

Handling Life's Temptations (Part 2)

Sunday, August 20, 2006

Message Title "Handling Life's Temptations"

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Matt 4:1-11

1 Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit* into the wilderness *to be tempted of the devil*.

2 And when *he had fasted forty days and forty nights*, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, *If thou be the Son of God*, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But *he answered and said*, It is written, *Man shall not live by bread alone*, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of *the mouth of God*.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and *setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple*,

6 And saith unto him, *If thou be the Son of God*, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 *Jesus said unto him*, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into *an exceeding high mountain*, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt *fall down and worship me*.

10 *Then saith Jesus unto him*, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, *angels came and ministered unto him*.

- There are several principles that we learned from our last lesson that are crucial to our spiritual success. We learned the nature and cause of all temptation, the end result of temptation, and what the effects of temptation are on the saint.

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- There is much that can be learned also from the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Again, we reemphasize that temptation first comes to cause you to question your God given identity.
- Only God has the authority to assign to you your purpose and identity. Any other source or opinion is wrong and illegal. We must constantly search the word and stay before God in order to fully live out our potential. Outside of God, there is no option for success.
- Again, if you don't learn how to handle the temptations of your life, then you are subject to failure and destruction.
- If you are not attuned to the word and voice of God, then you will easily respond incorrectly to the voice of the tempter. We learned that temptation comes about when you are drawn away by your own lusts. But, if we learn to discipline our flesh by fasting, then we will more readily overcome the enticement of temptation.
- Today, we want to look briefly at the three areas of temptation that Jesus was confronted with and how He handled them, thereby, obtaining wisdom as to how we may handle the temptations in our lives.
- First, let's look at what the Apostle John says in his first Epistle.

1 John 2:15-17

15 ***Love not the world***, neither ***the things that are in the world***. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For ***all that is in the world***, the ***lust of the flesh***, and the ***lust of the eyes***, and the ***pride of life***, is not of the Father, ***but is of the world***.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but ***he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever***.

- This is the strength of most of our temptations, the degree of our love for the world. When we read in scripture of the world, we must understand that the Bible is referring to the unregenerate world's system and standards.
- The term 'world' indicates the orderly arrangement of the physical and cosmic realm of our existence. It implies the way in which things happen and are handled by the individuals that live within the sphere of this existence and the evil influence that exists because of sin.

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- The command comes for us to not love the world and the things of the world. Not just the world, but the things of the world, also. And, this is where most people fail; they may hate the world, but they love the things of the world too much to let them go.
- We see this everyday and even in many churches; people have become so obsessed with money, power, and influence until they willingly do wrong to obtain either.
- John let us know that in the world, there are three things that characterize its existence; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- These three areas characterize the avenues by which all of us are tempted. The temptations of life either comes to you by way of the appeasement of sight (the eyes), the fulfilling of fleshly desires (the flesh), or through the over inflation of one's ego (the pride of life).
- As we look at the temptation of Jesus, we will see that these areas are in line with this assessment. The Devil's approach towards tempting Jesus came by way of these avenues.
- He attempted to appease the flesh by tempting Jesus to turn the stone into bread; he tried to appease the eyes by showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and finally, he attempted to tempt Jesus' pride by challenging Him to use arrogance in tempting the heavenly host to sustain Him by doing a foolish task.
- A couple of other things are worthy of notation here; first, Satan tried to get Jesus through spiritual pride and secondly through worldly pride.
- In verse 5, Satan carried Jesus to a pinnacle (a high point) of the Sanctuary. This amazed me that he chose this place, but, then I realized that Satan was trying to get Jesus to commit spiritual suicide.
- And, in verse 8, he carried Jesus upon a very high mountain, signifying physical and unhealthy worldly exaltation.
- Many spiritual leaders are destroyed, not by blatant sins, but by allowing Satan to tempt and overcome them by spiritual arrogance and pride. Therefore, they cast their own selves down, ruining their sacred place of worship with God.

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- And, if they are not careful and don't overcome in the area of worldly arrogance, then they will ascend to the place of worldly pride, which simply means that he has chosen to fall and bow down to worship something that is Satanically influenced.
- So, in closing, allow me to help you to understand how Jesus overcame the temptations of Satan.
- As previously mentioned, fasting was a crucial spiritual weapon in Jesus' arsenal against temptation. Secondly, unconditioned obedience to the will of God gives you unmeasured influence and power of the Holy Ghost.
- Lastly, Jesus used the word of God. But, notice, it was not simply His knowledge of the word, but the scripture repeatedly states that Jesus said something with each encounter that was either scriptural or spiritually empowered as a principle of God.
- So, this explains how we are to handle our temptations; pray and fast; obey God unconditionally; and lastly, speak the word of God to our temptations and the will have to flee.