be suffering, helpless, hopeless suffering to the bitter end and the agonies of the cross as a malefactor denounced, betrayed, rejected by his people, alone in very God-forsakenness. This is what he's accepting by resisting these temptations. Let me continue here.

He is weary with the contest, faint with hunger, alone in the wilderness. His voice falls on no sympathizing ear. No voice reaches him but that of the tempter.

There is nothing to strengthen him in this barren, stony wilderness, only the picture of desolation, hopelessness, despair. But he must, he will absolutely submit to the will of God. You know, it's really the determination we'll hear later in Peter's voice.

Lord, you have the words of life, where else would we go? What other option do we have? Yeah, going this path is hard at times, but what other option is there? To go the way of the world? You know, to live in self-indulgence and live for pleasure and live for the things of a temporal life? Is there really any possibility of going down that path? I can't imagine it. I cannot imagine it. But you know what he's mentioning here about no voice reaching him but that of the tempter.

And I've said it before and I'll say it again, that the day is going to come that we're going to be scattered. And what you have, you're going to have to fight on your own. You know, you're not going to be surrounded with godly people who are going to encourage you in the battle.

You know, very well could come a time you're sitting in a prison cell by yourself, and the only people you're going to hear from are those who hate God. But don't worry, don't despair, because the Spirit of God indwells you, your, you know, being. And he will be there with you, and he'll give you the words to say, and he'll take you through.

So don't let that bother you. Okay, the second temptation, verse 5. Then the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand 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 command his angels concerning you, and on their hands they will bear you up so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, on the other hand, it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

All right, this comes out of, Satan's words come out of Psalm 91, but obedience is implied in that Psalm. You know, all the way through that Psalm, it's the one who loves the Lord who's being described there. You can't just do your own thing and expect and demand of God to protect you and cover you, but that's the message that Satan wants us to have.

You shall not surely die, right? You can do your own will, and God will cover you. You know, that sweet, syrupy, lying voice of the enemy, and that's what the Lord was facing there, and what we face. I like what one of these old-time writers said.

He says, but what is this I see? Satan himself with a Bible under his arm and a text in his mouth? Doubtless the tempter, having felt the power of God's word in the former temptation, was eager to try the effect of it from his own mouth. You know, and that's, wow, that's just quite a thing to think about, Satan with a Bible, but he does use the Bible. You know, where do you think all the strife comes from in the church? Maybe I'll get to that.

Yeah, we'll get to that in a minute, but it is Satan at work using verses and twisting them out of proportion or out of the context or the real meaning of them or emphasizing some certain statements and de-emphasizing, just in the middle of it, corrupting it and making it into something it's not. Satan's all over the church. He just is.

You know, it's sad, but he is. Anyway, the temptation here that Jesus is facing is to seize the opportunity, to launch out on his own, to move in self-will and trust God to cover him. That's really what Satan's appealing to here.

You know, I mean, think about the logic. Satan always has a certain kind of worldly logic tied into his temptations. In this case, wouldn't it advance his work as the Messiah to, you know, begin with a dramatic miracle right in front of the whole religious world of Israel? Think of how that would advance God's kingdom on earth.

You know, and that's what's involved here. What Satan is trying to appeal to in Jesus is he knows that Jesus has a zeal to accomplish God's work. And this is something that I have fallen prey to in some kinds of ways over the years, is outrunning the Lord and not waiting on him to open doors and, you know, and so on.

Being too quick to run out and just trying to accomplish the mission that God gave me to do. Anyway, let me read what Spurgeon says. The second temptation is a cunning one.

He is persuaded rather to believe too much than too little. He is not now to take care of himself, but recklessly to presume and trust his Father's promise beyond its meaning. Satan borrowed our Lord's weapon and said, it is written.

But he did not use the word, the sword lawfully. It was not in the nature, it was not in the nature of the false fiend to quote correctly. You know, and that's exactly what I'm saying, how the enemy will, will use scripture.

How many times I have seen it. Men who come into the program, completely corrupted by sin, nothing really in their lives that they could point to, to say, I'm walking with the Lord. All it is, is a pretense, a fall, their whole life.

I mean, their whole life is a lie. But they know the great doctrinal issues of the day. And they'll argue with you till, you know, doomsday, that they know and that they're right and so on.

Where does that come from if it isn't the enemy? You know, and that's what he uses in the church. Let me read what Farrar says. There was nothing vulgar, nothing selfish, nothing sensuous in this temptation.

It was an appeal, not to natural appetites, but to perverted spiritual instincts. Does not the history of denominational battles show us that thousands who could not sink into the slough of sensuality have been dashed into headlong ruin from the pinnacle of spiritual pride? And men, have I ever seen that? It's frightening. Okay, the third temptation, verse eight.

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, all these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, go Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

All right, so the scene changes from the religious atmosphere of Jerusalem to the pagan world and all the glorious majestic kingdoms, you know, and so on, and of the world. In this temptation, Satan just throws aside all subtlety and just throws it out there. You know, he's just making like a desperate attempt, one final attempt to get Jesus off course.

And the two things that stood out to me about this temptation, the first one is that it's a glorious, magnificent offer. You know, he just, he presents all the grandeur of the world, probably showing him one kingdom after another after another. I don't know if it was past kingdoms or kingdoms on the world at the time.

You know, think of the mighty kingdom in China or Roman kingdom and empire and so on, or maybe kingdoms in the future, maybe America. I don't know. You know, somehow Satan was able to present a vision to Jesus where he would see their glory.

I mean, there is no mountain high enough to make you see it all. And even if you could get up in a spaceship and look down on earth, you wouldn't see the kingdoms of the world. But so somehow he made all these things real to Jesus.

And he's basically saying, you know, you don't have to go down this lonely path anymore. Look at all that I'm offering to you. And that is the way the enemy is.

The second part to that is the hidden price tag attached to it. And again, I'm going to read a quote. Pulpit commentary says this, he showed the fair side of all.

He kept away in the background the foul ways and sinful means by which kingdoms often have been won. The bloody battles, the cruel massacres, the wicked plots, the diplomatic schemes by which crowns have been gained, the cares that attend them, the anxieties that perplex them, the thorns that line them. But why act so disingenuously? Why not state the drawbacks? Ah, this is never Satan's way.

He shows the best part of the picture, the darker background he keeps out of view. He exhibits the fascinations of sin. He conceals its bitterness.

He recounts its pleasures, not its pains, its seductions, not its sorrows, its allurements, not its sufferings. Besides his promises are lies. He never keeps his word or performs his promise.

How many of us can say amen to that? You know, wow. Every time I fell into sin 30 years ago, whenever it was, it was always the same story. I would remember some pleasurable experience or at least the pleasurable side to an experience.

That's really what it was because the truth is I could probably count on one hand in all my years of sin, I could probably count on one hand the experiences that I really thoroughly enjoyed. I don't even know if I could count them on one hand. It usually always was a mixture of, you know, just something nasty or ugly attached to it or miserable or whatever.

And that is the way Satan works. He presents a glorious picture to us and somehow has a way of masking in our minds the realities of it. And we're just stupid.

We just continually fall for it time after time, you know, and just give into it. But think of what misery, and I'll just, as a reminder to you guys, think of the misery that brought you to Pure Life Ministries. You didn't come here because you were having the time of your life, did you? You came here because everything was going wrong in your life and you were sick and tired of paying the price.

You were tired of the emptiness, the misery of it, the darkness, the separation from God. All those things are what brought you in to this place, crawling on your hands and knees, looking for help. And don't ever forget that.

Remember. Remember. Those are one of the things you need to remember.

Remember the misery of sin. All right. I'll mention also, I won't read this last quote, but the other part to this was the reality, you know, again, that Satan was hiding, was that Jesus would become a satanic messiah.

He would have to operate as the messiah with Satan as his master. Can you imagine what could Satan offer him to induce him to do that? And, you know, Jesus was very realistic. He understood the spiritual kingdom, and that was why he, you know, had an extra strength inside of him to resist all these temptations, because he knew the reality of what was, you know, involved.

All right. So, verse 11, then, again, the last, the sixth time I think this word's used, then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and began ministry to him. So, no sooner did Satan vacate than the angels from his father's throne came and ministered to him, and, you know, what does that mean? I don't know.

I know what it would mean for angels to come to me, and I'm sure I've had angels come to me at times to encourage me, to strengthen me, and so on, but I'm, of course, out of it, not aware of it, but Jesus was very aware, and he was a man, and he needed what they had to give him, and we would see the same thing happen for Paul at different times when angels came and encouraged him, but Satan did leave, but it was only for a season. I think it's Luke that says that he left and would come back at a more opportune time. So, you know, he was not done attacking, assaulting, tempting, testing Jesus.

He was going to fight him with everything he had in his dark arsenal all the way to the cross. Satan would be on him. All right.

Now, I'm going to end with one final quote that is just very powerful. This is the Pulpit Commentary, and it was written as part of the second temptation, and throw yourself from the pinnacle, you know, that whole thing, but he's relating it now to our struggles, our temptations that we face. Let me read this.

How much more severe and repeated attacks of this great adversary may be expected by us, in whom a wicked heart within and a wicked world without combine to render temptation successful. Satan's onsets are so daring and his designs so murderous, excuse me, his schemes of ruin so subtle, his plan being our enslavement to himself and to pay us the hard-earned wages of transgression. Cast yourself down, he says to some.

Sin is an easy and safe descent. The way of virtue is hard and uphill. Don't trouble yourself about it.

Cast yourself down. Wallow in your beloved lust. Take your fill of your besetting sin.

To others, again, cast yourselves down. Become slaves to luxury or sensuality or vice. Your means warrant it.

The circumstances justify it. Perhaps he waxes bolder and says to another, you are a child of grace. Once in grace, always in grace.

You may indulge in sin with impunity. Cast yourself down. Thus, he continues to lead men blindfold to the brow of the precipice and bids them cast themselves down, telling them there is no danger and assuring them of safety.

Thus, he plunges men into misery. Thus, he brings them to perdition. Thus, he sinks them in the deep abyss.

Man, that says it all, doesn't it? That exactly expresses what happens when the enemy comes to us with his, you know, subtle little temptations. And we are going to fail, but there is always a pathway open. You know, if you've fallen to one sin, then it's easier for the next, and then it becomes easier and easier.

And before you know it, you are sliding down a dangerous hillside, heading for destruction. Well, I don't need to tell you guys that. You're experts on that.

You know this for yourselves. So that's it for this week. Next week, we're going to take a look at two different people that Jesus dealt with that could not have been more opposite, a proud Pharisee and an immoral sinner.

So we will get into that story next week. God bless you. See you then.

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